



CLIFFORD
CHANCE

Afghanistan: COI Repository

1 September 21- 31 August 22





C L I F F O R D
C H A N C E

Afghanistan: COI Repository



Asylos and Clifford Chance publications are covered by the Creative Commons License BY-NC 4.0 allowing for limited use of Asylos/Clifford Chance publications provided the work is properly credited to Asylos and Clifford Chance and it is for noncommercial use. Asylos and Clifford Chance do not hold the copyright to the content of third party material included in this report.



This repository was produced with the kind support of the Justice Together Initiative.



This project is supported by Refugee Action.

Background to this document

The Afghanistan Country of Origin Information (COI) Repository was started as an emergency response to the crisis in Afghanistan in August 2021 by Asylos, ARC Foundation and Clifford Chance, with the support of Refugee Action. Initially, the COI was jointly compiled by Asylos and Clifford Chance law firm and quality reviewed by ARC Foundation and Asylos. Through an emergency grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Misha Nayak-Oliver was appointed as the Afghanistan Repository Coordinator, who now coordinates the research and reviews the weekly updates before publication. For more information or to provide comments please contact misha.nayak-oliver@asylos.eu.

Purpose of this document

This document is a collection of COI and its purpose is to address and pre-empt needs that arise as Afghans who have fled the current situation will make claims for international protection. This is a living document intended to collect sources that are (still) reporting on the situation in Afghanistan and to collect relevant information from these sources. Research areas for this report are devised in consultation with UK asylum lawyers and with regards to relevant UK Home Office guidance on similar situations. An updated version of this document will be published on a weekly basis, with new weekly additions highlighted in green throughout the document. Due to the rapid unfolding of events in Afghanistan and the increased media interest during August 2021, as well as internal organisational matters, it was agreed that research would only start on 1st September 2021. Therefore, sources published in August 2021 have not been included.

Disclaimer

The COI Repository is intended as background reference material for legal representatives and those assisting asylum seekers from Afghanistan, to assist in their preparation of the case. The COI Repository should be used as a tool to help identify relevant COI. The information cited in the repository can be considered by decision makers in assessing asylum applications and appeals. Legal representatives are welcome to submit relevant excerpts cited in this document for their specific case to decision makers (including judges) to assist in the determination of an asylum claim or appeal. **However, this document should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.** The information cited in this document is illustrative, but not exhaustive of the information available in the public domain, nor is it determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. Submissions should always be complemented by case-specific COI research. While we strive to be as comprehensive as possible, no amount of research can ever provide an exhaustive picture of the situation. It is therefore important to note that the absence of information should not be taken as evidence that an issue, incident or violation does not exist. We are COI research experts and adhere to strict research principles of providing relevant, objective, transparent, timely and reliable sources material. We therefore include all discoverable relevant information, whether or not supportive of any human rights or asylum claim. **It is therefore imperative that legal representatives and those assisting asylum seekers read the whole COI Repository and submit only relevant excerpts cited in this document for their specific case in addition to conducting their own case-specific COI research.**

Feedback

If you would like to suggest additional research areas or sources to include that would assist you in supporting your clients, please do share them with us. Please fill this [form](#) or email misha.nayak-oliver@asylos.eu.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

New weekly additions are highlighted in green throughout the document.

Table of Contents

SECTION 1 - COI RESEARCH COLLECTION	6
Control of territory and security situation	6
What territory in Afghanistan do the Taliban control?	6
Where do actors other than the Taliban exert influence?	17
General security situation	37
Crime rates under the Taliban, including kidnappings and abduction	128
Coercion / forced recruitment to join Taliban	142
What instances of forced recruitment and use of children/young men are there under the Taliban?	142
Leaving and ‘defecting’ from Taliban	144
What may be reasons for leaving?	144
What legal prosecution is there for defectors?	144
<i>How are defectors treated by the Taliban?</i>	144
<i>How are they treated by society?</i>	144
Justice, law and order in Taliban-controlled territory	144
How is governance, law and order regulated under the Taliban?	144
How is the media regulated under the Taliban?	167
How is Sharia law interpreted and applied?	192
What is the Taliban’s justice and dispute resolution system?	198
Livelihood	211
Can cultural activities (including sport, music, and art) take place? What restrictions and guidelines does the Taliban place on them?	219
Taliban taxes and collection of tax	228

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

What is the state of the financial industry and civilians' access to money?	230
Availability of and access to food	280
Availability of and access to water	336
Availability of and access to shelter	341
Availability of and access to employment	351
Medical care	362
Are there any challenges to accessing medical services?	362
What effect does COVID-19 have on the health care system?	396
What treatment for mental health conditions is available?	401
How are people with mental health conditions treated by the Taliban?	402
How are people with mental health conditions treated by society?	403
What are the challenges for persons with disabilities to access health services?	403
What treatment is available for people with drug-addiction issues?	404
Women	406
Violence against women	407
What is the Taliban's position regarding women in the labour force?	424
What is the Taliban's position regarding women studying?	446
What is the Taliban's position regarding women in public?	480
What is the Taliban's position regarding women participating in sports?	504
What is the position for lone women (i.e. widows, divorcee) without a male support network?	508
What is the position for unmarried/single women without a male support network?	512
What is the position for single mothers without a male support network?	512
What is the situation of women in women's shelters?	513
Children	516

This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Access to education	516
Violence and abuse (including child labor)	543
Children separated from their families	550
Early and forced marriage	551
Persons with disabilities (stigma, discrimination, harassment, violence)	560
Freedom of movement	564
Freedom of movement and travel abroad (Taliban officials)	564
What is the Taliban's position regarding citizens leaving the country?	565
Forced deportation from neighbouring states to Afghanistan (August 2022)	576
What is the Taliban's position regarding unsuccessful asylum applicants returning to Afghanistan?	577
What are the challenges to moving freely within the country?	583
How do Taliban checkpoints affect free movement?	590
Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	592
Number and situation of IDPs in Afghanistan	596
What is the housing situation for IDPs?	607
What is the food situation for IDPs?	610
Do IDPs have access to livelihood opportunities?	612
Documentation	614
How do people obtain ID, birth registrations and/or passports under the Taliban?	614
How do people obtain documentation for mobile telephone and internet services (including sim cards)	626
Online and in-person passport registration and application in Kabul (2022)	627
Taliban's ability to track individuals of interest	627
What are the Taliban's capabilities to track individuals?	627
Targeted groups	636

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Individuals who are critical or in opposition of the Taliban (e.g. peaceful protesters) or those going against Taliban’s prescribed way of life	636
Individuals (formerly) affiliated with the Afghan government or international governments	644
(Former) prosecutors, judges and lawyers	672
(Former) journalists	682
Human rights defenders, activists, NGO representatives	714
Hazara Shi’a	727
Other ethnic minorities	744
Religious minorities (including Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and Jews)	747
LGBTQI+ people, including hijras	759
Disability rights activists	768
Academics, teachers, translators, and scholars (including university employees)	768
Treatment of family members of those sought by the Taliban	771
SECTION 2 - COI SOURCES	778
International Organisations	778
Intergovernmental Sources	778
Government sources	779
NGOS and think tanks	779
Media	780
Contacts on the ground	781
Additional useful COI databases or sources for case-specific country research (non-exhaustive)	781
Additional useful databases and sources to find expert witnesses	782

This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

SECTION 1 - COI RESEARCH COLLECTION

This section is a collection of relevant COI excerpts, organised by research topic. Latest editions since last week's publication are highlighted in green.

Control of territory and security situation

What territory in Afghanistan do the Taliban control?

Aljazeera, Taliban accuses Pakistan of allowing US drones in Afghan airspace, 28 August 2022

"The Taliban's acting defence minister has said Pakistan allowed American drones to use its airspace to access Afghanistan, a charge Pakistan has recently denied following a US air strike in Kabul. Acting Minister of Defence Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob told reporters at a news conference in Kabul on Sunday that American drones have been entering Afghanistan via Pakistan."

Pajhwok Afghan News, US drones enter Afghanistan through Pakistan, alleges Yaqub, 28 August 2022

"Acting Defence Minister Mualvi Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid on Sunday alleged US drones entered Afghanistan through Pakistan, asking Islamabad not to allow the use of its airspace against Kabul. In July, a US drone strike killed Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul. Pakistan has denied playing any role in the killing of Zawahiri."

Pajhwok Afghan News, Casualties in Afghanistan down by 73pc last week, 28 August 2022

"IEA spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told reporters last week that US aircraft continued flying over Afghanistan- a violation of the country's airspace that must be stopped. He said the issue had been discussed with American officials, who were asked to resolve issues through direct talks. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said efforts would continue to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist safe haven again."

AVA, Religious Scholar was killed in Central Afghanistan, 3 August 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Monitoring, Abdul Matin Mohammadi, a religious scholar, was allegedly killed on Tuesday, August 2, in the evening by unidentified assailants, according to the Islamic Emirate authorities. [...] According to sources, the attackers ride away from the scene on motorcycles after killing Mohammadi as he was returning home after offering the prayers in the mosque. [...] The Islamic Emirate governor's office in the province of Ghor reports that no one has been arrested in relation to the death of this religious scholar, despite an ongoing investigation."

Al Jazeera, Taliban supreme leader addresses major gathering in Kabul, 1 July 2022

"Mullah Haibatullah Akhunzada, the reclusive supreme leader of the Taliban, has attended a major gathering of religious leaders and elders in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. More than 3,000 men were expected to attend the three-day gathering that started on Thursday in Kabul's Polytechnic University and is expected to rubber-stamp the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Taliban Senior Official Denies the Claims of "Attacks Against Civilians" in North Afghanistan, 28 June 2022

"In an effort to put an end to an armed insurgency in the north of the country, Taliban authorities in Afghanistan are accused of engaging in extrajudicial killings and other violations of human rights."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

On Monday, claims of abuses in the chaotic Balkhab district in Sar-e Pol province's north were deemed alarming by the United Nations and rights watchdogs, who called the Islamist party in power to hold those who are accountable...

The Taliban's aggressive and inhumane behavior has alarmed Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation in Afghanistan as on Monday, June 27, he tweeted that reports of unlawful killings, forced displacement, destruction of private property, and other human rights violations in Sar-e-Pol's Balkhab district are concerning."

AVA, The possibility of Russia recognizing the Islamic Emirate got stronger, 15 June 2022

"Russia's special envoy to Afghanistan has said that his country is not following the West in recognizing the current government in Afghanistan, adding that it may recognize the government of the Islamic Emirate. He stated that the conditions of this important matter have already been announced to the officials of the Islamic Emirate by the President and Foreign Minister of Russia. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Zamir Kabulov, Russia's special envoy to Afghanistan, said: "We may recognize the Taliban interim government in Afghanistan and send grain to this country to prevent a famine crisis." "There is a possibility of recognizing the Taliban, and the conditions for this action have been announced by the president and the foreign minister," he added. Russia's special envoy to Afghanistan stressed that Moscow will not follow the decision of the West and other countries in recognizing the Islamic Emirate. Kabulov added that the Taliban interim government was willing to cooperate with Moscow in accordance with internationally accepted laws. Announcing the visit of the Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Islamic Emirate to Moscow, he said: "Afghanistan wants to buy some Russian goods and Russian President Vladimir Putin has also given permission to store grain for this country." This statement comes at a time when no country has yet recognized the Islamic Emirate following the recent developments in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of foreign troops after 20 years and the collapse of the pro-Western government."

AVA, Security Situation in Parwan is Admissible, 12 June 2022

"During a meeting, in Sapedar palace the chief police commander of Parwan Mawlawi Azizullah provided details on the security situation and said security and peace are ensured in the province, according to a statement. Deputy Prime Minister Kabir praised the security situation in that province, said the Islamic Emirate security forces are in the service of the people, and will never spare any efforts in this respect. In the meeting, the deputy political directed the Necessary orders to the chief police commander of Parwan and other local member officials of the province to ensure better security in that province. Parwan is one of Kabul's neighboring provinces to the north, which after the collapse of the former government, witness no insecurity or security incidents on the rise of the Islamic Emirate."

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir, 10 June 2022

"Taliban security forces in northern Afghanistan's Panjshir province have unlawfully detained and tortured residents accused of association with an opposition armed group, Human Rights Watch said today. Since mid-May 2022, fighting has escalated in the province as National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have attacked Taliban units and checkpoints. The Taliban have responded by deploying to the province thousands of fighters, who have carried out search operations targeting communities they allege are supporting the NRF. During search operations in other provinces, Taliban forces have committed summary executions and enforced disappearances of captured fighters and other detainees, which are war crimes. "Taliban forces in Panjshir province have quickly resorted to beating civilians in their response to fighting against the opposition National Resistance Front," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Rights Watch. “The Taliban’s longstanding failure to punish those responsible for serious abuses in their ranks puts more civilians at risk.” A human rights advocate who has interviewed several former detainees and a source with direct information about Taliban detentions spoke to Human Rights Watch about the Panjshir situation. Former detainees in early June reported that Taliban security forces detained about 80 residents in Panjshir’s Khenj district and beat them to compel them to provide information about the NRF. After several days, the Taliban released 70, but have continued to hold 10 people whose relatives they accuse of being members of the group, a form of collective punishment. Former detainees said the district jail held nearly 100 others who have alleged links to the NRF. None had access to their families or lawyers. Others have been held in informal detention facilities.”

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 28 MAY-3 JUNE 2022, 9 June 2022

“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, Taliban forces came under attack from anti-Taliban groups, the Islamic State (IS), and the National Resistance Front (NRF) in Afghanistan. Civilians in Panjshir province were detained and reportedly tortured following NRF-Taliban clashes. In Pakistan, IS and unknown groups clashed with security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, while Baloch separatists increased attacks against security forces and civilians in Balochistan. In India, security forces conducted operations against militant groups amid increasing militant attacks on civilians in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), while communal clashes broke out between Muslim and Hindu groups in Uttar Pradesh state. In Sri Lanka, anti-government demonstrations continued amid the country’s worst economic crisis in decades. In Bangladesh, clashes involving Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supporters continued across several divisions. In Afghanistan, the Taliban continued to arrest and reportedly torture civilians across Panjshir province last week, accusing them of cooperating with NRF forces. In Hissa-e-Awal (Khinj) district, 100 people were arrested on 1 June, including minors and the elderly, despite local residents contending that the detained did not have any links to the NRF (Subhe Kabul, 2 June 2022). In Badakhshan province, civilians were also forcibly recruited to fight against the NRF, with the Taliban reportedly torturing those who refused (Hasht e Subh, 1 June 2022). The arrest and reported torture of civilians comes amid ongoing clashes between the Taliban and the NRF, mostly centered in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces. These trends contribute to the 225% increase in violence in Panjshir in the past month relative to the past year flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Threat Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir in the past month. Other armed groups, including the Afghanistan Liberation Movement, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (NLFA), and IS, also continued to target Taliban forces last week. The Afghanistan Liberation Movement claims the killing of eight Taliban members in Qalat district of Zabul, and the NLFA claims attacks in Kandahar and Takhar province. In Kandahar, the NLFA killed a senior Taliban commander during an attack in Zhire district. In Takhar, the group attacked a prison in Taloqan city, freeing two former military officers and killing nine Taliban members. Meanwhile, IS increased its attacks on Taliban forces compared to the week prior, killing at least seven Taliban members in Kabul, Kunar, Kunduz, and Nangarhar.”

AVA, India considers reopening diplomatic missions in Afghanistan, 8 June 2022

“The issue of India reopening its embassy in Kabul was discussed at meetings last week during JP Singh, the special envoy to Afghanistan’s visit to Kabul. The Hindustan Times reported New Delhi is looking at the possibility of posting a very limited number of junior officials, mainly to oversee consular matters and the distribution of humanitarian aid. India pulled out all its officials from its embassy in Kabul after the former government collapsed in August last year. Some local Afghan staff are currently responsible for the upkeep of the mission.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

"The Taliban captured Baghlan and Panjshir in early September, weeks after toppling the Western-backed Afghan government and seizing power in Kabul. Since April, deadly clashes have erupted between resistance forces and the Taliban in both provinces. Last month, heavy clashes broke out in parts of Panjshir, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Residents alleged that some civilians accused of having links with the NRF were executed. Others were beaten and tortured in Taliban custody, they said."

"Meanwhile, locals told Radio Azadi that the Taliban detained more than 100 civilians in the Paryan district of Panjshir in the past week. Their whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, the Taliban said it had detained an unspecified number of people accused of having links with the NRF. Locals have also alleged that Taliban fighters have recently beheaded several NRF fighters who were captured, a claim the Taliban has rejected. The ongoing fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Panjshir."

DW, Taliban faces threats from 'Islamic State', UN Says, 3 June 2022

"The Taliban regime faces multiple threats from al-Qaida, the "Islamic State" (IS) group, and an insurgency in the northern region of Panjshir, according to a new report prepared for the UN Security Council. The report suggested that neither IS nor al-Qaida is expected to be able to launch international attacks "before 2023 at the earliest, regardless of their intent or of whether the Taliban acts to restrain them."

Tolo News, MoFA Denies UN Report Alleging Foreign Groups in Country, 30 May 2022

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) issued a statement rejecting a report by the UN Security Council alleging that Al-Qaida and the Islamic Emirate have a "close" relationship and that foreign groups are in Afghanistan.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan again reaffirms its commitments and reassures all that none shall be allowed to use the territory of Afghanistan against others," the statement said.

The UN Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in the report said Al-Qaida has a "safe haven under the Taliban and increased freedom of action."

"The relationship between the Taliban and Al-Qaida remains close, with the latter celebrating the former's success and renewing its pledge of allegiance to [Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada]," the UN report said.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a recent statement said the allegations were baseless: "The fact remains that since the return to power of the Islamic Emirate, the world and the region have been prevented from facing any harm from Afghanistan, and the Afghan government has consistently worked for the last nine months to build an environment of trust with the regional and world countries."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement called on the United Nations to hand over the post of Afghanistan's permanent representative at the UN to the current Afghan government in order to directly provide factual information to the UNSC and other countries.

The United Nations report estimated an approximate presence of "180 to 400 fighters affiliated with Al-Qaeda" from "Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan" who are settled in "Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz, Paktika and Zabul provinces."

"The Islamic Emirate is committed to its promises. It has attempted for the past nine months to prevent any kind of threat to other countries from Afghan soil and to create a trust-building environment with regional countries," said Inamullah Samangani, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Long War Journal, [Tajik terrorist serves as Taliban commander in northern Afghanistan](#), 25 May 2022

"As the Taliban continues to maintain that it doesn't allow foreign fighters in Afghanistan, a Tajik national and commander for the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaat Ansarullah remains in control of several districts in a northern Afghan province. During the Taliban's swift offensive across Afghanistan last spring and summer, the Taliban placed five districts in the northern province of Badakhshan under the control of Mahdi Arsalon, a Tajik national and a commander in the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaat Ansarullah (JA). Arsalon was given control of the districts by Qari Fasihuddin, an ethnic Tajik Taliban commander who served as the shadow governor of Badakhshan at the time. Fasihuddin has since been appointed to serve as the Taliban's chief of army staff. The clear cooperation between the Taliban and Jamaat Ansarullah directly contradicts repeated Taliban claims that their regime does not provide safe haven to foreign fighters. In an interview with CNN this past week, the Taliban's Minister of the Interior, and leader of the Haqqani Network, Siraj Haqqani doubled down on the assertion, declaring that the Taliban does not support foreign fighters and does not allow Afghanistan to serve as a breeding ground or launching pad for terrorism. Numerous terror groups, including Al Qaeda, the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Hizbul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, the Turkistan Islamic Party, Katibat Imam Bukhari, and a host of others are known to operate inside Afghanistan. These groups are closely allied with the Taliban and helped the group take control of the country in order to establish the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. On his Facebook account, Arsalon recently posted videos of Jamaat Ansarullah fighters, or "Tajik Taliban" forces, operating along the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border in Badakhshan's districts of Kuf Ab, Khwahan, Maimay, Nusay, and Shekay."

BBC News, [Afghan resistance attack Taliban, sparking reprisals in Panjshir](#), 17 May 2022

"The Taliban have been accused of human rights abuses during clashes with resistance forces in Panjshir province, to the north of Kabul. One local resident told the BBC his unarmed elderly relative had been shot by the group, who seized power in Afghanistan last August. Another saw a neighbour beaten by the Taliban until he fell unconscious. A local Taliban spokesman denied any abuses had taken place or that any of the group's members had been killed. The fighting is localised and at this stage does not represent a challenge to the Taliban's control of the country, but it is the most significant sustained armed opposition the group has faced since coming to power. In recent days, fighters belonging to the National Resistance Front launched a guerrilla attack on Taliban forces in the area, who responded by sending a large number of reinforcements to Panjshir. Taliban forces were ambushed and a number were allegedly killed - something Taliban officials have denied. Details on casualty figures, and even the extent of the fighting, are difficult to ascertain. The Taliban appear to be downplaying the clashes, while claims by the NRF often seem exaggerated. Two local sources said that about 15 unarmed civilians had been killed by the Taliban in Panjshir so far."

Gandhara, [New Reports Of Fighting In Afghanistan's Panjshir Trigger Fresh Claims Of Taliban War Crimes](#), 13 May 2022

"Resistance to the Taliban is flaring up in northeastern Afghanistan, and as reports of deadly fighting increase, so are claims of war crimes against civilians.

The fighting is centered in the center and south of Panjshir Province, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban and the last province to fall to the extremist group after it seized control of the rest of the country in August."

Jurist, [Afghanistan dispatch: armed resistance against the Taliban continues](#), 12 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Since their takeover of Afghanistan the Taliban have tried to cover up any news of revolt and resistance against them, although as reported by Afghanistan International since August of last year there have been at least 13 clashes between Taliban and the anti-Taliban movements in Baghlan province, 8 in Panjshir province and 3 in Takhar province. Also there have been minor clashes and attacks on Taliban in six other provinces, the capital being excluded. As recently as last Friday, May 6, there were reports of yet another conflict between the Taliban and the National Resistance Force; an NRF spokesperson claimed 22 Taliban killed and 6 wounded. The Taliban have denied the existence of any conflict in Panjshir at first, though videos of fighting and of the Taliban's reinforcement convoys moving toward Panjshir have been shared on social media. Hasht-e-sobh, the most read news paper in the country, has confirmed that 20 bodies of Taliban fighters have been carried to the southern provinces. Hasht-e-sobh, quoting from ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), reports that at least six freedom fighter groups are currently engaged against the Taliban and are gaining influence among the public here. The National Resistance Force is the current dominant group among the anti-Taliban movements. The Azadgan (Free People) Front has been jointly fighting the Taliban in the recent days with the NRF. The National Liberation Front is another group, which in a recent strike killed a prominent Taliban figure in the west of Kabul who was known to be the organizer of suicide attacks against Shiites people. The Wolfs of Jawzjan is an anti-Taliban movement mainly formed by Uzbeks. The formation of The Afghan Liberation Movement, a Pashtun-led group, is thought to be a giant step for the anti-Taliban movements, although the other two are minor groups."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 23 APRIL-6 MAY 2022, 12 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, the National Resistance Front (NRF) increased attacks against the Taliban in the northern provinces over the past two weeks, especially in Baghlan, Panjshir, and Takhar. The group claims to have seized Taliban checkpoints, bases, and villages in Pul-e-Hisar district of Baghlan province, Warsaj district of Takhar province, and Darah district of Panjshir, with clashes resulting in dozens of Taliban and NRF fatalities. These trends contribute to the 157% increase in violence in Panjshir last week relative to the past month as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir, as well as Takhar, in the past month. Additionally, the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF), the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (NLFA), and IS targeted the Taliban across the country. The AFF claims to have attacked Taliban forces in Kabul, Laghman, and Parwan provinces, including an operation on the Taliban intelligence headquarters in Badghis province. Meanwhile, the NLFA, an anti-Taliban group that declared its formation in February, has claimed several attacks against the Taliban in Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, and Paktia provinces. In Khost, the NLFA claims to have killed 12 Taliban members, including the chief of Alisher district. Taliban officials ignored NLFA claims, instead claiming that a fire occurred at the Alisher district military base (Etilaat e Roz, 2 May 2022). IS also attacked Taliban forces in northeastern Afghanistan, including attacks in Kabul, Kunar, and Nangarhar, killing at least nine Taliban members."

ToloNews, EU 'Concerned' by Reports of Civilian Casualties in Panjshir, 11 May 2022

"The European Union Ambassador to Afghanistan, Andreas von Brand, expressed concerns over the "reports of killings of civilians and mistreatment in Panjshir." However, the local officials in Panjshir denied the reports of civilian casualties."

"The videos that are being circulated on social media shows clashes in Panjshir but the Islamic Emirate said the situation in Panjshir is normal. According to the Islamic Emirate, there are some clearing operations that have been launched in the provinces of Panjshir and Baghlan. This comes as the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Resistance Front claimed it had overrun some areas in Panjshir, Baghan and Takhar provinces and that its forces inflicted casualties on the Islamic Emirate, but the Islamic Emirate denied it."

ToloNews, Islamic Emirate: "Adversaries in Panjshir Surrendered", 10 May 2022

"The Islamic Emirate said that more than 100 of their opponents have surrendered through the mediation of tribal elders. Meanwhile, the Resistance Front claimed that many civilians have been targeted by the Islamic Emirate in Andarab district of Baghlan. The Islamic Emirate denied the civilian casualties."

ToloNews, 5 Islamic Emirate Troops Killed in Panjshir Clash: Local Official, 9 May 2022

"At least five members of Islamic Emirate forces were killed and two were wounded in a clash that took place on Friday in Dara district of central Panjshir province, local officials said on Monday."

Khaama, Resistance Front: 22 Taliban Militants Killed; Taliban: We Had No Casualties in the Panjshir Conflict, 9 May 2022

"Hostilities had grown in Dara district, but a small-scale damage had been done to Taliban troops, including the destruction of three vehicles and the injury of three members," Abu Bakr Siddiqui, spokesman for the Taliban governor in Panjshir province, told the media today, 9th May. Six Taliban were captured and seven Taliban tanks were entirely destroyed, according to the spokesperson for NRF. While the spokesman for the NRF claims that the Taliban are under pressure in Panjshir and have suffered casualties, a Taliban spokesman for the province claims that their "operation" to clear members of the NRF in the AbdullahKhel village has forced them to flee to the mountains. However, public sources in Panjshir province state that two military helicopters evacuated all Taliban bodies and wounded to Kabul yesterday."

Khaama, The National Resistance Front to Reassume the Control of Sections of Panjshir Province, 7 May 2022

"The Resistance Front claims that operations in Panjshir have resumed, with their first operation claiming sections of the province. The Resistance Front's spokesman, Sibghatullah Ahmadi, tweeted last night, May 7, that the districts of AbdullahKhel and Abshar, with the exception of their centers, had fallen to the Front. He also labeled all of the Resistance Front's held territories as crucial and strategic, noting that the district centers were under siege and that the Taliban had asked more time to surrender. The operation was carried out as the Taliban Red Unit was conducting house-to-house searches in the two districts, according to the spokesman for the Resistance Front. The operation has killed 13 Taliban fighters, and Ahmadi claims that five of their armored vehicles have been destroyed."

Khaama, Mujahid: No Military Operations Have Been Carried Out Against Our Forces in Panjshir and Takhar, 7 May 2022

"In response to statements by Sebghatullah Ahmadi, spokesman for the Resistance Front, claiming sections of Panjshir province had fallen into the front's control, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said no military actions had been carried out against their forces in Panjshir."

Khaama, The Resurgence of the Durand Line Dispute Could Alter Afghanistan's and Pakistan's Relationships, 5 May 2022

"The Durand Line, which was contested in the context of the Pashtun homeland movement, has recently become the source of increased border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Despite Pakistani

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

intelligence's estimate of expected hostility along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Asian Lite International claimed that the Afghan side has been relentless in its attacks. In the interest of peace and progress between the two 'brotherly' countries, Pakistan had to formally request Kabul to protect the Pakistan-Afghan border region, ensuring stern action against those involved for terror operations, on April 17. Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) in Islamabad has explicitly said that border hostilities have increased significantly in recent days. The Taliban are enraged at a fence being built by Islamabad along their Durand line, a 2,700-kilometer (1,600-mile) frontier."

Ariana News, IEA officials visit victims of Pakistani airstrikes, deny existence of TTP, 18 April 2022

"The Deputy Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Defense, Mali Khan, visited families of victims of Pakistani airstrikes in Khost on Monday and said they have strengthened Afghanistan's borders with more troops, weapons and equipment. The Ministry of Defense says that Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) forces are ready to defend their country against any threat and that there is no power in the region or in the world to fight these forces. At the same time, the IEA's spokesman denies the presence of the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) in Afghanistan."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Kabul denies presence of TTP fighters in Afghanistan, 19 April 2022

"The Taliban government has spurned reports regarding the presence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants in Afghanistan. However, the government's spokesman acknowledged on Monday there could be issue in mountainous and far-flung areas of the country. Zabihullah said Afghan forces were capable of defending their homeland. He hoped tensions with Pakistan would be defused via diplomatic channels. Earlier in the week, 47 Afghans were killed and over 20 others wounded in Pakistani military raids and rocket strikes in and Khost provinces."

Ariana News, Badakhshan establishes new anti-insurgency unit, 19 April 2022

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials in Badakhshan said Monday a new security unit has been established in the province to maintain security. According to the officials the members of this new unit are well-equipped and ready to suppress any insurgency by opposition groups. Badakhshan deputy governor Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi said there has been incidents of insurgency by groups linked to Daesh and the so-called Resistance Front. Officials said they will not allow anyone to disturb the security in Badakhshan."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Unidentified Armed Men Attack a Taliban Base in Logar, 18 April 2022

"This is the first armed attack on Taliban's base in Logar province since the Taliban returned to power. Local sources in province have confirmed that at around 1:00 AM Monday night anonymous armed men attacked a Taliban base in -e Alam city, the center of Logar province. Sources told Hasht-e Subh that the attack took place at the Tangi base in Kanjak area of Pol-e Alam city, confirming that the clash between the two sides lasted for about twenty minutes. No casualties have been reported so far."

Al Jazeera, ISIL 2.0: How the group became a franchise, 12 April 2022

"Having now transitioned from fighters to civil servants, the Taliban is in the ironic position of having to conduct campaigns against a network of ISIL fighters who are well versed in hiding themselves in cities. ISIL in Afghanistan also leverages the Taliban's uncomfortable transition with disaffected members of the Taliban who are easier to recruit. The two groups are now locked in an existential battle for survival, the Taliban and indeed Afghanistan as a whole, in desperate need of peace after several decades of war. The

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban government has its hands full as famine ravages the country, its funds partially frozen as it struggles to gain international recognition and the aid that would follow. ISKP [The Afghan affiliate, the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K)], has taken advantage of this lull and focused on building up its strength, using funds the group has received from its affiliates in Iraq and northern Syria to grow to double its size in Afghanistan since the United States pulled out. It now controls limited territory in the east of the country. US intelligence predicts that unless ISIL is seriously compromised by the Taliban, it will be able to conduct attacks outside the country by mid-2023 as cells spread to Pakistan.”

International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide: Afghanistan - March 2022, 6 April 2022

“Following 25 Feb Taliban large-scale search operations in north, specifically in Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan and Panjshir, in attempt to forestall spring offensive by NRF, Taliban early March expanded operations to Logar and Laghman provinces (east), Baghlan province (north), and Herat and Badghis provinces (west); rumours rose of imminent large-scale operations in Nangarhar province (east). Risk of Islamic State Khorasan (ISIS-K) and NRF resuming operations in warmer weather remained.”

Al Jazeera, In Pakistan’s Borderlands, Taliban quietly expanding influence, 8 December 2021

“Since January, at least 69 people have been killed in 37 attacks across South and North Waziristan districts, according to data from the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP).

The attacks have included targeted killings of anti-Taliban civilians, extortion-related killings, checkpoint raids and numerous improvised explosive device (IED) attacks targeting security forces, who account for 84 percent of all reported casualties in these areas.

“Shocks were felt in Pakistan due to evolving situation in Afghanistan,” said the source. “However, this scenario was short-lived as Pakistan’s security forces remain ready to deal with any internal [or] external threats.” [...]

In [] North Waziristan, the security situation appears to be even worse.

“After the collapse of Kabul, they have gotten internal strength and confidence, and they have come onto the front foot,” says Mohsin Dawar, North Waziristan’s sole member of Pakistan’s lower house of parliament, who travels often to the district. [...]

“For normal people, their lives are completely at a standstill,” says one resident, who requested anonymity fearing reprisals. “They are very distressed, because they can’t say anything to the army or to the Taliban.

“People are afraid.””

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, ICC judges ask UN for help identifying who represents Afghanistan, 8 October 2021

“The International Criminal Court on Friday said it cannot rule on a prosecutor's request to resume a war crimes investigation of Afghanistan until it can decide who represents the country in international bodies. The judges asked U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the ICC's governing body for help identifying which group officially rules Afghanistan from an international law standpoint. It asked for a response by Nov. 8.”

RUSI, Afghanistan: A Safe Haven for Global Jihadism Once More?, 20 September 2021

“The Taliban’s leadership still seems to want to proceed with its policy of confining foreign jihadists in ‘reserves’ where their movements can be controlled. Taliban sources in Badakhshan say that just days ago the Central Asian jihadists clustered near Jurm were told to get ready to be transferred to their assigned

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

TOLO News, Taliban Says Panjshir is Captured, Resistance Claims War Not Over, 10 September 2021

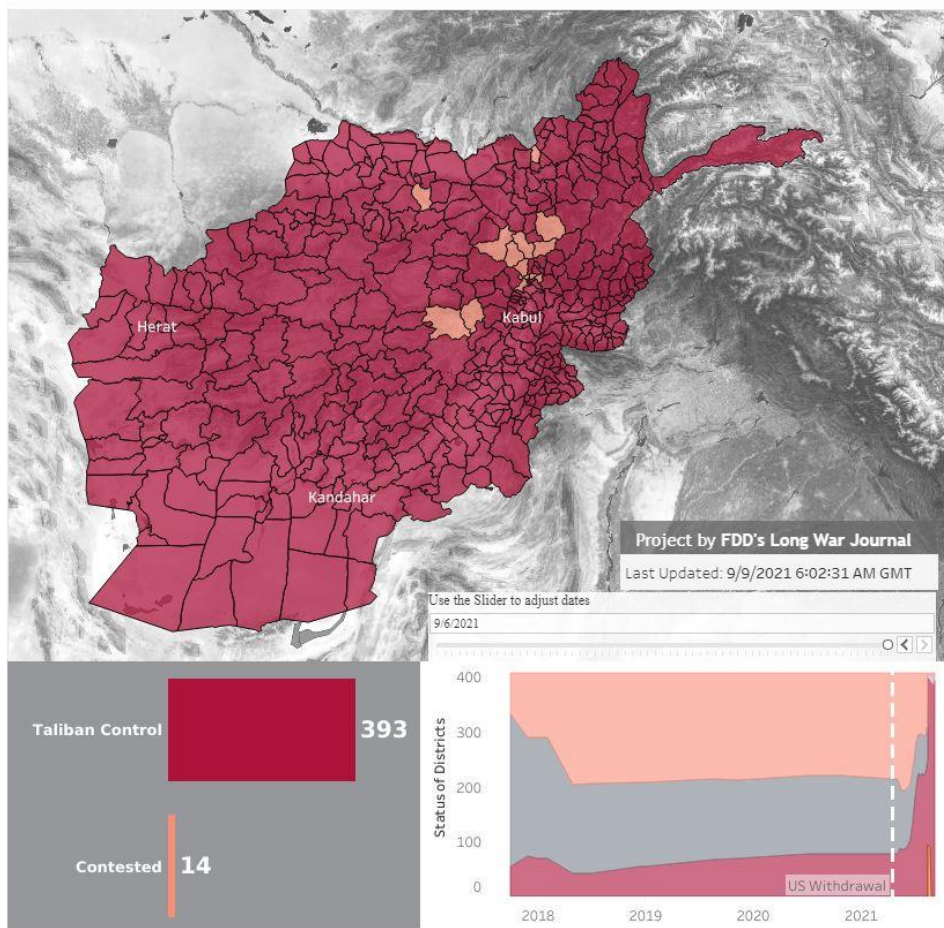
“The Taliban said they are in control of Panjshir and the resistance forces are hiding in "valleys and caves." Fives days after all districts of Panjshir and the provincial center were captured by the Taliban, a commander of the Resistance Front on Friday in a recorded video message said the Taliban’s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

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

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

FDD’s Long War Journal, Mapping Taliban Control in Afghanistan | FDD's Long War Journal, 9 September 2021

This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.



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

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

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

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

FDD's Long War Journal, National Resistance Front repels multi-day Taliban assault on Panjshir, 2

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

September 2021

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

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

Where do actors other than the Taliban exert influence?

Gandhara, One Year After Seizing Power, Is the Taliban Here to Stay? 15 August 2022

"A handful of small armed groups have opposed Taliban rule in different regions of the country. But they remain weak, divided, and have no sanctuary or outside help, experts said.

"They pose mostly an annoyance, not a threat to the Taliban regime," said Marvin Weinbaum, the director of Afghanistan and Pakistan studies at the Middle East Institute think tank in Washington.

The most potent anti-Taliban group is the National Resistance Front (NRF), led by Ahmad Masud, son of former mujahedin commander Ahmad Shah Masud, who used his native Panjshir Valley in northern Afghanistan as a base to fight Soviet forces in the 1980s and the Taliban in the 1990s.

The NRF has staged deadly, sporadic attacks against the Taliban but has been unable to wrest control of the valley. The militant group has used brute force to quell the resistance, including the alleged killing and torture of resistance fighters and the detention and beating of civilians."

[...]

"The Taliban has also violently suppressed peaceful opposition to its rule.

Human rights campaigners have accused the Taliban of carrying out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and forced confessions as part of its effort to crush dissent. The militants have targeted human rights defenders, women activists, journalists, and intellectuals."

CSIS, Reflections on the Fall of Kabul One Year Later, 15 August 2022

"Since the takeover, the Taliban has issued countless policies eliminating women's rights, millions are now at risk of poverty, and active battles in parts of Afghanistan continue. Before Ashura, a religious celebration, 150 people were either killed or injured in attacks that ISIS claimed. Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed a few days later in Kabul, which is an indication that Taliban did not keep their promise of disassociating with al Qaeda and other military extremists."

Ariana News, Islamic Emirate committed to fighting ISIS in Afghanistan: Haqqani, 2 August 2022

"Haqqani added that al-Qaeda does not have a military force in Afghanistan and that the network is no longer a threat to the security of the region and the world."

TOLO News, Reports of Afghan-Pakistani Clash in Kunar, 8 August 2022

"Islamic Emirate and Pakistani soldiers exchanged gunfire in the Ben-Shahi area of Dangam district in Kunar province, according to Najibullah Hanif, local director of information and culture. Hanif said the clashes were resolved and that no one was harmed. He stated that the attempt by Pakistani soldiers to build military facilities along the Durand Line is what sparked the clashes."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, New Blast Shakes Kabul, Killing At Least Two And Injuring 22, August 6 2022

"KABUL -- An explosion has ripped through a mostly Shi'ite area of Kabul, killing at least two people and injuring 22 others in the second blast in two days in the Afghan capital that has been claimed by Sunni-led Islamic State (IS) militants. The blast on August 6 hit the Sukhteh Pul area of Kabul, home to many of the city's Shi'ite Muslim population. A Taliban-appointed police spokesman said one of the wounded was in critical condition. In a statement on its Telegram channel late on August 6, IS said it carried out the attack. A day earlier, at least eight people were killed and 18 wounded in a Shi'ite residential area of Kabul in a blast claimed by IS."

AVA, IS-K Deadly Explosion During Shia Mourning, 6, August 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, The Friday explosion occurred in a wheelbarrow among civilians in Kabul city's Police District 6, according to a tweet from the Islamic Emirate's senior spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, which "martyred" 8 people and wounded another 18. [...] ISIS reportedly declared in a statement that its attack in the west of Kabul resulted in the deaths and injuries of 20, according to Reuters."

TOLO News, Fighting in Karta-e-Sakhi Between Islamic Emirate Forces and Daesh, 4 August 2022

"At least four members of the Daesh group were killed and one person was detained in operations conducted earlier this week by the Islamic Emirate forces in Karta-e-Sakhi area of Kabul city, Kabul security department said. The clashes between the Islamic Emirate forces and Daesh members lasted for many hours. "Those who were trying to target civilians, four of them were killed and one of them was detained. In this operation, one member of the Islamic Emirate force was killed and another one was wounded. Also, a policewoman was killed," said Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul security department."

Gandhara, Two Taliban Police Officers Killed In Kabul By Alleged Islamic State-Khorasan Gunman, 4 August 2022

"A gunbattle in Afghanistan's capital on August 3 left at least five people dead, including two Taliban police officers, the Taliban spokesman for the Kabul police chief said. The gunbattle erupted after police launched an operation against a hideout in the Karti Sakhi neighborhood in western Kabul heavily populated by Shi'a, said spokesman Khalid Zadran.

The officers killed at least three of the gunmen, who Zadran said were Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militants. There was no immediate claim of responsibility."

AVA, Religious Scholar was killed in Central Afghanistan, 3 August 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Monitoring, Abdul Matin Mohammadi, a religious scholar, was allegedly killed on Tuesday, August 2, in the evening by unidentified assailants, according to the Islamic Emirate authorities. [...] According to sources, the attackers ride away from the scene on motorcycles after killing Mohammadi as he was returning home after offering the prayers in the mosque. [...] The Islamic Emirate governor's office in the province of Ghor reports that no one has been arrested in relation to the death of this religious scholar, despite an ongoing investigation."

Khaama Press, Taliban Foreign Minister Says 1,800 ISIS Prisoners Were Released From Prisons When Kabul Fell, 27 July 2022

"American officials even said the Taliban's release of extremist Islamist ISIS prisoners from the prisons of Pul-e-Charkhi and Bagram had strengthened the group.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

After taking control of every province last year, the Taliban pardoned all the prisoners with all the detention centers and prisons in Afghanistan were emptied when this group took Kabul.

Even though the Taliban have underlined time and time again that ISIS does not physically exist in Afghanistan and does not pose a threat, since the Taliban's gaining control, ISIS has claimed responsibility for deadly attacks on mosques, schools, and cars."

Jamestown Foundation (Central Asia), Russia, China and the US Assist Tajikistan in Strengthening Its Troubled Border With Afghanistan, 22 June 2022

"In the ten months since seizing power in Afghanistan, the Taliban has consistently stressed that its political control has eliminated armed unrest in the country. But undercutting the mullahcracy's confident assertions is ongoing resistance centered in the northern Panjshir and Baghlan provinces. Last month (May), the National Resistance Forces of Afghanistan (NRF), a loose alliance of anti-Taliban factions consisting primarily of former members of the country's military and police (many of them trained by the United States military), recently announced a new offensive against the Taliban's Islamic Emirate (IE) to "liberate" the Panjshir and Andarab valleys (Hasht e Subh, May 8).

Further muddying the situation as the Afghan IE attempts to reassert its authority in Takhar and Badakhshan border provinces, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-KP) militants have not only also contested the Taliban's control but even fired rockets into neighboring Tajikistan. The fluid security situation on the Tajikistani-Afghan frontier has attracted the attention of Russia, China and the US. Each of these rival powers is providing assistance to Tajikistan to strengthen its southern border with Afghanistan while Dushanbe simultaneously copes with domestic disturbances in its restive eastern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) (see EDM, May 24, June 1).

In a rare bilateral convergence of efforts, both Moscow and Washington are contributing money and expertise to help strengthen Tajikistan's southern frontier with Afghanistan. While Russia began offering military security assistance to Tajikistan immediately following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the US has provided Tajikistan with over \$300 million since 2002 to help combat security threats. Moreover, the United States is planning to help fund construction of Tajikistan's new border guard facility at Ayvoj in 2022 (Tj.usembassy.gov, September 1, 2021).

Since 2016, China has also assisted Tajikistan, having built a security post near Shaymak, in Tajikistan's GBAO, to monitor Afghanistan's eastern Wakkan Corridor (see EDM, December 7, 2021; The Straits Times, October 29, 2021). Efforts to reinforce Tajikistan's southern border represent the most significant international intervention in South Asia since the Taliban victory in Afghanistan ten months ago."

Pajhwok, Afghanistan: 61 suffered casualties last week, 18 June 2022

"KABUL (Pajhwok): At least 26 people were killed and 35 others wounded last week while different sources once again stressed the reopening of schools for girls above sixth grade and the formation of an inclusive government. [...] Casualties Last week, 26 people were killed and 35 more wounded. Reports say one person was killed and 10 more wounded as a result of an explosion in the Imam Sahib district of northern Kunduz province. Local sources say unidentified gunmen attacked technical staff of the Mazar-i-Sharif airport, killing two people and wounding six more. Meanwhile, security officials say three robbers were killed and one security officer wounded in Mazar-i-Sharif. According to reports, eight Daesh rebels including their commander were killed during an operation by security forces in northern Takhar province. In Helmand, one individual was killed and three others were wounded in a blast triggered by an unexploded shell. Officials say four people were killed as a result of an explosion in the Butkhak area of Kabul. A Daesh commander was killed during an operation in Kabul. A child was killed in a blast in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Badakhshan while three people were injured in an explosion in Kunduz province last week. Based on media reports, one individual was killed and four others were wounded in a sticky bomb blast in Kunar province, where four members of a family were injured in a grenade attack. Reports show that unidentified gunmen killed one person each in Daikundi, Jawzjan, Ghor, and Paktia provinces. One individual was injured in Paktia. Local sources say the body of a midwife was found in central Uruzgan province."

BBC, [Afghanistan gurdwara attack: Sikhs say 'We don't feel safe'](#), 18 June 2022

"The attack on a Sikh prayer site in the Afghan capital, Kabul, began early in the morning. Militants opened fire outside the fortified doors leading to the compound housing a Sikh gurdwara, as well as the homes of members of the community. The assailants killed the security guard, and armed with grenades they managed to make their way inside, whilst Taliban members stationed at nearby checkpoints rushed after them. "My house is just in front of the gurdwara, as soon as I heard firing I looked out the window, people were saying attackers are inside," Kuljit Singh Khalsa told the BBC. "It was chaos, then all of a sudden there was a blast from outside." A bomb hidden inside a car, parked next to a Taliban checkpost, had been detonated, killing the unit's commander and ripping through the surrounding shops and homes. The attack had begun around half an hour before daily morning prayers were due to start. "If it had been later, there would've been even more people inside," Mr Khalsa said. [...] So far, there has been no claim of responsibility but it appears likely that IS was also behind this latest attack. Afghanistan's Shia and Sufi Muslim minorities have also repeatedly been targeted by the group. IS is much less powerful than the Taliban and does not control any territory, but has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in the country's history. Overall, levels of violence in Afghanistan have fallen dramatically since the Taliban returned to power - ending their insurgency - but IS is undermining the Taliban's promise to have finally brought security to the nation. [...] All the attackers were killed around three hours after the assault began, during which time intense gunfire and multiple explosions could be heard. At least one Sikh man and one member of the Taliban's security forces were killed. Wandering through the still smoking wreckage of the Gurdwara, Sikh community members said they were grateful for the Taliban's help in bringing the attack to an end, but that they did not feel safe and wanted to leave the country. "We've appealed a lot to the Indian government, to find a way to give us visas, we don't want to live here anymore," said Sukhbir Singh Khalsa. "Those of us left here are only here because we don't have visas, no-one wants to stay here. This has happened now, tomorrow it will happen again, and then again after that.""

AVA, [Militant commander killed in special forces raid in Kabul](#), 13 June 2022

"Zabiullah Mujahid, the IEA's spokesman, said the militant commander was killed and another was arrested during the operation. Mujahid did not however say which group the insurgent belonged to. "A prominent enemy commander named Yusof had been killed and another named Mohammad Agha had been arrested during the operation," Mujahid tweeted. "These people were important members of a group of enemies who were responsible for attacking mosques and other worship places in Kabul and blowing up electricity pylons," Mujahid added. Mujahid also said further details of the operation would be shared with the media later."

Ariana News, [Seven Daesh members killed in Takhar operation](#), 12 June 2022

"Seven members of Daesh militant group were killed in an operation by security forces in Afghanistan's northern Takhar province on Saturday, police said. The militants were hiding in a house in Prozhay Sharqi, District 4 of the provincial capital Taluqan. Habibullah Shakir, the police chief of Takhar, said that security

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

forces carried out the raid on Saturday afternoon based on an intelligence report. He said that the operation lasted for one hour, as a result of which seven militants were killed, three more were arrested and some weapons and ammunition were seized. Two civilians were also killed during the raid, he said. Zabihullah Mujahid, the government's spokesman, said the raid targeted Daesh's funding, equipping and training center. He said that eight key militants including their commander Yonus Uzbekistani were killed in the operation. Separately, Sunday saw two bomb blasts happening in northeastern provinces of Badakhshan and Kunduz. One child was injured in the Badakhshan explosion while the one in Kunduz left three people wounded."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 28 MAY-3 JUNE 2022, 9 June 2022

"Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, Taliban forces came under attack from anti-Taliban groups, the Islamic State (IS), and the National Resistance Front (NRF) in Afghanistan. Civilians in Panjshir province were detained and reportedly tortured following NRF-Taliban clashes. In Pakistan, IS and unknown groups clashed with security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, while Baloch separatists increased attacks against security forces and civilians in Balochistan. In India, security forces conducted operations against militant groups amid increasing militant attacks on civilians in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), while communal clashes broke out between Muslim and Hindu groups in Uttar Pradesh state. In Sri Lanka, anti-government demonstrations continued amid the country's worst economic crisis in decades. In Bangladesh, clashes involving Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supporters continued across several divisions. In Afghanistan, the Taliban continued to arrest and reportedly torture civilians across Panjshir province last week, accusing them of cooperating with NRF forces. In Hissa-e-Awal (Khinj) district, 100 people were arrested on 1 June, including minors and the elderly, despite local residents contending that the detained did not have any links to the NRF (Subhe Kabul, 2 June 2022). In Badakhshan province, civilians were also forcibly recruited to fight against the NRF, with the Taliban reportedly torturing those who refused (Hasht e Subh, 1 June 2022). The arrest and reported torture of civilians comes amid ongoing clashes between the Taliban and the NRF, mostly centered in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces. These trends contribute to the 225% increase in violence in Panjshir in the past month relative to the past year flagged by ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir in the past month. Other armed groups, including the Afghanistan Liberation Movement, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (NLFA), and IS, also continued to target Taliban forces last week. The Afghanistan Liberation Movement claims the killing of eight Taliban members in Qalat district of Zabul, and the NLFA claims attacks in Kandahar and Takhar province. In Kandahar, the NLFA killed a senior Taliban commander during an attack in Zhire district. In Takhar, the group attacked a prison in Taloqan city, freeing two former military officers and killing nine Taliban members. Meanwhile, IS increased its attacks on Taliban forces compared to the week prior, killing at least seven Taliban members in Kabul, Kunar, Kunduz, and Nangarhar."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatch: 'An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance.', 9 June 2022

"Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a law student in Kabul reports on conflict between Taliban fighter and resistance forces in the Panjshir valley area of the country. For privacy and security reasons, we are withholding our correspondent's name. The text has only been lightly edited to respect the author's voice. The Afghan resistance war on the Taliban is very likely to escalate, according to a recent report by UN experts. The report notes that the main military threats against Taliban are the National Resistance Force-NRF (an anti-Taliban movement made of The Northern Alliance that fought against the Soviets, plus former

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

government military personnel), and ISIS-K. The Taliban have proved to be fragmented, and internal conflicts are evident all the way to the bottom of their ranks. In recent months, the Taliban have preferred members of their own ethnic group in provinces which are made up of predominantly Persian speakers, have confiscated lands from Hazara people and awarded them to Pashtuns, have conducted targeted killings of former military personnel, and – the jewel on top – have sexually harassed women whose husbands or other family members have fought against them in the past. An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance. Given the history of Afghanistan, the day of a full uprising is not far off; and the provocative and oppressing behaviour of the Taliban against other ethnic groups – such as backing their own tribal members and kin to monopolize trade, government jobs and any service a government is expected to provide – is making the idea of an uprising and a full escalated war against them more plausible and expected. The UN report speculates that after weather change in the country the fighting against Taliban could intensify. The Washington Post meanwhile reports that Taliban are engaged in fighting in Panjshir province, noting that the “Taliban have been denying any conflict, yet thousands of their fighters are stationed in the valley”. The fighting in Panjshir has been intense and more than a hundred Taliban have been killed and many more injured in recent weeks. The NRF has been fairly successful in their guerrilla attacks and have taken out Taliban fighters and important figures in the valley. The major part of the casualties inflicted on the Taliban come from their own counter offenses to finish of the resistance once and for all, but having the higher ground gives the NRF an incredible advantage in keeping them at a distance and carrying out strikes which have delivered fatal blows to Taliban fighters. In response, the Taliban have been detaining hundreds of civilians in Panjshir, have carried out tens of field executions and have been torturing friends and families of the NRF members for information, some of whom have been reported dead after intense torture. In one incident a shepherd was killed by torture and his family were threatened to keep his death quiet or meet the same fate as him. Crimes against humanity, genocide and death by torture are happening in Panjshir, Andarab and Takhar provinces as I write this report. An open letter to the UN has been signed by 60 experts, professors and PhD holders around the world to call for an immediate stop to human rights violation against Tajiks in the aforementioned provinces.”

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

“The Taliban captured Baghlan and Panjshir in early September, weeks after toppling the Western-backed Afghan government and seizing power in Kabul. Since April, deadly clashes have erupted between resistance forces and the Taliban in both provinces. Last month, heavy clashes broke out in parts of Panjshir, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Residents alleged that some civilians accused of having links with the NRF were executed. Others were beaten and tortured in Taliban custody, they said.”

“Meanwhile, locals told Radio Azadi that the Taliban detained more than 100 civilians in the Paryan district of Panjshir in the past week. Their whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, the Taliban said it had detained an unspecified number of people accused of having links with the NRF. Locals have also alleged that Taliban fighters have recently beheaded several NRF fighters who were captured, a claim the Taliban has rejected. The ongoing fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Panjshir.”

DW, Taliban faces threats from 'Islamic State', UN Says, 3 June 2022

“The Taliban regime faces multiple threats from al-Qaida, the “Islamic State” (IS) group, and an insurgency in the northern region of Panjshir, according to a new report prepared for the UN Security Council.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The report suggested that neither IS nor al-Qaida is expected to be able to launch international attacks "before 2023 at the earliest, regardless of their intent or of whether the Taliban acts to restrain them."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 21-27 MAY 2022, 1 June 2022

"Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, Islamic State (IS), unknown groups, and the Taliban attacked civilians in Afghanistan, while anti-Taliban groups and IS continued to attack the Taliban. [...] In Afghanistan, IS, unidentified groups, and the Taliban targeted civilians last week. On 25 May, at least nine civilians were killed and dozens injured in Mazar-e-Sharif city in Balkh province when remote bombs detonated in three minibuses carrying people from the Hazara community. IS claimed responsibility for the attack (Al Jazeera, 25 May 2022). This attack was the third IS attack in Mazar-e-Sharif city in the past month, with the previous attacks targeting Shiite Muslims. On the same day, another explosion occurred inside a mosque in Kabul city, killing at least five people. Similar to other deadly mosque attacks in Kabul on 29 April and 13 May, the perpetrators of the attack remain unknown.

Taliban forces also carried out attacks targeting civilians across the country. Among these attacks, the Taliban opened fire at a wedding ceremony in Surkh Rud district of Nangarhar province for unclear reasons, injuring the bride and many others. The Taliban also targeted civilians for playing music in Kabul city.

Meanwhile, anti-Taliban groups carried out attacks against the Taliban across the country last week. The National Resistance Front (NRF) continued offensives in Panjshir province, as well as Parwan and Kapisa, claiming to have killed at least 40 Taliban members in Panjshir. Meanwhile, the Taliban reportedly conducted operations against two NRF bases in the province. Taliban forces also continued to detain and torture locals in Panjshir, including elders and children (Hasht-e Subh, 26 May 2022). These trends contribute to the 256% increase in violence in the province last month relative to the past year, as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of this increased violence to come in Panjshir in the past month. Elsewhere, in Ghazni province, the Afghanistan Liberation Movement claimed to have killed the Taliban's chief of intelligence in a mine explosion (Shafaqna, 27 May 2022). In Kabul province, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan claimed to have conducted an attack on the Taliban police chief's house in Qarabagh district, reportedly killing seven Taliban members (Subhe Kabul, 25 May 2022).

IS also carried out multiple attacks against the Taliban in Kabul city, including a suicide bombing that killed at least two Taliban members during a commemoration ceremony for former Taliban leader Akhtar Mansour (TOLO News, 22 May 2022; Twitter @Natsecjeff, 22 May 2022). IS also targeted a Taliban vehicle with an explosive device, killing or injuring all those on board."

Tolo News, MoFA Denies UN Report Alleging Foreign Groups in Country, 30 May 2022

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) issued a statement rejecting a report by the UN Security Council alleging that Al-Qaida and the Islamic Emirate have a "close" relationship and that foreign groups are in Afghanistan.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan again reaffirms its commitments and reassures all that none shall be allowed to use the territory of Afghanistan against others," the statement said.

The UN Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in the report said Al-Qaida has a "safe haven under the Taliban and increased freedom of action."

"The relationship between the Taliban and Al-Qaida remains close, with the latter celebrating the former's success and renewing its pledge of allegiance to [Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada]," the UN report said. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a recent statement said the allegations were baseless: "The fact

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

remains that since the return to power of the Islamic Emirate, the world and the region have been prevented from facing any harm from Afghanistan, and the Afghan government has consistently worked for the last nine months to build an environment of trust with the regional and world countries."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement called on the United Nations to hand over the post of Afghanistan's permanent representative at the UN to the current Afghan government in order to directly provide factual information to the UNSC and other countries.

The United Nations report estimated an approximate presence of "180 to 400 fighters affiliated with Al-Qaeda" from "Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan" who are settled in "Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz, Paktika and Zabul provinces."

"The Islamic Emirate is committed to its promises. It has attempted for the past nine months to prevent any kind of threat to other countries from Afghan soil and to create a trust-building environment with regional countries," said Inamullah Samangani, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate."

Tolo News, Al-Qaida and Islamic Emirate Relationship 'Remains Close': UN, 29 May 2022

"The relationship between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda remains close, with the latter celebrating the former's success and renewing its pledge of allegiance to [Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada]," a UN report said. The Islamic Emirate has yet to comment on this latest claim but has earlier denied reports of the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan. The UN Security Council released a report by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team which assessed the presence of Al-Qaeda and Daesh groups in Afghanistan. "Member State assessments thus far suggest that Al-Qaeda has a safe haven under the Taliban and increased freedom of action. Ayman al-Zawahiri has issued more frequent recorded messages since August, and there is now proof of life for him as recently as February 2022," the report said. The report estimated an approximate presence of "180 to 400 fighters affiliated with Al-Qaeda" from "Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan" who are settled in "Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz, Paktika and Zabul provinces." "The Islamic Emirate has yet to reach a final discussion regarding this issue. The officials of the Islamic Emirate should provide final assurances in this regard," said Shir Hassan Hassan, an international relations analyst [...]"

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

"The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] [...] called for investigations into a series of attacks on places of worship and schools in Kabul, Kunduz, and Balkh provinces, instances of which have been claimed by the ISIS-K group. He said that such attacks specifically targeting members of the Hazara, Shia, and Sufi communities are becoming increasingly systematic in nature and reflect elements of an organizational policy, thus bearing hallmarks of crimes against humanity. He also expressed concern about allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced displacement in Panjshir and other northern provinces, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front."

Long War Journal, Tajik terrorist serves as Taliban commander in northern Afghanistan, 25 May 2022

"As the Taliban continues to maintain that it doesn't allow foreign fighters in Afghanistan, a Tajik national and commander for the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaat Ansarullah remains in control of several districts in a northern Afghan province. During the Taliban's swift offensive across Afghanistan last spring and summer,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the Taliban placed five districts in the northern province of Badakhshan under the control of Mahdi Arsalon, a Tajik national and a commander in the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaat Ansarullah (JA). Arsalon was given control of the districts by Qari Fasihuddin, an ethnic Tajik Taliban commander who served as the shadow governor of Badakhshan at the time. Fasihuddin has since been appointed to serve as the Taliban's chief of army staff. The clear cooperation between the Taliban and Jamaat Ansarullah directly contradicts repeated Taliban claims that their regime does not provide safe haven to foreign fighters. In an interview with CNN this past week, the Taliban's Minister of the Interior, and leader of the Haqqani Network, Siraj Haqqani doubled down on the assertion, declaring that the Taliban does not support foreign fighters and does not allow Afghanistan to serve as a breeding ground or launching pad for terrorism. Numerous terror groups, including Al Qaeda, the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Hizbul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, the Turkistan Islamic Party, Katibat Imam Bukhari, and a host of others are known to operate inside Afghanistan. These groups are closely allied with the Taliban and helped the group take control of the country in order to establish the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. On his Facebook account, Arsalon recently posted videos of Jamaat Ansarullah fighters, or "Tajik Taliban" forces, operating along the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border in Badakhshan's districts of Kuf Ab, Khwahan, Maimay, Nusay, and Shekay."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 7-13 MAY 2022, 19 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, the Taliban intensified operations against the NRF in the northern Panjshir and Baghlan provinces last week. These clashes led civilians to flee their homes, while reportedly also being targeted and tortured by the Taliban (CBS News, 16 May 2022; RFE/RL, 13 May 2022). Further clashes between the NRF and Taliban forces were reported in Parwan, Kapisa, and Warsaj district, Takhar province, after the NRF claimed to have seized key points in Warsaj from the Taliban the week prior. At least 12 civilians were killed by Taliban forces in Warsaj district, as some civilians, including the former governor of Warsaj, were tortured for information on the NRF (Subhe Kabul, 11 May 2022). Taliban forces also carried out airstrikes in Warsaj, prompting civilians to flee. ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in both Panjshir and Takhar in the past month. Meanwhile, IS and anti-Taliban groups targeted Taliban forces across the country. IS killed at least three Taliban members and injured others in attacks in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. In Ghazni province, the anti-Taliban Afghanistan Liberation Movement conducted a rocket attack in Waghaz district, claiming to have caused Taliban casualties. Also in Ghazni, the Watandost Front, or Patriotic Front, claimed to have seized control of a village in Ab Band district during an attack on a Taliban base – reportedly the group's first armed interaction with the Taliban (Subhe Kabul, 20 May 2022)."

BBC News, Afghan resistance attack Taliban, sparking reprisals in Panjshir, 17 May 2022

"The Taliban have been accused of human rights abuses during clashes with resistance forces in Panjshir province, to the north of Kabul. One local resident told the BBC his unarmed elderly relative had been shot by the group, who seized power in Afghanistan last August. Another saw a neighbour beaten by the Taliban until he fell unconscious. A local Taliban spokesman denied any abuses had taken place or that any of the group's members had been killed. The fighting is localised and at this stage does not represent a challenge to the Taliban's control of the country, but it is the most significant sustained armed opposition the group has faced since coming to power. In recent days, fighters belonging to the National Resistance Front launched a guerrilla attack on Taliban forces in the area, who responded by sending a large number of reinforcements to Panjshir. Taliban forces were ambushed and a number were allegedly killed - something Taliban officials have denied. Details on casualty figures, and even the extent of the fighting,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

are difficult to ascertain. The Taliban appear to be downplaying the clashes, while claims by the NRF often seem exaggerated. Two local sources said that about 15 unarmed civilians had been killed by the Taliban in Panjshir so far."

Gandhara, New Reports Of Fighting In Afghanistan's Panjshir Trigger Fresh Claims Of Taliban War Crimes, 13 May 2022

"Resistance to the Taliban is flaring up in northeastern Afghanistan, and as reports of deadly fighting increase, so are claims of war crimes against civilians. The fighting is centered in the center and south of Panjshir Province, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban and the last province to fall to the extremist group after it seized control of the rest of the country in August."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: armed resistance against the Taliban continues, 12 May 2022

"Since their takeover of Afghanistan the Taliban have tried to cover up any news of revolt and resistance against them, although as reported by Afghanistan International since August of last year there have been at least 13 clashes between Taliban and the anti-Taliban movements in Baghlan province, 8 in Panjshir province and 3 in Takhar province. Also there have been minor clashes and attacks on Taliban in six other provinces, the capital being excluded. As recently as last Friday, May 6, there were reports of yet another conflict between the Taliban and the National Resistance Force; an NRF spokesperson claimed 22 Taliban killed and 6 wounded. The Taliban have denied the existence of any conflict in Panjshir at first, though videos of fighting and of the Taliban's reinforcement convoys moving toward Panjshir have been shared on social media. Hasht-e-sobh, the most read news paper in the country, has confirmed that 20 bodies of Taliban fighters have been carried to the southern provinces. Hasht-e-sobh, quoting from ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), reports that at least six freedom fighter groups are currently engaged against the Taliban and are gaining influence among the public here. The National Resistance Force is the current dominant group among the anti-Taliban movements. The Azadagan (Free People) Front has been jointly fighting the Taliban in the recent days with the NRF. The National Liberation Front is another group, which in a recent strike killed a prominent Taliban figure in the west of Kabul who was known to be the organizer of suicide attacks against Shiites people. The Wolves of Jawzjan is an anti-Taliban movement mainly formed by Uzbeks. The formation of The Afghan Liberation Movement, a Pashtun-led group, is thought to be a giant step for the anti-Taliban movements, although the other two are minor groups."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 23 APRIL-6 MAY 2022, 12 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, the National Resistance Front (NRF) increased attacks against the Taliban in the northern provinces over the past two weeks, especially in Baghlan, Panjshir, and Takhar. The group claims to have seized Taliban checkpoints, bases, and villages in Pul-e-Hisar district of Baghlan province, Warsaj district of Takhar province, and Darah district of Panjshir, with clashes resulting in dozens of Taliban and NRF fatalities. These trends contribute to the 157% increase in violence in Panjshir last week relative to the past month as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir, as well as Takhar, in the past month. Additionally, the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF), the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (NLFA), and IS targeted the Taliban across the country. The AFF claims to have attacked Taliban forces in Kabul, Laghman, and Parwan provinces, including an operation on the Taliban intelligence headquarters in Badghis province. Meanwhile, the NLFA, an anti-Taliban group that declared its formation in February, has claimed several attacks against the Taliban in Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, and Paktia provinces. In Khost, the NLFA claims to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

have killed 12 Taliban members, including the chief of Alisher district. Taliban officials ignored NLFA claims, instead claiming that a fire occurred at the Alisher district military base (Etilaat e Roz, 2 May 2022). IS also attacked Taliban forces in northeastern Afghanistan, including attacks in Kabul, Kunar, and Nangarhar, killing at least nine Taliban members."

Khaama, Resistance Front: 22 Taliban Militants Killed; Taliban: We Had No Casualties in the Panjshir Conflict, 9 May 2022

"Hostilities had grown in Dara district, but a small-scale damage had been done to Taliban troops, including the destruction of three vehicles and the injury of three members," Abu Bakr Siddiqui, spokesman for the Taliban governor in Panjshir province, told the media today, 9th May. Six Taliban were captured and seven Taliban tanks were entirely destroyed, according to the spokesperson for NRF. While the spokesman for the NRF claims that the Taliban are under pressure in Panjshir and have suffered casualties, a Taliban spokesman for the province claims that their "operation" to clear members of the NRF in the AbdullahKhel village has forced them to flee to the mountains. However, public sources in Panjshir province state that two military helicopters evacuated all Taliban bodies and wounded to Kabul yesterday."

Gandhara, Taliban Investigating Report That Islamic State Fired Rockets Into Tajikistan, 8 May 2022

"The Islamic State (IS) extremist group said earlier on May 8 that it had fired eight rockets from Afghanistan into the territory of neighboring Tajikistan, according to an Afghan media report. The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) news agency quoted an IS press release claiming the militants had fired the rockets from the Khawaja Ghar district of Afghanistan's Takhar Province toward unspecified military targets in Tajikistan on May 7. In a statement, however, Tajikistan said bullets, not rockets, were fired accidentally into Tajik territory during a firefight on the Afghan side of the border between Taliban forces and IS militants."

Khaama, The National Resistance Front to Reassume the Control of Sections of Panjshir Province, 7 May 2022

"The Resistance Front claims that operations in Panjshir have resumed, with their first operation claiming sections of the province. The Resistance Front's spokesman, Sibghatullah Ahmadi, tweeted last night, May 7, that the districts of AbdullahKhel and Abshar, with the exception of their centers, had fallen to the Front. He also labeled all of the Resistance Front's held territories as crucial and strategic, noting that the district centers were under siege and that the Taliban had asked more time to surrender. The operation was carried out as the Taliban Red Unit was conducting house-to-house searches in the two districts, according to the spokesman for the Resistance Front. The operation has killed 13 Taliban fighters, and Ahmadi claims that five of their armored vehicles have been destroyed."

Khaama, Mujahid: No Military Operations Have Been Carried Out Against Our Forces in Panjshir and Takhar, 7 May 2022

"In response to statements by Sebghatullah Ahmadi, spokesman for the Resistance Front, claiming sections of Panjshir province had fallen into the front's control, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said no military actions had been carried out against their forces in Panjshir."

Khaama, ISIS Trying to Regroup in Afghanistan: Gen. Milley, 6 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff General Mark Milley said Tuesday the terrorist groups – including the Islamic State (ISIS) – are trying to regroup in Afghanistan, according to sources, exclaiming it poses a threat to the United States mainland."

ACLED, [REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 16-22 APRIL 2022](#), 28 April 2022

"In Afghanistan, dozens of civilians were killed by IS and unknown groups during attacks across the country last week, including deadly bombings at mosques in Balkh and Kunduz provinces. In Balkh province, an IS-planted explosive went off in a Shiite mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif city on 21 April, killing at least 10 people and injuring over 30. Taliban officials claim to have since arrested the main IS militant behind this explosion (Ariana TV, 22 April 2022). The following day, in Kunduz province, unknown perpetrators planted explosives inside a Sunni mosque in Hazrati Imam Sahib district, killing at least 33 people during Friday prayers. The attacks took place as the Muslim holy month Ramadan is ongoing, augmenting insecurity for the worshippers.

Meanwhile, in Kabul, multiple deadly explosions — perpetrated by IS and unknown groups — targeted members of the Hazara community. This surge of attacks triggered a large protest in Kabul, with protesters demanding that the Taliban provide security and calling the attacks against the Hazara community acts of "genocide" (Hasht-e Subh, 22 April 2022). Taliban forces intervened with aerial fire to disperse the protest and injured two people. These trends contribute to the 157% increase in violence in Kabul over the past week relative to the past month, as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker. IS also increased its attacks on the Taliban last week, killing at least 13 Taliban members during clashes in Kabul, Kunar, Logar, Nangarhar, and Takhar provinces. IS explosions targeting civilians and clashes with the Taliban last week marked a significant increase in IS activity compared to recent months (for more on IS activity in Afghanistan, see this infographic). While the Taliban has been carrying out anti-IS operations since their takeover of Afghanistan, last week's attacks raise concerns about the effectiveness of such operations and the possibility of IS launching larger offensives in the coming months (The Washington Post, 22 April 2022).

Meanwhile, the NRF and the AFF continued to attack Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan last week, with the AFF also attacking the Taliban in southern Kandahar province. The Liberation Front of Afghanistan and Wolf Unit anti-Taliban groups also claimed separate attacks in Kapisa and Balkh provinces, respectively. The Wolf Unit is reportedly led by the son of Uzbek-Afghan warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, while the Liberation Front of Afghanistan declared its formation in February without any affiliation (The Institute for the Study of War, 9 March 2022). Additionally, the militia of Atta Mohammad Noor — a former governor of Balkh province and prominent warlord — clashed with the Taliban in Mazar-e Sharif city following the explosion in the Shiite mosque. Noor's nephew was reportedly killed in the clash, along with a number of militiamen and Taliban members."

Tolo News, [9 killed, 13 Wounded in Two Blasts in Balkh](#), 28 April 2022

"At least nine people were killed and 13 others were wounded in two blasts occurring on Thursday evening in Mazar-e-Sharif of Balkh province, security officials said. Both blasts targeted public transportation. A spokesman for the Balk security department said that the blasts were due to explosives placed in vehicles. Provincial health officials confirmed hospitals had received bodies of the slain and were treating the wounded. Najibullah Tawana, head of the public health department in Balkh, said ten people including women and children were killed and 15 were wounded in Thursday's Mazar-e Sharif explosions. Daesh claimed responsibility for the blasts."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, ISIS, Not a Threat, It's eliminated in Afghanistan: MoI, 25 April 2022

"The phenomenon called Daesh has been eliminated up to 98 percent in Afghanistan and is no more a serious threat. Security forces are still trying to eliminate the last and only hideouts of the heinous phenomenon"

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan – Terrorist attacks, 22 April 2022

"France condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks of April 19 and 21 on schools in Kabul as well as yesterday's attacks on the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif and in Kunduz province. These attacks, for which Daesh (IS-K) claimed responsibility, killed several dozen people and wounded more than a hundred, including young children."

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), At least 16 killed as explosions rock Afghan cities, 21 April 2022

"At least 16 people have been killed in bomb attacks in two Afghan cities, including 12 people at a Shia mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif in Balkh province which has been claimed by the ISIL (ISIS) group. Twelve people were killed and 58 wounded – including 32 in serious condition – by the blast on Thursday at the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif. [...] Another roadside blast in Kabul wounded three, including a child, he added."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Death toll in 'Pakistan strikes' on Afghanistan rises to 47: officials, 18 April 2022

"Afghanistan has reported a death toll of at least 47 after Pakistani military air strikes hit the provinces of Khost and Kunar provinces. Pakistani security forces carried out airstrike on Waziristan refugees in Sperai district of southeastern Khost province and in the Shaltan district of eastern province, inflicting casualties on people. "Forty-one civilians, mainly women and children, were killed and 22 others were wounded in air strikes by Pakistani forces near the in Khost province," Shabir Ahmad Osmani, director of information and culture in Khost told Pajhwok. Meanwhile Najibullah, an official with the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Khost told AFP, the death toll in the province was 48."

Ava Press, Pakistan claims 'terrorists using Afghan soil' to carry out attacks, 17 April 2022

"[...] Pakistan said it has "repeatedly requested Afghan Government in last few months to secure Pak-Afghan border region. Terrorists are using Afghan soil with impunity to carry out activities inside Pakistan." The ministry of foreign affairs spokesman said the two countries have been engaged in dialogue over the past few months to coordinate security along the shared border."

Afghan Voice Agency, Attack Claim by NRF Forces on Taliban Base Near Balkh International Airport, 13 April 2022

"The National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have claimed of targeting a Taliban base near Mawlanea Jalaluddin Mohammad International Airport in -e-Sharif province, killing and injuring a number of the Taliban rebels in the province. It is said that they carried out the attack at around 1:00 AM on Tuesday night.

However, the Taliban press members in the province have refused to provide details about the casualties. The National Resistance Front forces have increased their operations on the Taliban insurgents in , Kunduz, Takhar, Panjshir, , Jowzjan, and provinces."

Afghan Voice Agency Unknown Armed Gunmen Abduct a Child in Balkh Province, 13 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Security camera footage sent to Hasht-e Subh shows armed abducting a child from Zabihullah Shahid Square in Mazar-e-Sharif, the center of the province. The footage was filmed on Tuesday afternoon, April 12.

Taliban security members in Balkh have confirmed the case, saying that they have launched a search operation to rescue the child. Reports and findings show a significantly increased graph of abduction cases in Balkh province during the past couple of weeks. In the latest case, the fighters in Mazar-e-Sharif city rescued an abducted man named Ferdous, but the kidnappers escaped. Meanwhile, the operations of unidentified gunmen have recently increased in the province.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 1 April 2022, 6 April 2022

In Afghanistan, the NRF, the recently-emerged anti-Taliban AFF, and IS continued to attack Taliban forces last week. The NRF claims to have launched deadly retaliatory attacks on Taliban forces in response to Taliban operations targeting the NRF in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces. (...) In Parwan province, the NRF also claims to have conducted several offensives targeting the Taliban, including an attack on the governor’s building in Sayyed Khel district. Additionally, the AFF and the Taliban clashed in Kapisa province, and (for the first time) in Badakhshan, Kandahar, and Jowzjan provinces last week. Lastly, IS clashed with the Taliban in Logar, Nangarhar, and Farah provinces. In Nangarhar, Taliban forces conducted operations killing five people with suspected IS ties in Chaparhar district.

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 4th March 2022, 10 March 2022

“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, the National Resistance Front (NRF), the Islamic State (IS), and unknown groups continued to attack Taliban forces in Afghanistan. The Taliban launched nationwide operations during which they arrested IS members and reportedly detained and tortured civilians. Additionally, former judges and engineers working for the government held protests in Kabul. In Afghanistan, clashes between the NRF and the Taliban continued in Parwan, Baghlan, Badakhshan and Panjshir provinces last week. In Panjshir, the NRF damaged two Taliban helicopters in Shutul district, and claimed to have taken over three Taliban checkpoints in Unaba district. These trends underline how violence continues to surge in Panjshir, with an increase of 168% in the last month relative to past year, as flagged by ACLED’s *Subnational Threat Tracker*, which first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir last month. Unidentified groups also targeted Taliban forces with explosives in Kabul and Helmand provinces. In Helmand, a Taliban commander managed to escape unhurt from an explosion targeting his vehicle. Meanwhile, IS killed a Taliban member during a clash in Kunduz. Elsewhere, in Parwan, the Taliban killed an IS militant and arrested others, including a Tajik citizen.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

“Other armed groups were active during the year. The IS-K engaged in violent activity throughout 2021; UNAMA reported that the IS-K claimed responsibility or was believed responsible for 77 attacks in the first four months of the year. The IS-K also claimed responsibility for a bombing near Kabul Airport in August, which killed over 170 civilians and 13 US military personnel. IS-K activities continued after the elected government collapsed; in November, the IS-K attacked a military hospital in Kabul, killing at least 19 people.

In August 2021, the Taliban fought the NRF in the Panjshir Valley. The Taliban claimed victory in September, though the NRF vowed to continue its operations.”

TOLO News, Groups Seek to Destabilize Bamiyan, Says Commander, 21 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“ [...] reports of increased resistance activities in Panjshir, Kapisa and Parwan provinces. [...] A senior army official in the central province of Bamiyan spoke of efforts by some groups to destabilize the province. Mulla Mohammad Shireen, the commander of the 5th Brigade of the 203rd Mansouri Corps, did not provide names of these groups, but stressed that the security forces would not allow anyone to disrupt security.

1,500 troops, armed with light and heavy weapons, left Paktia for Bamiyan.

But who are the threats to this province?

“There is talk of a second resistance, we ask all the people of Bamiyan to work with us so that the security of Bamiyan is not compromised,” said Allah Mohammad Bakhtyar, head of Planning and Operations of the Fifth Brigade of Mansouri Corps.

Meanwhile, a number of Bamiyan residents criticize what they see as the persecution of the people by the forces of the Islamic Emirate.

“Everyone who came here, created check points, nobody listened to the governor's speeches, the people were harassed,” said the elder of the tribe.”

Gandhara, Taliban's Arrest Of Ethnic Uzbek Commander Sparks Clashes In Northern Afghanistan, 29 January 2022

“Since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in August, information has trickled in about tensions building between the ethnic Uzbek, Turkmen, and Tajik communities in parts of northern Afghanistan and the mainly Pashtun Taliban fighters who have moved to the area in recent months. [...] There is still armed resistance to the Taliban in parts of northern Afghanistan. RFE/RL's [Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty] Afghan service, Radio Azadi, has received information of fighting between Taliban forces and guerrilla bands in Afghanistan's northern provinces of Baghlan, Balkh, Badakhshan, and Faryab. The guerrilla bands are believed to be part of the National Resistance Front (NRF), a group that emerged after the Taliban seized control over most of Afghanistan and is led by Ahmad Masud, the son of legendary Afghan field commander and leader Ahmad Shah Masud. According to Azadi, there are no reports of fighting in the Panjshir Valley, the NFR stronghold before Taliban forces seized that area in fighting in September. But northern Afghanistan remains restive nearly a half year after the Taliban chased the government from power. The so-called Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK) has been active in northern Afghanistan, as well.”

France 24, Fears stalks city in Islamic State's Afghan heartland, 21 January 2022

“Once a fringe force in Afghanistan, analysts say the local chapter of IS has been increasingly active since the United States agreed to a deal in 2020 with the Taliban to withdraw foreign troops from the country. The fundamentalist fighters, who are opposed to any compromise with the West, are believed to have about 2,000 to 4,000 fighters in Afghanistan, against 80,000 Taliban. [...] According to Abdul Sayed, an academic specialising in jihadist networks, the group is responsible for nearly 100 attacks since mid-September -- some 85 percent aimed at the Taliban -- and Jalalabad is the front line. [...] While Salafist elders do not deny the community has been a source of recruits for IS, they say they are now being collectively punished. "Not all Salafists are members of the Islamic State," one elder told AFP. "Very often, it is innocent people who are caught, and sometimes killed," says analyst Bahiss, who warns that this indiscriminate Taliban crackdown on Salafists risks strengthening rather than weakening IS.”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) Muttaqi, Afghanistan Seeks Good Relations With World, 11 January 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Acting Foreign Minister Amir Kahn Muttaqi said that the new government is exercising power over the whole country, and the Islamic Emirate-led government will not pose a threat to any country in the world. He said that the political isolation of Afghanistan is not in the interest of anyone.”

RUSI, The Taliban's Homemade Counterinsurgency, 4 January 2022

“Another reason for the Taliban not to hurry in mobilising resources for a massive campaign against IS-K bases in the east has to do with the value that the IS-K threat represents for the Emirate: the Taliban argue to their neighbours that they are the only defence against IS-K, and hence deserve to be supported adequately. A successful campaign against IS-K would undermine that argument.

As a result, instead of mounting a determined strike against IS-K's ‘centre of gravity’ in the east, the Taliban have been battling it, mostly in the rural areas of Nangarhar – where IS-K has been particularly active – and in the cities affected by the group's campaign of terrorist attacks, primarily Kabul and Jalalabad. Information about the repression unleashed by the Taliban is sketchy. In Nangarhar in particular and, during September, in Kunar, the Taliban seem to have been rather indiscriminate in their repression. In Kunar, the governor appointed by the Emirate went as far as closing down all Salafi mosques and madrasas, causing a major backlash. The Taliban's leadership had to replace him and rescind his orders, and the repression seems to have become less indiscriminate since. In Nangarhar, there are claims that Taliban death squads are executing IS-K suspects without trials and on the basis of little, if any, evidence. To be sure, a lot of unclaimed killings of Salafis have been taking place, although the pace has slowed down in recent weeks.”

Gandhara, Two Killed, Four Wounded After Bombs Hit Kabul Shi'ite Neighborhood, 10 December, 2021

“The Taliban says two separate bomb explosions in a predominately Shi'ite neighborhood of the Afghan capital claimed the lives of two civilians and wounded four others.

Two were killed and three others wounded when a car bomb exploded in the Dasht-e Barchi area of western Kabul, the Taliban's Interior Ministry spokesman, Sayed Khosti, told RFE/RL on December 10.

A woman sustained injuries in another bomb blast in the same area, Khosti added.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blasts, which followed similar attacks in Kabul claimed by the local affiliate of the Islamic State extremist group, the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K).

Twin bombings in Dasht-e Barchi on November 17 that killed or wounded a total of seven people were claimed by IS-K.

IS-K is an enemy of the Taliban, which came back to power after toppling the Western-backed government in Kabul in mid-August.

Afghanistan's Shi'ite Hazara minority has been the target of repeated attacks by IS-K militants.

Hazara represent Afghanistan's third-largest ethnic group. They have faced long-term discrimination and persecution in predominantly Sunni Afghanistan.”

DW, Afghanistan: Deadly bomb blast in Shiite neighborhood in Kabul, 17 November 2021

“A bomb blast killed at least one person in a neighborhood of Kabul populated largely by people from the Hazara Shiite minority on Wednesday, the Taliban confirmed.

The explosion happened in the Dast-e-Barchi district. One civilian was killed and six were injured, Interior Ministry spokesperson Qari Sayeed Khosty said on Twitter. Other witnesses reported more casualties. [...] The so-called Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militant group claimed responsibility for the attack.”

Khaama Press, Taliban arrests 11 Daesh suspects in central Daikundi province, 16 November 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Provincial officials in central Daikundi province said that their intelligence personnel arrested 11 people who are suspected to be ISIS-K affiliates.

The officials said that the suspects are from Helmand, Ghazni, and Urozgan provinces but added that further investigations have been started.

The Taliban have also seized weapons with the suspects.

It comes a day after the Taliban fighters in large-scale operations in four districts of Kandahar province arrested ten ISIS-K affiliates and killed three more.

Provincial officials of Kandahar province said that four hideouts of the terror group have been eliminated in the province.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan branch (ISIS-K) is now the only terror group that operates against the Taliban in Afghanistan and inflicts casualties on civilians people mainly the Shi ‘ite Muslims.”

[The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) published on 15th November 2021 a *Brief compilation on recent developments and key actors in Afghanistan*, which you may wish to consult. The compilation covers: *Developments in 2021, The Taliban, Taliban-associated groups (Haqqani Network; Al Qaeda); Islamic State - Khorasan Province; National Resistance Front (NRF)*]

Khaama Press, Taliban conducts large-scale operations against ISIS-K in Kandahar province, 15 November 2021

“Provincial officials in southern Kandahar province said that the Taliban officials conducted large-scale operations against ISIS-K fighters in four districts of Kandahar province on Monday night, November 14.

It is the first time that the Taliban launched operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan branch in Kandahar province.

Local residents have said that the operations started Monday midnight and continued until early morning the following day and claimed that three civilians have also been killed during the operations.

Taliban’s provincial officials in Kandahar said that they killed three ISIS-K affiliates and arrested ten more but did not say anything about civilians.

In the meantime, it is rumored that an ISIS-K affiliate has blown his explosives in a room that killed the affiliate.

The provincial officials and interior ministry have not said anything about the casualties of the Taliban fighters.

The ISIS-K has recently escalated their attacks in Afghanistan and has lately claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on Saturday in Kabul that left three killed and six wounded.”

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Taliban leader warns of infiltrators, 4 November 2021

"The supreme leader of the Taliban, Haibatullah Akhunzada, has warned the group that there may be “unknown” entities among their ranks who are “working against the will of the government.”

Lawfare, The Taliban Haven’t Changed, But U.S. Policy Must, 31 October 2021

“When it comes to IS-K, the notion that the Taliban will be able to provide anything more than short-term, tactical gains against the group is optimistic. Although the Taliban may succeed in rooting out some IS-K cells in the next few months, the history and current trajectory of the Islamic State-Taliban rivalry suggests that a much longer, protracted war between the two organizations is likely if the Taliban are left alone to manage IS-K. Civilians will bear the brunt of the costs. Boosted by thousands of jailbroke fighters, new leadership, and a revamped messaging campaign that paints the Taliban as illegitimate puppets of the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

United States and the international community, IS-K recently embarked on a lethal campaign of attacks in its former stronghold of Nangarhar province to challenge Taliban rule. With likely support from Salafist sympathizers, veteran jihadists, younger Afghans and others, IS-K has already begun to implement the same method of insurgency as its namesake in Iraq and Syria, including the assassination of prominent members of the “moderate middle” in IS-K’s target recruiting pool in order to weaken its opponents.”

EurAsia.net, Event | Russia looks to Taliban to contain Islamic State in Afghanistan, 28 October 2021
"Moscow seems willing to tolerate Taliban rights abuses, if the movement can get the job done."

AVA Press, ISIS unable to threaten region, Taliban are way stronger: Taliban’s minister, 27 October 2021
“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has assured the region not to be threatened by ISIS-K from their soil and said that their fighters are way stronger and serious when it comes to suppressing the group.
Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Afghanistan’s acting minister of information and culture Khairullah said that they will eliminate not only -K but any group who wants to insecure the region.
On the other hand, US undersecretary of defense said that they suspect the ability of the Taliban in suppressing ISIS-K and .
Colin Kahl has said that the Taliban have relations with the Al Qaida terror group and that will make it difficult for the former to fight against the group.
Our intelligence assessment indicates that ISIS and Al Qaida are willing to conduct operations abroad including in the US. The assessments show that ISIS-K will be able to do so in six months while Al Qaida will gain the ability in upcoming 12 or 24 months.” Said Kahl.
The concerns over the appearance of ISIS-K come after the group conducted bloody attacks in Kandahar and Kunduz province that inflicted casualties to Shite worshippers.”

Gandhara News, Taliban Wages Deadly Crackdown On Afghan Salafists As War With IS-K Intensifies, 22 October 2021
“Since seizing power, the militant group has waged a deadly crackdown on Salafists, who accuse the Taliban of detaining and killing members of the community. They also allege that the Taliban has raided and closed down dozens of their mosques and madrasahs, or religious seminaries.
The Taliban’s clampdown on Salafists has coincided with its escalating war with rival Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militants, many of whom are Salafists. There are believed to be several hundred thousand Salafists in Afghanistan, mainly concentrated in the eastern provinces Fof Nangarhar, Kunar, and Nuristan. Salafists like Hakimullah say civilian members of the community are caught in the middle of the intensifying conflict between the two groups in eastern Afghanistan, an IS-K stronghold.”

Khaama Press, Taliban underrate Daesh, do not call it danger in Afghanistan, 17 October 2021
“Afghanistan’s acting foreign minister Amir Khan Motaqi during his visit to Turkey said that ISIS-K (Daesh) is not a threat in Afghanistan and the group does not have training centers in the country.”

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), Will Afghanistan’s powerful neighbours engage the Taliban?, 16 October 2021
“The withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan is inevitably leaving a political vacuum in South and Central Asia. The question that many are asking is who will step in to fill it. Afghanistan’s immediate neighbours – Pakistan, Iran and China – all have special interests in the country that they are likely to pursue with renewed vigour.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghan Voice Agency, Blasts Hit Mosque in Kandahar, 32 Killed, 16 October 2021

"A bombing attack occurred at Imam Bargah Fatimeyah mosque in the southern province of Kandahar on Friday."

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), Deadly explosion hits Shia mosque in Afghanistan's Kandahar, 15 October 2021

"ISIS-K claims responsibility for attack that killed at least 47 people inside a mosque in southern city during Friday prayers."

[The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) published on 5th October 2021 a *Brief compilation on recent developments and key actors in Afghanistan*, which you may wish to consult. The compilation covers: *Developments in 2021, The Taliban, Taliban-associated groups (Haqqani Network; Al Qaeda); Islamic State - Khorasan Province; National Resistance Front (NRF)*]

Ariana News, IEA says Daesh is not a threat to Afghanistan's security, 3 October 2021

"MoI officials also said that Daesh claims responsibility for attacks in Afghanistan that are carried out by criminals.

"Daesh is not a serious threat to Afghanistan's security, and they (Daesh) are not able to threaten Afghanistan's security," said Saeed Khosti, spokesman for the MoI.

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials say that Daesh has no active presence in the country and falsely claim responsibility for attacks.[...]

This comes after IEA forces raided a Daesh (ISIS-K) hideout north of Kabul on Friday, killing and arresting an unspecified number of militants, an IEA spokesman said.

IEA spokesman Bilal Karimi told The Associated Press that Friday's raid took place in the city of Charikar in Parwan province. He did not provide more details.

The raid followed an arrest by the IEA of two Daesh members linked to a roadside bombing that targeted an IEA vehicle in the city on Friday, wounding four members. The two were questioned and the information they provided helped the IEA identify the hideout, Karimi said."

The Guardian, Civilians killed in deadliest Kabul attack since US withdrawal, 3 October 2021

"IS militants have stepped up attacks against the Taliban since their mid-August takeover, signalling a widening conflict between them. IS maintains a strong presence in the eastern province of Nangarhar, where it has claimed responsibility for several killings in the provincial capital of Jalalabad. [...]

Attacks in Kabul have so far been rare, but in recent weeks IS has shown signs it is expanding its footprint beyond the east and closer toward the capital. On Friday Taliban fighters raided an IS hideout just north of Kabul in Parwan province. The raid came after an IS roadside bomb wounded four Taliban fighters in the area."

Long War Journal, Testimony: The Biden's Administration policy in Afghanistan, 30 September 2021

"Al-Qaeda retained a significant footprint in Afghanistan throughout the war. At FDD's *Long War Journal*, my colleague Bill Roggio and I have documented this footprint for more than a dozen years. Other sources have recently recognized al-Qaeda's current network inside the country. For example, a team of experts working for the UN Security Council reported earlier this year that al-Qaeda has an active presence in at least 15 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.² This assessment is broadly consistent with al-Qaeda's own reporting, via its Arabic newsletter *Thabat*, as well as with reporting by other sources.³ The U.S. Treasury Department warned in January that al-Qaeda has been "gaining strength in Afghanistan while continuing

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to operate with the Taliban under the Taliban's protection." Al-Qaeda has a "network of mentors and advisers who are embedded with the Taliban, providing advice, guidance, and financial support."⁴ Much of al-Qaeda's focus inside Afghanistan has been on winning the war. Now that the war has been won, al-Qaeda's personnel in Afghanistan will have the resources to devote to other missions, both throughout the region and globally. [...]

ISKP continues to pose a threat throughout the region. ISKP's network extends into Pakistan, where it has conducted a string of attacks. The group has also demonstrated some capability to strike in the Central Asian nations. In July 2018, a team of Islamic State terrorists ran over American and European cyclists in Tajikistan, killing four people.⁵ ISKP has also recruited members from throughout Central Asia who could potentially return to their home countries to conduct attacks.

ISKP poses some degree of threat outside of Central and South Asia as well. In the summer of 2016, three men allegedly conspired to carry out terrorist attacks in New York City on behalf of the Islamic State.⁶ American investigators discovered that the trio had at least some contact with ISKP's jihadists. In April 2020, German authorities broke up a cell of four Tajik nationals who were allegedly preparing to attack U.S. and NATO military facilities.⁷ Given ISKP's open hostility to the United States, as demonstrated by the August 26 suicide bombing outside the airport in Kabul, military and intelligence officials will have to continue monitoring the group.

2 U.N. Security Council, "Twelfth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2557 (2020) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace stability and security of Afghanistan," April 28, 2021, page 12. (<https://www.undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/2021/486>)

3 Bill Roggio, "Analysis: Al Qaeda continues to operate throughout Afghanistan," *FDD's Long War Journal*, April 8, 2021. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/04/analysis-al-qaeda-continues-to-operate-throughout-afghanistan.php>)

4 U.S. Department of the Treasury, Memorandum for Department of Defense Lead Inspector General, "Operation Inherent Resolve - Summary of Work Performed by the Department of the Treasury Related to Terrorist Financing, ISIS, and Anti-Money Laundering for First Quarter Fiscal Year 2021," January 4, 2021.

(<https://oig.treasury.gov/sites/oig/files/2021-01/OIG-CA-21-012.pdf>)

5 Thomas Joscelyn, "Assailants in Tajikistan swore allegiance to Baghdadi before attack," *FDD's Long War Journal*, July 31, 2018. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/07/assailants-in-tajikistan-swore-allegiance-to-baghdadi-before-attack.php>)

6 U.S. Department of Justice, Press Release, "Charges Unsealed Against Three Men for Plotting to Carry out Terrorist Attacks in New York City for ISIS in the Summer of 2016," October 6, 2017.

(<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/charges-unsealed-against-three-men-plotting-carry-out-terrorist-attacks-new-york-city-isis>)

7 Nodirbek Soliev, "The April 2020 Islamic State Terror Plot Against U.S. and NATO Military Bases in Germany: The Tajik Connection," *CTC Sentinel*, January 2021, Volume 14, Issue 1. (<https://ctc.usma.edu/the-april-2020-islamic-state-terror-plot-against-u-s-and-nato-military-bases-in-germany-the-tajik-connection>)

Long War Journal, [Islamic State bombs Taliban convoys in eastern Afghanistan](#), 20 September 2021

"The Islamic State's Khorasan Province has claimed responsibility for a series of bombings that targeted Taliban convoys throughout the city of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. The group claims that

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

35 Taliban members were killed or wounded in the attacks, though the casualty figures could not be independently verified. [...]

The so-called caliphate's men previously controlled a number of districts in Nangarhar. The Islamic State even seized ground in the Tora Bora Mountains, which were once home to Osama bin Laden.

As of early 2016, the Islamic State's men reportedly controlled 10 districts in Nangarhar. However, their safe haven shrunk in the months that followed. They lost their turf after battling the U.S. military, security forces for the now deposed Afghan government, as well as rival jihadists from the Taliban and al Qaeda. Even after losing its turf, the Islamic State retained a terror network in Nangarhar. That network received a new influx of personnel in recent months, as thousands of jihadists were freed from Afghanistan's jails, including in Jalalabad."

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

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

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

General security situation

UNAMA, Briefing By Acting Special Representative Markus Potzel To The Security Council, 29 August 2022

"The following is the as-delivered transcript of the briefing by the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Markus Potzel, to the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan today. The United Nations has remained exceptionally focused on addressing humanitarian and human needs in Afghanistan which continue to be significant. First, the current regime in Afghanistan has not been recognized by any member of the international community because the Taliban need to adhere to their international obligations. These include efforts to facilitate access to assets belonging to the Afghan central bank for the benefit of the Afghan people. In addition to international assistance that supports basic human needs. "Islam and Afghan traditions," have further curtailed fundamental human rights and freedoms, especially for women and girls (denies girls the full right to education). "Human Rights in Afghanistan" covering the ten-month period since the Taliban takeover till 15 June this year. It reflects the human rights priorities set out in UNAMA's mandate given by this Council. UNAMA documented human rights violations targeting specific groups such as former government officials and members of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, individuals accused of affiliation with ISIL-K and the National Resistance Front, civil society, media, and women, including those accused of so-called 'moral' crimes. Arbitrary arrests of people as they carry out their daily lives. Attacks against human rights defenders, the media violation. Afghanistan remains significantly underdeveloped, vulnerable, and in need of international assistance."

Pajhwok, Casualties in Afghanistan down by 73pc last week, 28 August 2022

"Casualties

Fifteen individuals were killed and seven others injured in different violent incidents in the country last

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

week.

Three civilians and an individual carrying explosives were killed in a blast in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province. Two robbers were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces last week, according to reports.

In Badghis, a man killed his neighbour before the murderer was gunned down during an exchange of fire with security forces.

Security force killed two robbers in Kabul during a clash, says a report.

In Faryab, a man killed his sister along with her lover over their alleged illicit relationship. In Farah, a woman killed his father-in-law and in Badghis another woman shot dead her husband. During investigations, the woman insisted she had killed her husband unintentionally.

According to reports, a woman axed her niece to death and wounded her husband. A militant commander was killed in Samangan while two people were gunned down in Paktia over a land dispute.

Reports said Iranian security forces killed an Afghan on the border between the two nations.

The casualty figures were obtained from reports available to Pajhwok Afghan News. However, there is a possibility of reports regarding some violent incidents being missed or sources not providing exact casualty figures."

Aljazeera, Taliban accuses Pakistan of allowing US drones in Afghan airspace, 28 August 2022

"The Taliban's acting defence minister has said Pakistan allowed American drones to use its airspace to access Afghanistan, a charge Pakistan has recently denied following a US air strike in Kabul.

Acting Minister of Defence Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob told reporters at a news conference in Kabul on Sunday that American drones have been entering Afghanistan via Pakistan."

International Centre on Counter-Terrorism, One Year of Taliban Rule in Afghanistan: A Predictable Disaster, 26 August 2022

"One year ago, the Taliban established themselves as the sole rulers of Afghanistan. Unsurprisingly, the weeks after the takeover saw a flurry of commentaries, op-eds and think pieces about what Afghanistan's future would hold. One thing that clearly stood out in these analyses was the pervasive sense of pessimism. While not all criticised the decision to leave per se, few observers believed it would do Afghanistan much good. Some feared the Taliban's brutal repression, while others questioned the group's ability to govern the country adequately, or expected that Afghanistan might become a safe haven for terrorists and criminal networks.

Now, a year on, this Perspective will assess the accuracy of five such predictions and consider whether things turned out as badly as many journalists, scholars and analysts believed they would. The predictions we will cover, pertain to the Taliban's repression, their openness to strike compromises about human rights with potential external donors, their ability to run the economy, the impact of the takeover on organised crime, and the impact on the terrorist threat. For each prediction, we will briefly outline the consensus and then, drawing on a year of extensive journalistic and government reporting on the situation, give an assessment of its accuracy. As each prediction covers a vital aspect of Taliban rule, the five assessments together give us an overview of how the situation in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan has developed. Sadly, this overall picture is quite bleak. The year since the takeover has brought what many have predicted, and little of it has been good.

The Taliban will impose a harsh rule domestically

The takeover of Kabul initially sparked fears that the repression and brutality seen during the 1990s could return. Initially, the Taliban made some efforts to appear a more moderate force than before, and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

proclaimed an amnesty for former government officials, and sought to reassure women that their rights would be protected.

Although the Taliban's promises were dismissed by many as a charm offensive, there were some reasons for hope. On the local level the Taliban in the past have been willing to accommodate the wishes of ordinary Afghans. They responded to discontent from the population by turning a blind eye to the home schooling of girls or to people owning a TV-set. They also set up complaint mechanisms for people who were victimised by the group's violent campaign, and later expanded its mandate to include complaints about grievances the Taliban caused during their civilian governance activities. Indeed, the Taliban have made compromises after the takeover as well. For example, in Herat, a lack of female staff forced Taliban officials responsible for enforcing gender segregation in universities to allow elderly male teachers to teach women.

But any hopes that instances like these might become the rule rather than the exception were dashed shortly after the Taliban took Kabul. One of their first orders of business was the removal of women from public life, which included an immediate ban on education for girls older than eleven, and the removal of billboards with pictures of women. Women's rights have continued to be severely restricted since, and despite the Taliban's assurances the girls could resume education, they still refuse to allow girls over eleven years old to go to school.

The Taliban proved similarly unreliable in their treatment of former government officials. Despite the group's aforementioned promises of an amnesty, a recently released UN report reveals widespread killings, detentions, and human rights abuses inflicted upon former government officials. The report asserts that journalists and former members of the security forces are subjected to this form of repression as well.

After the fall of Kabul, some were hoping for a somewhat more democratic political structure as the best possible outcome. The reality, unfortunately, is that those who feared a reign of terror have largely been proven right. Admittedly, there is some regional variation, as local mullahs have been allowed some autonomy in their regions. But while we should not minimise what that means to ordinary people trying to live their lives, it does little to change the overall picture: the evidence of human rights abuses is piling up and the Taliban's promises to the contrary have been empty words.

The Taliban will not be open to compromises with Western powers and international organisations. Noting Afghanistan's poorly functioning economy, some observers believed Western countries and international organisations, such as the World Bank, would have leverage over the Taliban after the takeover. They believed (or hoped) the Taliban would be in need of international legitimacy, which would open up the possibility of making humanitarian aid and economic assistance conditional on respect for human rights. Others were sceptical, arguing that the Taliban have other options and do not depend on Western aid. It is this latter position that turned out to be much more accurate, as the Taliban's preferred partners are countries that will not make their ties conditional on concessions over human rights.

[...]

The Taliban will be unable to run the economy

The Taliban did not seize power in a flourishing country. Unemployment, malnutrition, and stalling trade were already major problems in August 2021. Against this background, several observers expressed doubts that a group of former guerrilla fighters with no institutional economic experience, and whose experience in service provision is limited to the local level, would be up to the task of getting the Afghan economy up and running.

[...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Part of the problem is that the Taliban's post-takeover cabinet consists of religious hardliners from the group's inner circle, none of whom have economic or formal governance expertise. Remarkably, the Taliban seem to understand they have a problem. They reached out to several officials from the former government to solicit their help in getting the economy back on track. But while some high-profile former government officials have recently returned to the country and were granted immunity, the Taliban have not indicated that they will be allowed to participate in governance.

Moreover, the group is displaying a preference for policies that serve their own political and religious purposes rather than the well-being of the country. One telling example is the ban that keeps women from holding jobs. This is estimated to cost Afghanistan five percent of its annual GDP, but the Taliban are upholding it nonetheless. They are doing so out of conviction, but possibly also out of fear of losing members to Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K), the ISIS branch in Afghanistan that is presenting itself to their (and the Taliban's) potential support base as the more credible and religiously pure alternative to the Taliban.

Equally damaging to the economy, the Taliban's ban on poppy cultivation is depriving many Afghan farmers of their only remaining opportunity to make a living. Meanwhile, the Taliban's allies are largely exempt from the ban, and now have the market to themselves. With the Taliban engaging in such self-serving practices, they may not only be unable, but also unwilling to run the Afghan economy in a competent manner.

The takeover will lead to an increase in organised crime

Shortly after the fall of Kabul, several observers predicted a spike in organised crime. One immediate concern related to organised crime and the drug trade. With Afghanistan responsible for over 80 percent of the world's opium production, UN and US officials understandably feared that a Taliban takeover could lead to a boom in production. Another concern was that the Taliban's capture of billions of dollars of government arms and military equipment would turn Afghanistan into a regional arms bazaar, fuelling conflicts and terrorism in neighbouring countries.

A year later, it is fair to say that these fears have materialised.

[...]

The takeover will increase the terrorist threat

One of the most serious concerns voiced by Western observers was that under the Taliban, Afghanistan would become a haven for transnational terrorist groups who could use the country as a base to plan and commit terrorist attacks in Europe and North America. But while many raised the possibility, there was no consensus as to how realistic such concerns were. For some, the transnational threat appeared relatively low, while others believed the coalition's withdrawal made an attack much more likely.

A year on, a transnational attack in the West from Afghanistan appears unlikely, but there are certainly reasons for concern. A UN intelligence report from June 2022 concluded that al-Qaeda has established a foothold in the country and has an "increased freedom of action." The report also warned that Afghanistan could once again become a base for international attacks. The drone strike that killed Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul seemed to prove these points. It appears the Taliban allowed the al-Qaeda-chief to live in Afghanistan's capital, where he had become noticeably more active in releasing videos. [...] Looking back at a year of Taliban rule, it is hard to escape the conclusion that many of the concerns that analysts and policy makers expressed shortly after the takeover have proven to be legitimate. The Taliban are brutally repressing the Afghan population, are running the economy into the ground, and are destabilising the region through their involvement in (or acquiescence towards) drugs and arms trafficking. In addition, they have turned Afghanistan into a safe haven for all kinds of jihadist groups. A disconcerting pattern that runs through all predictions reviewed above is the Taliban's unwillingness or inability to do anything

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to improve matters.”

The Khaama Press News Agency, Taliban conduct extensive house-to-house searches in Northern Afghanistan, 25 August 2022

“House-to-house searches have reportedly been resumed by the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh in northern Afghanistan, according to local sources. These searches are being conducted to find suspected criminals, combat ISIS, and collect state and illegal weapons. According to sources, this round of house-to-house efforts began on Thursday morning, August 25, in Mazar-e-Sharif’s police district 3.

The Taliban’s 209th Al-Fath Corps and the Intelligence Directorate are working together to conduct house-to-house searches in Mazar-e-Sharif, according to Asif Waziri, the spokesman for the Taliban office of the chief of police in Balkh province.

According to the Taliban official, Asif Waziri, the Taliban forces are conducting door-to-door searches in an effort to combat ISIS, obtain state weapons and collect undocumented guns, as well as track down suspected criminals.”

[...] “The resumption of searches comes at a time when a powerful explosion on Wednesday in Mazar-e-Sharif injured at least 3 civilians, according to Taliban officials.”

EUAA, Afghanistan Security Situation COI Report, August 2022

“According to UN figures, between 19 August 2021 and 31 December 2021, there were 985 security incidents recorded across the country, representing a 91 % decrease compared to the same period in 2020. During this period, 148 armed clashes were registered, signifying a decrease by 98 %; air strikes decreased by 99 % with three recorded incidents, detonations of improvised explosive devices decreased by 91 % with 101 recorded incidents and targeted killings decreased by 51 % with 207 recorded incidents. There was, however, an increase in other security incidents such as crime, due to the ‘rapid deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation.’ 474 From early 2022 to the end of May 2022 security incidents and civilian casualties continued to decrease, when compared to the same period in 2021. According to UN figures, 2 105 security incidents were recorded in the period between 1 January 2022 and 21 May 2022, including 164 armed clashes, 5 air strikes, 123 IED explosions, and 122 assassinations. [...] Despite the overall decline in security incidents, SIGAR noted in January 2022 that significant levels of violence persisted, among which it listed mass-casualty attacks perpetrated by ISKP, attacks on civilians carried out by Taliban forces and others, as well as occasional skirmishes mounted by anti-Taliban insurgents. 477 According to an anonymous international NGO based in Kabul, consulted by the Swedish Migration Agency’s Unit for Migration Analysis in March 2022, the conflict-related violence at the time consisted of ‘asymmetrical attacks’, and not drawn out battles between different actors. [...] Contrary to the generally low conflict level, an anonymous international analyst based in Afghanistan, also consulted by the Swedish Unit for Migration Analysis in March 2022, stated that the number of murders and targeted attacks had increased in 2022. The same source stated that the motives behind these attacks had become increasingly difficult to understand. Individuals were previously targeted due to their connections to the former government according to the source, who further stated that murders at the time of the interview took place without such clear connections or apparent reasons. [...] In their joint report of April 2022, ACLED and APW noted an increase in Taliban infighting, having recorded 33 incidents from September 2021 to March 2022 (one third of these incidents recorded in January 2022 alone), where Taliban forces clashed with each other. Such clashes were registered for example in the provinces of Faryab and Samangan and were in part a result of ethnic tensions within Taliban ranks.482 Further armed clashes

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

between Taliban forces were reported in Bamyān in November 2021⁴⁸³ and June 2022⁴⁸⁴ and in Takhar Province in April 2022⁴⁸⁵ and June 2022.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Several sources reported an overall decrease in violent incidents compared to the time before the Taliban takeover in mid-August 2021. ⁴⁸⁸ The reduction of violence in the first months following the Taliban takeover was reportedly more noticeable in rural areas, where much of the previous conflict between Taliban and state forces had been carried out.⁴⁸⁹ [...] From the end of January 2022 to the end of May 2022, the UN Secretary-General noted that the security situation in the country was becoming 'increasingly fragile' due to ISKP and anti-Taliban armed groups intensifying their attacks.⁴⁹⁰ The UN Secretary-General reported that from September 2021 to the end of January 2022, 'the eastern, central, southern and western regions accounted for 75 per cent of all recorded incidents, with Nangarhar, Kabul, Kunar and Kandahar the most conflict-affected provinces'.⁴⁹¹ From February to the end of May 2022, Herat, Nangarhar, Kabul, and Kandahar provinces were reported to be the provinces with most recorded security incidents.⁴⁹² [...] In early 2022, several anti-Taliban opposition groups announced their intent to start a spring offensive, prompting the Taliban to move military reinforcements to northern Afghanistan and conducting military exercises there.⁵⁰⁷ In April 2022, armed resistance to the Taliban was said to be predominantly present in the Panjsher Valley and Andarab District of Baghlan Province⁵⁰⁸, but also to have spread to Kapisa, Parwan, Badakhshan, Takhar, Sar-e Pul, Ghor, and Jawzjan provinces as well as north of Kabul City.⁵⁰⁹ In the same month, the Taliban launched operations against NRF in Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces, killing several NRF members.⁵¹⁰ In May 2022, the Taliban reportedly sent a large number of reinforcements to Panjsher in order to stave off NRF attacks in the area.⁵¹¹ During the first months of 2022, UNAMA documented at least 10 cases of extrajudicial killings of individuals accused of NRF-affiliation by the de facto authorities, representing a marked increase in cases compared to the preceding UN reporting period.⁵¹² Referring to information provided by UNAMA, the UN Secretary-General as of mid-June 2022 noted the existence of at least a dozen anti-Taliban groups operating in 18 provinces, among them most visibly NRF and AFF in Panjsher and Baghlan provinces. There were reports of further clashes and attacks in the north (Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz and Baghlan provinces), the centre (Kapisa, Parwan and Kabul provinces), the south-east (Khost Province) as well as the south (Kandahar Province). However, UNAMA had not been able to verify most attack claims and stated that the capabilities and membership of these groups was difficult to assess.⁵¹³ Daykundi Province was reported to be the scene of tensions resulting from competition over resources between Pashtun populations and Hazara, leading to the displacement of Hazara residents in September and October 2021.⁵¹⁴ According to Human Rights Watch, at least 2 800 Hazaras were evicted by Taliban in 15 villages in Daykundi and neighbouring Uruzgan provinces in September 2021. Even though Taliban officials in Kabul later retracted eviction orders for some villages, the inhabitants had still not returned by 20 October 2021.⁵¹⁵ In the spring of 2022, the encroachment of armed Kuchi nomads on and the destruction of farmland of local Hazaras was reported in Shahrestan and Khedir districts.⁵¹⁶

SECURITY INCIDENTS [...]

In the period between 15 August 2021 and 15 June 2022, UNAMA recorded 2 106 civilian casualties (700 killed and 1 406 injured), including 441 children (159 killed and 282 injured), which were caused predominantly by ISKP-attributed IED attacks and unexploded ordnance (UXO).⁵¹⁸ According to ACLED, the highest number of security incidents were recorded in provinces of Kabul (226), Panjsher (181), Baghlan (172), Nangarhar (163), and Takhar (104 security incidents). In the provinces of Parwan, Kunar, Kandahar, Badakhshan, Kapisa, Balkh, and Helmand, ACLED recorded between 49 and 82 security incidents.⁵²¹ In the reference period, ACLED recorded 571 incidents of violence against civilians for which

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

it recorded a total of 584 fatalities.⁵³⁴ Between January and May 2022, UNAMA documented at least 40 extrajudicial killings, and at least 30 cases of torture and ill-treatment as well as at least 80 cases of arbitrary arrest targeting individuals being accused of affiliation with ISKP or NRF.⁵³⁵

Battles/armed clashes

According to ACLED, 777 of 1 679 security incidents in the country were coded as 'armed clashes', the most affected provinces being Panjsher (136), Baghlan (116), Nangarhar (67), Parwan (60), Takhar (55), Kabul (51 incidents).⁵³⁶

[...] Explosions/remote violence

According to ACLED figures, 331 of 1 679 security incidents in the country were coded as 'explosions/remote violence', the most affected provinces being Kabul Province (72), Nangarhar (40), Kunar (35), Helmand (20), and Panjsher (20 security incidents). In 254 of these incidents, remote explosives, landmines or IEDs were used, in 20 incidents grenades and in 5 incidents suicide bombs.⁵⁴⁴

[...] Targeted killings

Shortly after the Taliban took over government control in August 2021, they announced a general amnesty for all officials of the previous government, urging them to return to work.⁵⁷² They also declared persons who had served in the military sector to be included in this amnesty.⁵⁷³ However, UNAMA/UN OHCHR reported to have received credible allegations of more than 130 killings targeting persons working for the former government, former ANDSF personnel or their family members between mid-August 2021 and February 2022. Of these cases 'around 100 were extrajudicial killings attributed to the de facto authorities or their affiliates'.⁵⁷⁴ In the period between 15 August 2021 and June 2022, UNAMA recorded 160 extrajudicial killings, including 10 instances where women were killed, by the de facto authorities across the country.⁵⁷⁵

P70 (d) Arbitrary arrests

On 21 March 2022, AI reported that Taliban authorities had arbitrarily arrested, unlawfully detained or enabled the forceful disappearance of over 60 people, including children, in January and February 2022 in Afghanistan. According to AI, due to the limitations on media imposed by the Taliban, the number could be higher.

(e) Kidnappings

A source interviewed by DIS for the June 2022 report noted that business owners and their children were a frequent target of kidnappers.⁵⁹⁰ With reference to local media reports, a Foreign Policy (FP) article mentioned that more than 40 businessmen were kidnapped in Balkh Province and other regions in the two months that followed the Taliban takeover. FP elaborated that other sources gave higher numbers and that, due to the absence of a functioning bureaucracy, official statistics were very limited.⁵⁹

P70 (f) Explosive remnants of war

In April 2022, UNICEF reported that, since the Taliban takeover, 301 children had either been killed or injured by ERW and landmines. The organisation expected a further rise of such incidents as civilians, due to the improved security situation, venture into areas that were previously inaccessible.⁵⁹⁴ UNAMA documented 51 deaths and 76 injuries due to ERW detonations between 1 January and the end of April 2022.⁵⁹⁵

[...]

[P71]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

3.3. Impact of violence on the civilian population

3.3.1. Civilian casualties

The UN Secretary-General in his report of January 2022 noted that the significant decrease in armed conflict after the Taliban takeover also led to a drastic reduction in civilian casualties resulting from battles on the ground as well as airstrikes. Civilian casualties continued to be reported resulting from IEDs as well as explosive remnants of war (ERW). 601

[P74] 3.3.2. Displacement and return

(a) Internal displacement

In 2021, IOM recorded 1 327 474 new IDPs, of whom around 823 033 (62 %) were displaced due to conflict and 504 440 (38 %) due to natural disasters. Two out of three IDPs were displaced within their home province.⁶¹⁵ The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), however, recorded approximately 723 000 cases of displacement due to fighting in 2021, and around 25 000 displacements due to natural disasters.⁶¹⁶ UNHCR recorded 789 590 conflict induced IDPs between the start of 2021 until mid-April 2022, as well as 791 000 IDP returns in 2021. ⁶¹⁷ IDMC stated that most conflict-induced displacements occurred between May and August 2021, and from September 2021 onwards, many of the newly displaced persons returned to their place of origin after the fighting had died down.⁶¹⁸

Tolo News, Blast in Mazar-e-Sharif Leaves Four People Injured, 24 August 2022

“The Balkh Security Command said that an explosion in Mazar-e-Sharif on Wednesday injured four people, including the perpetrator, who authorities said was carrying explosives when they detonated.”

“‘Today’s explosion occurred in Mazar-e-Sharif; four injured have been brought to the hospital; their conditions are good; one of the injured, who may have been carrying explosives, had his legs amputated,’ said Najib Tawana, director of Balkh Public Health.

According to witnesses, six people were injured.

No group has so far taken responsibility for the explosion.”

AVA, Explosion in Balkh province, 24 August 2022

“Six people were injured in an explosion in Balkh province, says residents of Mazar-e-Sharif. Najibullah Tawana, head of public health for Balkh, said the six people who were injured have been taken to Balkh’s hospital. Tawana reports that the wounded people are in stable condition, but said one victim lost his leg. The explosion took place at around 11:30 on Wednesday morning in the Darwaz-e- Balkh area in PD4 of Mazar-e-Sharif. However, Mohammad Asif Waziri, the spokesman for the security command for Balkh, said only one person was injured. He said the victim had been carrying the explosives at the time of the blast.”

Gandhara, Senior Clerics Caught In The Crossfire Of The Taliban's Intensifying War With IS-K, 24 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“As the Taliban intensifies its war against Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), religious clerics associated with the rival militant groups are being caught in the crossfire. IS-K militants have been blamed for the assassination of several pro-Taliban clerics in Afghanistan in recent weeks. The Taliban has also been accused of killing religious figures with alleged links to IS-K.”

“Many IS-K fighters are members of Afghanistan’s small Salafist community...

Since seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban has waged a brutal crackdown on Salafists, who are believed to number several hundred thousand and are mainly concentrated in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, and Nuristan. Salafists accuse the Taliban of detaining and killing members of the community, and raiding and closing their mosques and religious seminaries. The Taliban’s clampdown has coincided with its intensifying war with IS-K militants. Observers say the rising number of killings of rival Hanafi and Salafist clerics has recently become the main feature of the Taliban’s escalating war with IS-K militants.”

UNHCR, Operational Update: Afghanistan, 22 August 2022

“Over 700,000 conflict-related displacements have been jointly verified since the beginning of 2021 – 80 per cent of them women and children. Overall, 3.4 million people are estimated to be displaced internally countrywide due to conflict while more than 2 million are refugees in neighbouring countries. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), some 24.4 millions of Afghanistan’s estimated 42 million population will need humanitarian and protection assistance this year.

The situation was further compounded by the 5.9 magnitude earthquake that struck the Central Region of Afghanistan, on 22 June with four districts in Patika Province (Gayan, Barmala, Naka and Ziruk), as well as Spera district in Khost Province affected. Over 1,000 people were estimated to have been killed while nearly 3,000 people were reported injured. Following the earthquake, UNHCR and other agencies assessed the area, with findings of extensive damage to houses, absence of basic services such as water, education, health, electricity, access roads in the remote locations, and lack of viable livelihood opportunities.

In response, UNHCR, as part of the inter-agency effort, distributed 1,600 tents, non-food items and 1,500 dignity kits for vulnerable women and girls. The UNHCR response benefited a total of 12,700 affected individuals in Khost and Pakitka provinces. Further to the assessments, UNHCR and UNDP started undertaking a joint program to assist earthquake affected families in two Priority Areas of Return (PARR) districts – Spera in Khost and Barmal in Paktika – aimed at rebuilding lives and resilience by improving access to essential services.”

[...] “So far in 2022, UNHCR has provided 14,000 people with clean energy including distribution of solar equipment. The support ensures reliable lighting, facilitates home-based livelihood opportunities, children’s education, fostering safer environments, and mitigating against protection risks including gender-based violence.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, Terrorism Continues to Strike Afghanistan: Afghan Envoy to UN, 22 August 2022

“On the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, August 21, Naseer Ahmad Faiq, Chargé d’Affaires of Afghanistan Permanent Mission to the United Nations, stated that Afghanistan is still a victim of terrorism and that the people of Afghanistan suffer from the presence of terrorist organizations.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), The Cost of Victory: How the Taleban used IEDS to win the war, despite the misgivings of some, 21 August 2022

“[W]hatever protections the Taleban might have given to civilian populations in their heartlands fell away when it came to the cities. Suicide bombers targeting urban centres rarely appeared to try to spare civilians. The justification, as seen when speaking to Taleban in private discussion, was that they viewed the capital’s population, for example, as default supporters of the US and its allies’ war against them.”

UNAMA, Statement Attributable to the spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Afghanistan, 19 August 2022

“The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern over a series of explosions in Afghanistan that have killed and injured more than 250 people this month, including children. He strongly condemns the most recent attack on 17 August, at the Abu Bakar Mosque in Kabul city.

The Secretary-General extends his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a swift recovery to those injured. Any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. All Afghans have the right to live in peace and exercise their freedom of religion.” [Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General]

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 6-12 August 2022, 18 August 2022

“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, the Islamic State (IS) continued to target Shiite civilians in Kabul city in Afghanistan...In Afghanistan, IS continued a series of bomb attacks targeting Shiite civilians in Kabul last week, following a bomb attack on 5 August. At least two Shiite civilians were killed and dozens were wounded by an IS-planted bomb in the Pul-e-Sokhta area on 6 August, while five Shiite civilians were killed when their bus was hit by another bomb on 7 August. Later in the week, a prominent religious cleric and close supporter of the Taliban was also killed by IS at a seminary in Kabul city. ACLED’s Subnational Surge Tracker warned of increased violence in Kabul during the preceding four weeks.”

UN News, UN deplores deadly attack in Afghanistan, killing scores and injuring many others, 18 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“On Wednesday, news media cited police in reporting that a huge explosion ripped through the crowded mosque during evening prayers, injuring 33 people and killing another 21, including the mosque’s imam, Amir Muhammad Kabuli.

While the blast scene in Kabul has been sealed off, it remains unclear who was behind the attack.”

“This latest bombing in Kabul comes days after the suicide bombing assassination of Rahimullah Haqqani, a prominent cleric who supported the Taliban and was in favour of female education. The Da’esh terrorist network claimed responsibility for the attack.”

Gandhara, Police Say 21 Killed in Kabul Mosque Blast, 18 August 2022

“An explosion that ripped through a mosque packed with worshippers during evening prayers in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on August 17 killed 21 people, police say. Police spokesman Khalid Zadran said on August 18 that 33 people had been wounded in the blast.

Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed there were dead and wounded in the blast, but did not specify how many.

‘The murderers of civilians and perpetrators...will soon be punished for their crimes,’ he said on Twitter. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but the Islamic State local affiliate has stepped up attacks since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021 following the withdrawal of U.S.-led forces.”

The Guardian, Kabul mosque blast during evening prayers kills 21, say police, 18 August 2022

“A blast that tore through a Kabul mosque during evening prayers on Wednesday killed 21 people, police said, as the United Nations expressed concern over a growing number of civilian casualties from explosions.

The police spokesperson Khalid Zadran said another 33 people had been injured in the blast, which witnesses said shattered the windows of buildings near the mosque in a northern Kabul neighbourhood. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the explosion and authorities did not publicly assign blame.”

“However, several large attacks, some claimed by Islamic State, have taken place in urban centres in recent months.

The United Nations assistance mission to Afghanistan (Unama), in a series of tweets, condemned the blast and expressed concern over a “disturbing” series of explosions that have killed and wounded more than 250 people in recent weeks, the highest monthly number of civilian casualties in the past year.

‘With security deteriorating, the UN calls on the de facto Taliban authorities to take concrete steps to prevent all forms of terrorism in Afghanistan,’ Unama said.”

Tolo News, 21 Killed, 33 Wounded in Kabul Mosque Blast, 18 August 2022

“At least 21 people were killed and 33 others were wounded in a blast targeting a mosque in PD17 of Kabul city, the Kabul security department said. The blast occurred on Wednesday evening in Sadiq Akbar mosque when many worshippers were attending.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA, Mosque explosion in Kabul, 18 August 2022

“During evening prayers on Wednesday, a blast tore through a Kabul mosque, and 21 people killed. Police spokesperson Khalid Zadran said that another 33 people had been injured in the blast. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) say they are restoring security to the war-torn country, which has seen an overall drop in violence since they defeated a U.S.-backed government a year ago.”

Gandhara, Large Explosion Rocks Mosque In Kabul During Evening Prayers; Casualties Reported, 17 August 2022

“A large explosion rocked a mosque in the Afghan capital during evening prayers on August 17, witnesses and officials said [...]

Witnesses told Reuters the powerful explosion was heard in a northern Kabul neighborhood, shattering windows in nearby buildings. Ambulances rushed to the spot.

The Taliban intelligence official, speaking on condition of anonymity to Reuters, said the explosion occurred in a mosque among worshippers in the Khair Khana area of Kabul.

The imam of the mosque was among those killed and the toll could still rise, the source added.”

Khaama Press, Taliban ‘Disgruntled’ Commander Killed in Western Afghanistan, 17 August 2022

“Mawlawi Mahdi Mujahid, the Taliban “disgruntled” commander, was killed by Taliban border forces when he wanted to enter Iran through the province of Herat in western Afghanistan, according to a statement from the Taliban’s Ministry of Defense released on Wednesday. Mawlawi Mahdi Mujahid is referred to as a “rebel” in this statement. Mujahid had clashed with the Taliban multiple times after starting a dispute with the group in the Balkhab district of Sar-e-pol in northern Afghanistan.[...] Mawlawi Mahdi Mujahid embraced the Taliban 13 years ago, while foreign forces were stationed in Afghanistan; he played a key part in the collapse of the republican system in Afghanistan’s northern provinces. However, more than ten months after the Taliban assumed power, he began to criticize the Taliban group. According to reports, Mahdi Mujahid sought more Hazara participation in the Taliban government, but the Taliban leaders disregarded not just his demand, but also the views of the international community and internal political circles, in order to establish an inclusive government. Mawlawi Mujahid was the only Hazara Taliban commander to take up arms against the Taliban government.”

Al Jazeera, Death toll in Kabul mosque bombing rises to 21, 17 August 2022

“At least 21 people have been killed and 33 others were wounded after a bombing at a mosque in the Afghan capital, Kabul, during evening prayers on Wednesday, according to the police.[...] There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast and authorities did not publicly assign blame.[...] Despite the Taliban’s assertion that they have brought security to the nation, Afghanistan has seen regular attacks

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

by armed groups, many of them claimed by an ISIL affiliate known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K), in recent months.”

Deutsche Welle, Afghanistan: Kabul mosque hit by large explosion, 17 August 2022

“At least 21 people were killed and 33 more injured when a Kabul mosque was hit by a huge explosion on Wednesday evening. Kabul police chief Khalid Zadran confirmed an explosion inside a mosque in northern Kabul. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the explosion and said that “perpetrators of such crimes will soon be brought to justice and will be punished.” A Taliban intelligence official told Reuters news agency that as many as 35 people were wounded or killed, with the toll expected to rise.”

Government of Netherlands, An interview with our ambassadors to Afghanistan and Pakistan: one year after the fall of Kabul, 16 August 2022

TOLO News, Review of security developments in afghanistan over the past year, 16 August 2022

“Although ensuring security in Afghanistan is considered one of the Islamic Emirate's accomplishments over the past year, following August 15th, 2021, various provinces in the country had security incidents.

One of the largest security events of the year was the American airstrike in Kabul, along with attacks on mosques, explosive events, and other incidents.

“The security situation over the past year has really been better than prior years. However, this situation is not completely guaranteed,” said Hekmatullah Hekmat, military expert.

These are the deadly incidents from the previous year:

At least 180 people were killed and over 200 others were injured in the incident that took place at Kabul Airport on August 26, 2021, while American soldiers were still stationed there.

Over 50 people were killed and at least 150 injured in the attack that targeted a Shia mosque in Kunduz province on October 8, 2021.

The attack on the Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan National Military Hospital on November 2, 2021, killed at least seven people and injured more than 25 others.

On October 15, 2021, a blast in Kandahar province targeted a mosque, leaving 32 people dead and 70 others injured.

On April 9, 2022, an explosion that targeted the Khalifa Sahib Mosque in Kabul left more than 10 people dead and more than 25 others wounded.

According to a UNAMA report, at least 700 people died, and 1406 others were injured in Afghanistan during the 10 months the Islamic Emirate was in power.

Daesh has claimed responsibility for most of the past year’s attacks in Afghanistan.

One of the major events of the past year was the house-to-house search operations in Afghanistan, which the Islamic Emirate soldiers began on February 25, 2022, in Kabul and continued in all 34 provinces of the country.

Talking at a press conference in Kabul, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said house clearings were intended to catch criminals, some of whom were released from prison during the change of government.”

Chatham House, Afghanistan: One year of Taliban rule, 15 August 2022

“Since seizing power, the Taliban claim they have achieved full territorial control, established security and removed ‘islands of illegitimate power’. However, while physical security has improved by some measures

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

– aid agencies report enhanced access to some provinces – a significant rise in attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-KP) targeting Shia and other minorities is one of many reminders that Afghanistan is far from secure. In addition, targeted killings of high-profile Taliban supporters and members, some claimed by the IS-KP in suicide attacks mimicking Taliban tactics, underline the vicious nature of the ongoing conflict.”

CSIS, Reflections on the Fall of Kabul One Year Later, 15 August 2022

“Since the takeover, the Taliban has issued countless policies eliminating women’s rights, millions are now at risk of poverty, and active battles in parts of Afghanistan continue. Before Ashura, a religious celebration, 150 people were either killed or injured in attacks that ISIS claimed. Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed a few days later in Kabul, which is an indication that Taliban did not keep their promise of disassociating with al Qaeda and other military extremists.”

Bloomberg, Taliban’s rule batters Afghanistan year after us departure, 15 August 2022

“Terrorism and Violence

Islamic State continues to be one of the biggest threats to the Taliban, carrying out major strikes on crowded areas. Recent attacks include one targeting attendees of a cricket game and another aimed at Shias taking part in a religious ceremony in Kabul, killing and wounding tens of people.

[...]

On the domestic security front, while the UN says there was a significant reduction in armed violence between mid-August 2021 and mid-June 2022, the toll is still high. In that time the UN recorded 2,106 casualties, including 700 killed, with most of the violence carried out by Islamic State. And despite the Taliban declaring a general amnesty after the US left, the UN has reported 160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary detentions, 23 instances of incommunicado detentions and 56 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former government and military officials.

Freedom of Expression

After a blossoming of media outlets and free expression in the 20 years before the Taliban re-took power, the pendulum has swung back in the opposite direction, according to the UN.

More than 200 media outlets have ceased operations since last year, primarily due to financial difficulties, laying off over 7,000 media workers, according to Afghanistan’s Tolonews channel, citing the country’s federation of journalists.

Reporters and media staff are also increasingly the subject of human rights violations, the UN said in a July 20 report. That report highlighted 122 instances of journalists facing arbitrary arrest. In addition, six journalists were killed -- five by Islamic State affiliates.”

ACLEd, 10 Conflicts to Worry About in 2022: Afghanistan Mid-Year Update, 15 August 2022

“One year on since the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan has seen continued insecurity marked by fighting between the Taliban and anti-Taliban armed groups, attacks by the Islamic State (IS), and worsening civilian targeting. At the beginning of the year, ACLED assessed that civilians were at heightened risk for violence under Taliban rule, and this risk has grown during the first half of 2022 amid an uptick in attacks by Taliban forces, IS, and unidentified perpetrators. Moreover, the de facto Taliban government has continued to restrict personal freedoms, especially women’s rights (Human Rights Watch, 18 January 2022), while also increasing repression of media and civil society.”

“The National Resistance Front (NRF) has ramped up attacks on Taliban forces in 2022, with over 300 NRF-Taliban battles recorded by ACLED in the first six months of the year. The majority of clashes took place

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in the northeastern Baghlan and Panjshir provinces. NRF activity has also been recorded in western Herat and central Daykundi provinces for the first time this year. Fighting between the NRF and the Taliban has particularly risen in recent months, with activity peaking in May and remaining at heightened levels in June. The NRF reported seizing territory from the Taliban in Takhar and Panjshir provinces, while the Taliban has mobilized thousands of troops to northern Afghanistan to contain the NRF (Hasht e Subh, 8 June 2022). Since December 2021, the NRF has additionally increased rocket and shelling attacks targeting Taliban bases, while Taliban forces have attacked the NRF with air and drone strikes in Panjshir and Takhar.”

“At least nine other armed anti-Taliban¹ resistance groups have emerged in 2022, engaging in over 100 armed clashes with Taliban forces during the first half of the year. The most active of these groups has been the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF), which has engaged in at least 59 clashes with the Taliban since its formation in March 2022 (Twitter @AfgFreedomAFF, 11 March 2022). The National Liberation Front of Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Liberation Movement have both been involved in over a dozen armed clashes or remote explosive events. Notably, they have attacked Taliban forces in southern provinces like Kandahar, expanding the geographic scope of resistance against the Taliban. ACLED also records attacks by other new armed groups like the Watandost Front, which claims to have seized territory from the Taliban in Ghazni province in May (Hasht e Subh, 9 May 2022), and the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan, which has engaged in over a dozen clashes with the Taliban.”

“Meanwhile, Taliban infighting has increased in 2022, with nearly 60 events recorded during the first half of the year. ACLED records a monthly average of nearly 10 events of Taliban infighting in 2022, a rate nearly quadruple that of the period between the Taliban takeover last August and the end of 2021.”

“In line with ACLED’s expectations at the beginning of the year, civilians continue to bear the brunt of ongoing violence in 2022. Following the overall drop in political violence after the Taliban takeover in August 2021, which ended clashes between the Taliban and former Afghan military forces, violence targeting civilians began to increase steadily in October 2021, when at least 50 events were reported, and peaked in May 2022, when more than 110 events were reported. Taliban forces are directly responsible for approximately 59% of attacks targeting civilians reported during the first half of 2022. Former security forces are so far the most targeted group. Taliban forces have also detained, beaten, and killed civilians in the course of enforcing regulations based on the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic law, such as bans on music during social gatherings and shaving beards for men (Reuters, 31 August 2021; RFE/RL, 6 October 2021). Additionally, in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces, newly mobilized Taliban forces have forcibly evicted residents and used their houses as military bases. Civilians accused of having links to the NRF have been detained, tortured, or killed (BBC, 16 May 2022).”

“Women are especially affected by new Taliban restrictions. Within the past year, government decrees have banned women from traveling without male company, have mandated full-body coverings in public, and have closed secondary schools for girls (VOA, 12 April 2022; The Guardian, 7 May 2022). These rules triggered over 50 women-led protest events during the first six months of the year. ACLED also records approximately 30 incidents where women were directly targeted by the Taliban during this period, as well as another dozen attributed to unidentified groups. These events include unknown perpetrators beheading women, the arrest and disappearance of civil society activists, and at least two cases of alleged rape by Taliban officials.”

“Perpetrators of violence targeting civilians are often unidentified: a third of all incidents in 2022 were committed by unknown actors. Targets of these attacks included journalists, civil society activists, and former security personnel. Half of these events were explosive attacks. Six of these targeted Muslim

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

worshippers, killing over 100 people. On 29 April, unknown perpetrators carried out the deadliest attack of the year so far, targeting Sunni Sufis in Kabul city in an explosion that killed at least 50 people. The attack came ahead of the Muslim holiday Eid Al Fitr, during which IS targeted Shiite Muslims with explosives in Kabul and Kunduz provinces. IS has also engaged in extensive violence targeting civilians, launching more than 20 attacks during the first half of 2022. Approximately 50% targeted Hazara and Shiite Muslim groups, killing over 60 people.”

Global Protection Cluster, Protection Analysis Update - Q1 2022, 14 August 2022

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘under Taliban rule, Afghans are killing themselves in epidemic proportion’, 14 August 2022

“Today marks the three hundred fifty sixth day in which a country, in the 21 century, does not permit its girls to attend school. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that after August 2021 Afghans and in particular women and girls lost most of their human rights. Women are omitted from leadership positions, and almost all the government bodies have and are continuously firing women from their jobs. In many cases Taliban had asked women to send their “man of the household” to work instead of themselves.” “Millions have lost their jobs, and are dealing with the worst financial crisis of their precious lives...For the last year, as per HRW’s report “almost 90 percent of the country faces food insecurity”. The country’s private sector has moreover turned to a “Mafia like” entity. Wheat, gas and almost anything that matters is made exclusively for certain companies and individuals, who manipulate the market at their will. The Taliban distort market competition for the mafia, in return they provide them with free gas.” Free speech is absolutely non-existent. Aside from JURIST, only two Afghan-driven news outlets [i.e. Afghanistan International and the “8 am” newspaper], the latter operating outside Afghanistan, have been able to publish any news against the Taliban. The past year has been the worst year for journalists. Many of them got imprisoned, severely beaten, tortured and killed. The Taliban in recent months of their first year of governing decreed that any single criticism would render the offending individual an enemy of the state. They have officially banned a free press and. frankly. any right to think against them.” ‘Thousands died during the last year. In Panjsher, Badakhshan, Takhar and Baghlan provinces, the Taliban broke into homes of civilians and killed them, claiming connection with or support of the NRF. The Taliban burned and killed a whole district—Balkhab—when a Hazara leader of defied their orders...Moreover, a systematic genocide of Shia people and the Hazara ethnic group is ongoing in Afghanistan by ISS-K. Mostly the Hazara minority has been targeted by the ISS, in their mosques. and where they can find a mass number in Kabul.” No shock would come to any Afghan when they read a recent report by TOLO News on suicide rates in Afghanistan. TOLO has found that under Taliban rule, Afghans are killing themselves in epidemic proportion – 27 have killed themselves in just two month. TOLO has also found that in the course of six months 630 attempts of suicide were recorded in Herat province alone...As for the incentives, the main cause of suicide in men are financial crises. Affording food, water, electricity and rent is now more than an impossible task. The main cause of suicide in girls are child marriages and forced marriages in cases of adult females. Not having access to education, social restriction and family pressure are other reasons for high suicide rates among girls.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, 'I was a policewoman. Now I beg in the streets': life for afghan women one year after the Taliban took over, 14 August 2022

"Hijab order

Samana,

Kabul

I was walking home alone when I turned down a deserted alley and found two Taliban with guns over their shoulders. They shouted I was a prostitute because I was unveiled, and demanded to know why I wasn't wearing the hijab. They pointed their guns in my face, and one of them had his finger on the trigger. I lowered my head and said: "It won't happen again." When I got home, I sat and cried for an hour. I said to myself: this is a warning for what is coming next. Since then, I have fallen into a deep depression. I can't bear to look at all my colourful clothes in my closet as they remind me of everything I have lost.

Zahra,

west

Kabul

After the hijab order was announced, I was caught by Taliban fighters. They asked why I was not wearing the hijab, and although I have no intention of following their orders, I apologised and thought they would let me go. But they visited my home and told my family the next time I was caught in public uncovered I would be arrested. Since then, my father has rarely allowed me or my sisters to leave the house, and says we can't go to university. Even my brothers now know what I wear and where I go at all times.

Travel restrictions

Zarlasht,

Kabul

In June, I was travelling with my brother and we were stopped at a checkpoint by Taliban fighters. Firstly, they questioned us separately to understand if we were related to each other, then they asked for our national ID cards. When my brother said we didn't carry our ID cards with us, they got angry and one of them hit him with a rifle and was about to fire. We were made to sit there for two hours, and then we had to call our families to bring ID cards so we could return home. Since then, I do not dare to leave the house.

University students

Sabira, Bamyān

province

Even though it is not mandatory we are being forced to wear the black hijab to be allowed to enter university. Once we're inside, women are under constant surveillance. There are hijab notices on the doors and walls. I never imagined that one day, in Bamyān, all female students would be forced to live like this. I can't believe what life is turning into here.

Islamic State attacks

Abassi,

west

Kabul

My friend and I were chatting on the bus on the way to work in the Hazara Shia neighbourhood of west Kabul when suddenly the world around us exploded. We found ourselves in the middle of carnage. Since the Taliban took control, security has deteriorated and our bus had been bombed by IS militants. We later found out that many people were killed. I was wounded in my leg and chest, and my friend in her right leg. When the bomb went off, everything changed for me. After the Taliban took over, things were hard but I continued my work and was determined to live bravely. Now, after the attack, I live in constant fear. The pain of my injuries has been excruciating. I've gone through five surgeries and can't go to the bathroom or dress myself without help. But the psychological wounds are also deep. I have to pass the place where the bomb exploded to get to my doctor appointments, and every time I feel the vehicle shaking, the heat of the explosion and the sound of people screaming. It keeps repeating and repeating in front of my eyes when I try to sleep."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

TOLO News, 4 people wounded in kabul blast, 13 August 2022

“At least four people including two members of the Islamic Emirate’s forces were wounded in a blast that took place near an electronic identity center in PD 13 of capital Kabul, a security official said.”

The National, Motorcycle bomb wounds 4 in kabul, 13 August 2022

“Four people, including two security forces members, were wounded when a bomb on a motorcycle exploded in Kabul on Saturday, a security official said.

The blast took place near an electronic identity centre in Erfani town in the 13th district of Afghanistan's capital, the official said in a report by TOLONews.

Earlier this week, prominent Afghan cleric, Rahimullah Haqqani, who supported education for girls, was killed in a bomb attack in Kabul that was claimed by ISIS.”

ICG, Afghanistan’s Security Challenges Under the Taliban, 12 August 2022

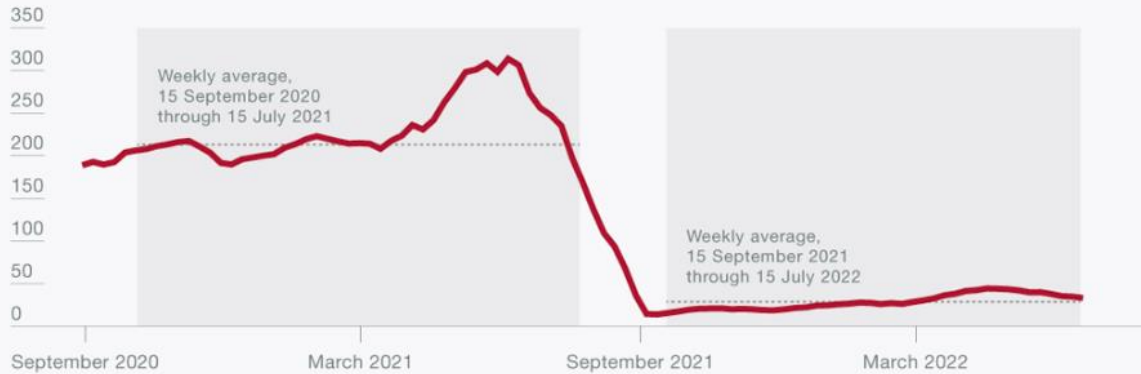
“The emerging picture of Afghanistan’s security landscape under Taliban rule reveals a country significantly more peaceful than a year ago, but with pockets of violence that threaten greater insecurity if not effectively managed. A key feature of the new landscape is the Taliban’s own changing force posture, which has visibly relaxed across much of the country. Hundreds of checkpoints on roads and highways have been dismantled, because the Taliban lack manpower to maintain them and, in any case, do not perceive major threats from the rural villages that hosted their fighters during the decades of insurgency. At the same time, they are still struggling to adapt to their new role policing the cities and parts of the north where they are unpopular. As they settle into Kabul and plan for the future, the Taliban have announced ambitious plans for a large security apparatus but efforts to build up these forces remain in early stages. The task is likely to take years.”

“Meanwhile, the Taliban face at least two small insurgencies. In the east and parts of the north, they battle the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP). In the north, they also fight affiliates of the former army, police and intelligence services whom they defeated in August 2021. The brutal campaign against IS-KP has diminished its capacity in the east, but the group has begun to adjust, altering its area of operations and shifting its tactics.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Violent incidents in Afghanistan, September 2020–July 2022

Incidents per week, eight-week moving average



Source: ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), August 2022. CRISIS GROUP / KM / AT / CB-G

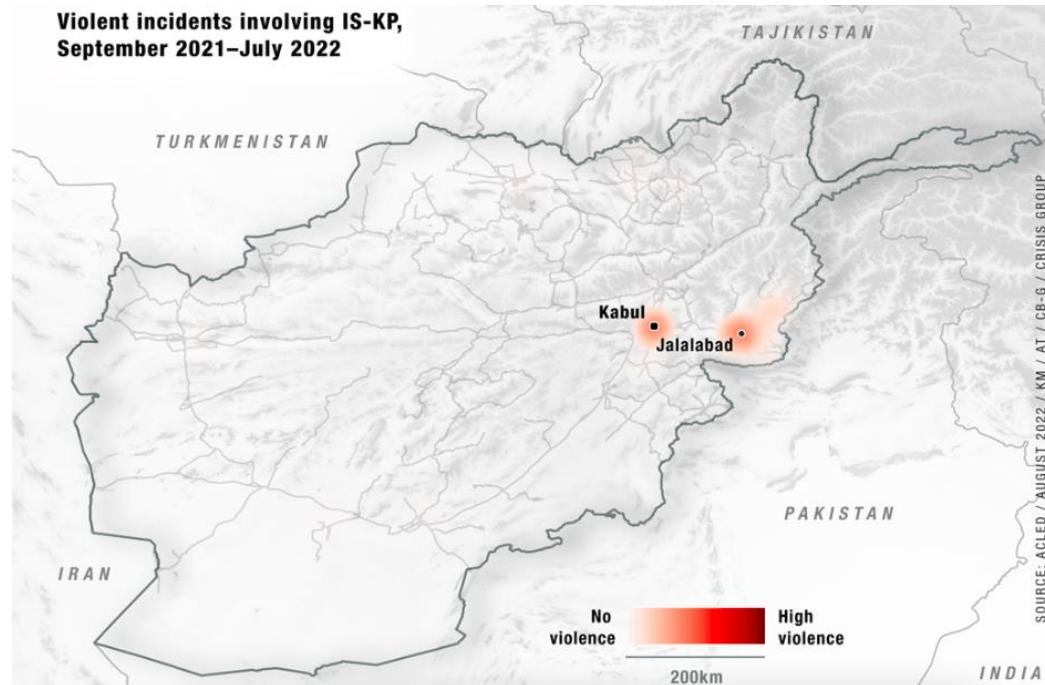


“...[I]t is clear that two small conflicts are smouldering. One involves the local branch of the Islamic State, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP)... The second conflict involves actors formerly affiliated with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the political order that collapsed in 2021. The National Resistance Front (NRF) emerged as the biggest of these ex-Republic groups, primarily in Panjshir province north east of Kabul, but many others have proclaimed themselves.

Thus far, neither of these two insurgencies seriously threatens the Taliban. The country has seen a sharp decline in violence, with insecurity concentrated in pockets of the east and north, in contrast with previous decades when almost the entire country was a war zone. When fighting breaks out, it is most often initiated not by insurgents but by the Taliban themselves, as the new authorities conduct offensive actions to consolidate power with armed force. Some of this skirmishing occurs as the Taliban remove unauthorised checkpoints and seize control of natural resources; other clashes involve opposition groups, criminals and renegade Taliban elements”

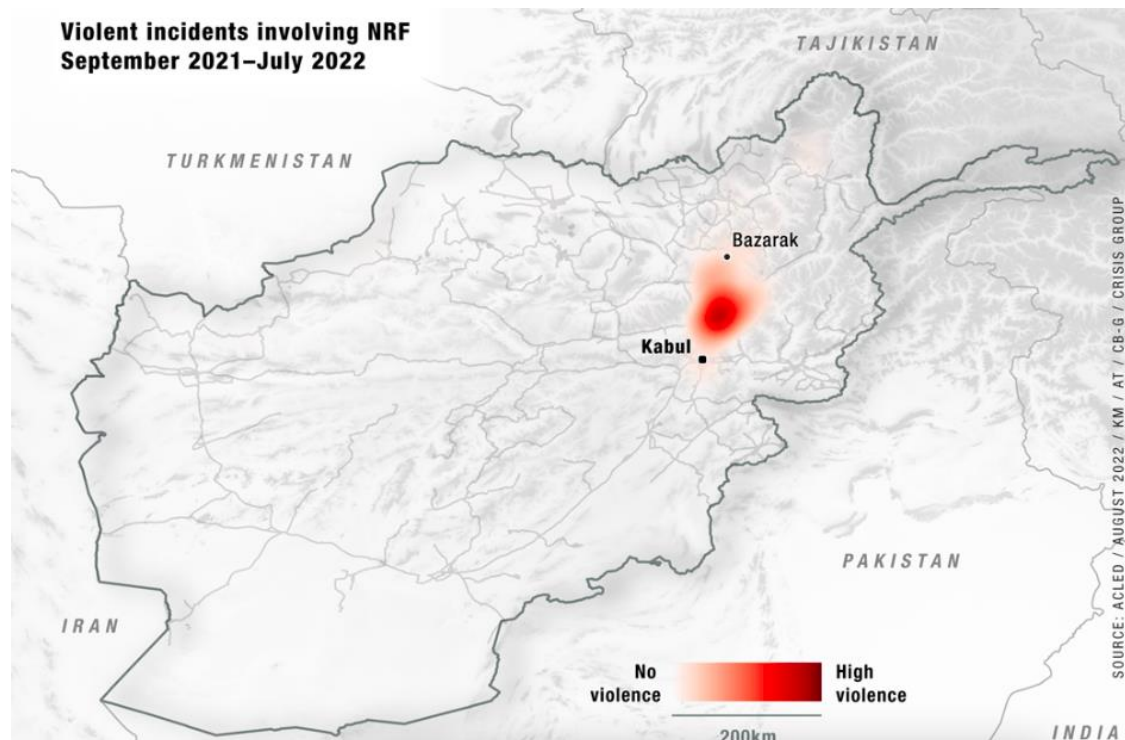
This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“In the months following the Taliban takeover, IS-KP launched more attacks than ever. The spike in violence seemed to be driven by two factors: the chaotic aftermath of the Taliban victory over Afghan forces, which created a security vacuum in some eastern districts; and, more generally, IS-KP’s shift in tactics toward high-frequency, low-impact attacks.”



“Armed groups composed mostly of people affiliated with the previous Republic surpassed IS-KP as the most active opposition to the Taliban in early 2022... The largest of these resistance groups is the National Resistance Front (NRF)... The NRF is primarily active in Panjshir province and adjacent areas in the north, including in parts of Baghlan, Parwan and Kapisa provinces. It also retains some capacity in Kabul.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.



“In the pockets of terrain where the Taliban have faced renewed insurgency, they have employed diverse tactics for dealing with armed opposition. These range from denial and downplaying of threats, to heavy-handed human rights violations, to a range of less violent methods aimed at mitigating anti-Taliban resistance.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan, 11 August 2022

“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, the United States (US) killed Al Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahri in a drone strike in Afghanistan, as the Islamic State (IS) and anti-Taliban groups continued to clash with the Taliban. IS also attacked Shiite civilians in Kabul during a holy period for the community.”

“The incident [Al Zawahri drone strike] also triggered protests across the country, with demonstrators condemning the US for disrespecting Afghanistan’s sovereignty. ACLED records protests across at least 19 provinces, some of which were attended by thousands of people.”

“Meanwhile, the Taliban continued to target IS in Balkh and Kabul provinces last week, claiming to have foiled a planned attack against Shiite civilians (Bakhtar News Agency, 4 August 2022). Despite this, an IS-planted bomb killed at least eight Shiite civilians and wounded over a dozen in Kabul city following Taliban operations... IS also claims two attacks against Taliban members in Kunar province. These trends contribute to the 100% increase in violence in both Kabul and Kunar provinces over the past week relative to the past month.”

“Anti-Taliban forces also remained active last week, with the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Taliban clashing in Panjshir, Kapisa, and Nangarhar provinces. Additionally, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan claims an attack against the Taliban in Ghazni province, while the Watandost Front group

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

claims to have killed a Taliban government official in Kabul city.”

The National, Afghan cleric Rahimullah Haqqani reportedly killed in kabul blast, 11 August 2022

“A prominent Afghan cleric who supported education for girls has been killed in a blast in Kabul.

Rahimullah Haqqani died in Thursday's explosion at his seminary in the Afghan capital, local broadcaster TOLONews reported, quoting Bilal Karimi, a government spokesman.

[...]

Although he did not directly criticise the Taliban's decision not to reopen secondary schools for girls, he openly argued that Islam did not forbid female education.”

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Taliban must immediately step-up measures to protect the Hazara Shiite communities, 8 August 2022

“Responding to the series of attacks leading to about 120 deaths and injuries in areas dominated by Hazara Shiite communities in west Kabul over the last few days, Zaman Sultani, Amnesty International's South Asia regional researcher, said:

“The systematic attacks on the minority Hazara Shiite community in Afghanistan may amount to crimes against humanity and should be unequivocally condemned.”

“In the last year there have been multiple attacks on the minority community with little to no action. It is essential that as de-facto authorities the Taliban carry out an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation into the attacks, conducted in line with international law and standards. Those suspected of criminal responsibility for these crimes under international law and human rights violations should face justice in fair trials before ordinary civilian courts and without recourse to death penalty.”

“The Taliban are responsible to take all necessary measures for the protection of civilians in Afghanistan and they must immediately step-up measures to ensure protection to all civilians in the country.”

On Friday, 5th August, at least eight people were killed and 18 injured in a blast in Kabul. The next day, on Saturday, 6th August a bomb exploded in a busy shopping street in Kabul killed eight people and injured at least 22 as reported in media.

On Sunday, 7th August the UN reported at least 120 people were killed and wounded resulting from the attacks to which responsibility was claimed by the Islamic State of Khurasan Province claimed.

After the Taliban takeover, such minority communities have no effective representation within the Taliban's security or governance structure.

Amnesty International has previously documented the targeted killing of ethnic Hazara community following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021.”

TOLO News, Explosion Reported in Sarkariz Area of Kabul, 8 August 2022

“The spokesman of the Kabul Police Command, Khalid Zadran, said a blast occurred in the Sarkariz area of Kabul's PD6. Zadran said that explosive devices were placed in a cart, and eight people died in this incident and 18 others were injured.”

TOLO News, Reports of Afghan-Pakistani Clash in Kunar, 8 August 2022

“Islamic Emirate and Pakistani soldiers exchanged gunfire in the Ben-Shahi area of Dangam district in Kunar province, according to Najibullah Hanif, local director of information and culture. Hanif said the clashes were resolved and that no one was harmed. He stated that the attempt by Pakistani soldiers to build military facilities along the Durand Line is what sparked the clashes.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

TOLO News, As Attacks Rise, UNAMA Calls for Security for Minorities, 8 August 2022

"On Twitter, UNAMA said that the recent explosions in Kabul resulted in more than 120 deaths and injuries. "Following the Islamic State-claimed blasts in Kabul in recent days that killed and injured more than 120 people, the UN family in Afghanistan urges greater security for minorities so that Ashura can be marked without further attacks," UNAMA tweeted.

The UNAMA response comes after a bus in Kabul was hit by a landmine on Sunday in the most recent incident. Witnesses to the incident report that at least three people were killed and over 10 civilians were injured."

The National News, Pakistani Taliban commanders reported killed in Afghanistan, 8 August 2022

"Three senior commanders of the Pakistani Taliban militant group have been killed in a blast in eastern Afghanistan, according to local news outlets. Abdul Wali, also known as Omar Khalid Khorasani, was travelling with Hafiz Dawlat and Mufti Hassan in Afghanistan's Paktika province on the border with Pakistan when their car was hit by a roadside bomb on Sunday evening, the Gandhara news website reported. The three commanders were said to be living in Afghanistan's Kunar and Nangarhar provinces. They were travelling to Paktika's Birmal district "for consultation", sources told Gandhara, which is affiliated with the US-funded broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. There was no immediate comment from Afghanistan's Taliban government or the Pakistani Taliban, formally known as Tahrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP. Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Programme at the Wilson Research Centre think tank, said Khorasani's death had been reported several times in the past. Khorasani was a major figure in the Pakistani Taliban and his death would be a "big blow" to the group, Mr Kugelman said on Twitter."

Al Jazeera, Top Pakistan Taliban leader killed in Afghanistan roadside attack, 8 August 2022

"A late night roadside bombing in eastern Afghanistan has struck a vehicle carrying members of the Pakistan Taliban, killing a senior leader and three other members of the group, several Pakistani officials and the group said. Abdul Wali, also known as Omar Khalid Khorasani, was a top commander of the Pakistan Taliban and was allegedly behind some of the deadliest attacks in recent years. Wali's vehicle was struck on Sunday night by a roadside bomb in the Afghan province of Paktika, along the border with Pakistan, according to Pakistani officials and the TTP members who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press news agency. The three other men who were killed included his driver and two of his close aides, they said."

TOLO News, 3 People Die in Blast on Second Day of Attacks in Kabul, 6 August 2022

"Three people were killed and seven others were injured in a blast on Saturday evening in Kabul's Pol-e-Sukhta area, according to Mawlawi Zabihullah, commander of PD6 in Kabul.

A TOLONews reporter who visited the explosion scene in Kabul's Pol-e-Sukhta area, said that the explosives were put in a pot on the side of the road. It has been reported that security forces were not harmed in the explosion. Meanwhile, Kabul security department spokesman Khalid Zadran said on Twitter that two people were killed and 22 others were wounded in the blast that took place this afternoon in the Pul-e-Sokhta area of Kabul."

Gandhara, New Blast Shakes Kabul, Killing At Least Two And Injuring 22, August 6 2022

"KABUL -- An explosion has ripped through a mostly Shi'ite area of Kabul, killing at least two people and injuring 22 others in the second blast in two days in the Afghan capital that has been claimed by Sunni-

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

led Islamic State (IS) militants. The blast on August 6 hit the Sukhteh Pul area of Kabul, home to many of the city's Shi'ite Muslim population. A Taliban-appointed police spokesman said one of the wounded was in critical condition. In a statement on its Telegram channel late on August 6, IS said it carried out the attack. A day earlier, at least eight people were killed and 18 wounded in a Shi'ite residential area of Kabul in a blast claimed by IS."

The Guardian, Afghanistan: bomb in Kabul shopping street kills eight people, 6 August 2022

"A bomb exploded in a busy shopping street in Afghanistan's capital Kabul on Saturday killed eight people and injured at least 22, hospital officials and witnesses said. The blast occurred in a western district of the city where members of the minority Shia Muslim community regularly meet. [...] No militant group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which came ahead of Ashura, a commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of the prophet Muhammad, which is marked mainly by Shia Muslims. On Friday, at least eight people were killed and 18 injured in a blast in Kabul carried out by Islamic State, a Sunni Muslim militant group."

Ariana News, Two killed, 22 wounded in Kabul explosion, 6 August 2022

"Kabul security department spokesman Khalid Zadran confirmed Saturday night that two people were killed and 22 others wounded in an explosion that took place earlier in the day in Pul-e-Sokhta area of Kabul. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack, but a day earlier, at least eight people were killed and 18 wounded in another explosion in Kabul that was claimed by ISIS (Daesh)."

AVA, Better Security on Day of Ashura, 6 August 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, Kabul residents said they are afraid of possible scenarios, especially after the recent incidents across the country. "It feels more dangerous here. we call on the Islamic Emirate to cooperate with us on security," said Haider Hussein, a tribal elder in Paktia. Meanwhile, Kabul's Security Command called for security on the day of Ashura, saying that a commission has been established for security on Ashura. "A commission has been established for security and we ask our Shiite countrymen to celebrate their ceremonies in Takiyeh Khana (specific places for mourning) and to not make disturbances for other people," said Khalid Zadran, spokesman for the Kabul security department. On Wednesday, security forces clashed with a group of Daesh in the Karti Sakhi area of Kabul. Kabul Security Command announced that four members of Daesh were killed and one had been arrested by security forces. Kabul security command stated that the group aimed to attack the Shiite community during the Muharram days."

AVA, IS-K Deadly Explosion During Shia Mourning, 6, August 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, The Friday explosion occurred in a wheelbarrow among civilians in Kabul city's Police District 6, according to a tweet from the Islamic Emirate's senior spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, which "martyred" 8 people and wounded another 18. [...] ISIS reportedly declared in a statement that its attack in the west of Kabul resulted in the deaths and injuries of 20, according to Reuters."

Gandhara, At Least Eight Killed In Bomb Blast In Shi'ite Neighborhood Of Kabul; Islamic State Claims Responsibility, 5 August 2022

The Islamic State (IS) militant group has claimed responsibility for a blast in a Shi'ite residential area in Kabul that killed at least eight people and wounded 18 others. The bomb was hidden in a cart loaded with

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

vegetables and exploded on August 5 in an area where residents shop for food, said Khalid Zadran, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police chief. "The explosion happened in a crowded place," Zadran said. Police said at least eight people were killed and 18 wounded in the blast. The militant group said in a statement that 20 people were killed and injured in the attack."

Al Jazeera, Ayman al-Zawahiri assassination: The Taliban's biggest crisis, 5 August 2022

"The drone attack that killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri has plunged the Taliban into an internal crisis. The group has been humiliated by a unilateral US military action and its relentless claims that it has denied space to "terrorists" have been exposed as lies. [...] Initially, the Taliban are likely to respond to the raid on al-Zawahiri with defiance, insisting they were not harbouring a terrorist and hardening their resistance to addressing longstanding international demands, from letting older girls return to school to forming a more inclusive government. They may also take a harder line on sensitive negotiations with Washington on the delivery of humanitarian supplies and the unfreezing of Afghan Central Bank assets. But over the longer term, al-Zawahiri's killing could exacerbate existing fissures within the group. Such internal churn could provide openings for the emergence of factions espousing more conciliatory and practical views but it could also lead to dysfunction and danger that affect governance and raise questions about the viability of the Taliban's future political control."

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 23-29 July 2022, 4 August 2022

"Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Taliban continued to clash in Afghanistan. The Islamic State (IS) also suffered losses in Taliban operations, while civilians remained the target of Taliban forces. [...]

In Afghanistan, the NRF carried out attacks against the Taliban in Panjshir, Takhar, and Kapisa provinces last week. In Panjshir, 12 Taliban members were reportedly killed in an NRF attack on Taliban vehicles in Shutul district, while five more Taliban members were killed when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Hissa-e-Awal (Khinj) district. Violence in Panjshir is both common and highly volatile; it is considered an area of 'extreme risk' by ACLED's Volatility and Risk Predictability Index.

Meanwhile, the Taliban conducted operations against IS in Pul-i-Khumri city in Baghlan, Jalalabad city in Nangarhar, and Alingar district in Laghman last week, killing multiple IS militants. In Alingar district, the Taliban claims to have killed the founder of the group's district branch. Twelve people, including women and children, were also arrested during the operation in Jalalabad city.

Taliban forces were also responsible for more than half of recorded attacks against civilians in the country last week, including attacks on tribal elders in Kandahar and Takhar. In Kandahar, Taliban forces arrested and tortured an Achakzai tribal elder — a tribe that the Taliban has long been in dispute with due to the tribe's support for the previous government (Foreign Policy, 30 July 2021) — over a land dispute in Spin Boldak district. In Takhar, two tribal elders and one civilian were also arrested and tortured for their alleged cooperation with the NRF in Farkhar district, while a civilian with a speech disability was also killed in Farkhar district for unknown reasons. Taliban forces also shot and wounded a woman passing a checkpoint, with the motive for the shooting remaining unclear. Taliban attacks on civilians contribute to the 200% increase in violence in Takhar last week relative to the past month flagged by ACLED's *Subnational Surge Tracker*. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Takhar in the past month."

Gandhara, Two Taliban Police Officers Killed In Kabul By Alleged Islamic State-Khorasan Gunman, 4 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“A gunbattle in Afghanistan’s capital on August 3 left at least five people dead, including two Taliban police officers, the Taliban spokesman for the Kabul police chief said. The gunbattle erupted after police launched an operation against a hideout in the Karti Sakhi neighborhood in western Kabul heavily populated by Shi’a, said spokesman Khalid Zadran.

The officers killed at least three of the gunmen, who Zadran said were Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militants. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.”

TOLO News, Fighting in Karta-e-Sakhi Between Islamic Emirate Forces and Daesh, 4 August 2022

“At least four members of the Daesh group were killed and one person was detained in operations conducted earlier this week by the Islamic Emirate forces in Karta-e-Sakhi area of Kabul city, Kabul security department said. The clashes between the Islamic Emirate forces and Daesh members lasted for many hours. “Those who were trying to target civilians, four of them were killed and one of them was detained. In this operation, one member of the Islamic Emirate force was killed and another one was wounded. Also, a policewoman was killed,” said Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul security department.”

Ariana News, Two IEA forces and 4 Daesh fighters killed in Kabul clash, 4 August 2022

“Four Daesh militants were killed and a fifth was arrested in an operation in Kabul on Wednesday. According to Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), forces had conducted a raid on an “important nest of the enemy” in Karte-e-Sakhi area in PD3. The operation was launched at about 11.30am but a shootout between IEA and Daesh militants broke out, which lasted several hours. The situation was eventually brought under control and a cache of weapons and ammunition was recovered. Mujahid said in a series of tweets that the Daesh cell had been planning to attack Shiites in the Kart-e-Sakhi area during the upcoming Muharram.”

AVA, Mujahid: The core of DAESH that was planning to attack the Muharram ceremony was destroyed, 4 August 2022

“Zabihullah Mujahid; The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate says that Daesh who planned to attack the gatherings of Shia citizens during Muharram days were destroyed in Karte Sakhi of Kabul. [...] Mujahid added that as a result of this operation, 4 people from “Khawarij” were killed and one person was arrested alive. A number of weapons and ammunition have also come into the hands of the forces of the Islamic Emirate. Based on Mujahid’s statements, the terrorists affiliated with the Daesh group tried to attack the Shia citizens in the Karte Sakhi area during the Muharram days through this house.”

AVA, 4 Islamic Emirate forces killed in Kunar, 4 August 2022

“Four Islamic Emirate forces were killed in a roadside bomb explosion in Kunar province in Afghanistan. [...] The explosion occurred when a vehicle of Islamic Emirate forces collided with a mine planted on the side of the road in the city. According to the report, 4 Islamic Emirate forces were killed in the blast. So far, no individual or group has claimed responsibility for the blast.”

AVA, Religious Scholar was killed in Central Afghanistan, 3 August 2022

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Monitoring, Abdul Matin Mohammadi, a religious scholar, was allegedly killed on Tuesday, August 2, in the evening by unidentified assailants, according to the Islamic Emirate authorities. [...] According to sources, the attackers ride away from the scene on motorcycles after killing Mohammadi as he was returning home after offering the prayers in the mosque. [...] The Islamic Emirate governor’s office in the province of Ghor reports that no one has been arrested in relation to the death of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

this religious scholar, despite an ongoing investigation.”

Khaama Press, Clash in Afghan Capital; Taliban Besieges House in Karta-e-Sakhi Area, 3 August 2022

“The Taliban’s spokesman for the Kabul Police, Khalid Zadran, said that the group’s forces had besieged a residence while the special operation was currently underway.

The Taliban spokesman for Kabul Police made no particular mention of the operation’s potential casualties, and the special operation’s purpose is also still unknown.”

Tolo News, Hanafi: US Drone Strike Violates National Sovereignty, Doha Agreement, 3 August 2022

“Abdul Salam Hanafi, the 2nd Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate, said that the US drone attack in Kabul violates both national sovereignty and the Doha Agreement and that Afghan territory will not be used against any country. [...] Analysts said that the US drone attack in the center of Kabul may harm relations between the international community and Afghanistan. [...] One of the terms of the Doha Agreement was to not provide sanctuary to terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. After a drone strike was conducted by the US in the Kabul "green zone" of Sherpoor, in which the US said Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of the al-Qaeda network, was killed, Kabul and Washington have accused each other of violating the Doha agreement.”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Attack on Kabul, shoot at Doha Agreement, 3 August 2022

“"Islamic Emirate" confirmed on Monday (August 1) that the attack on Saturday in Kabul was carried out by American drones and condemned it.” “Zabihullah Mujahid; the spokesman of "Islamic Emirate" wrote in a statement that the attack was carried out on July 31 against a residential house in Shirpur area of Kabul. He said: "The nature of this incident was not clear at first. The security and intelligence organizations of the Islamic Emirate investigated the incident and found that the attack was carried out by American drones. He condemned the attack and said that it violated international principles and the Doha Agreement.”

Tolo News, Fighting in Karta-e-Sakhi Ends With ‘Multiple Attackers Killed, 1 Detained’, 3 August 2022

“Kabul security department spokesman Khalid Zadran in a statement said that the clashes in the Karta-e-Sakhi area of Kabul have ended. He said multiple attackers were killed and one of them has been detained. According to Zadran, two force members were killed, including one female, and four others were wounded in the clash. Earlier, Kabul security department spokesman Khalid Zadran said security forces were conducting a clearing operation when gunfire came from a house. He said the residence was surrounded by Islamic Emirate forces. The residents said that the clashes began around noon and the two sides were using heavy and light weapons.”

ICG, UN voiced concerns over human rights under Taliban’s governance, while Taliban continued to battle Islamic State Khorasan Province and Northern Resistance Front, 2 August 2022

“In report on human rights, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 19 July reported “erosion of women’s rights has been one of the most notable aspects of the de facto administration to date”. In attempt to garner domestic legitimacy, Taliban authorities organised gathering of nearly 4,500 scholars and community leaders; participants 2 July pledged allegiance to Taliban Emir, denounced rebellion against govt, and called on international community to recognise Taliban govt. On economic front, hardship continued. Local media reports 18 July indicated some 170,000 retired civil servants are yet to receive

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

pensions. Senior Pakistani trade delegation 20 July visited Kabul to discuss continuation of Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. De facto govt during month sought to reopen women-led businesses, notably in capital Kabul (east), Jowzjan (north), Balkh (north), Herat (west) and Kandahar (south). Meanwhile, Taliban launched raids against Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP): notably, security forces 16 July raided ISKP hideout in Kunduz city (north), allegedly against cell responsible for recent cross-border attacks into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; 19 July launched raid in Samangan province (north), where they killed ISKP members allegedly responsible for beheading of Taliban fighter on 14 July; 20 July allegedly captured three foreign fighters in Kabul. NGO Human Rights Watch 7 July accused de facto authorities of committing war crimes in their fight against ISKP. UN Sanctions Monitoring Team 19 July reported that al-Qaeda in country does not pose major international threat for now due to lack of capacity and need to stay on good terms with Taliban. Fighting in north also continued between Taliban and Northern Resistance Front (NRF). NRF 7 July purportedly captured Taliban military base in Baghlan province. Taliban mid-July launched offensive against NRF in Baghlan's Andarab region. NRF leader Ahmad Massoud 12 July claimed NRF had 3,000 armed fighters."

The Guardian, Ayman al-Zawahiri: al-Qaida leader killed in US drone strike in Afghanistan, Joe Biden says, 2 August 2022

"A US drone strike in Afghanistan has killed the top al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, Joe Biden announced on Monday. [...]

But it also raised questions over al-Qaida's continued presence in the country since the Taliban regained power. One of the world's most wanted men, Zawahiri and his family had moved into a safe house in downtown Kabul, the capital, according to White House officials. He was spotted on a balcony on numerous occasions over several months and continued to produce al-Qaida propaganda videos, some of which may yet appear posthumously. Zawahiri moved to a "very safe place" in Kabul a few months after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in August last year, a senior leader of the Islamist movement told Reuters on Tuesday on condition of anonymity. The 71-year-old died moments after stepping out on to the balcony on Sunday morning, US officials said. Biden was personally involved in meetings to plan a potential strike against Zawahiri during May, June and July, a senior administration official said on a conference call with reporters. [...]

The president eventually ordered a strike on the safe house at a meeting of key cabinet members and national security officials on 25 July. It was carried out at 9.48pm ET on Saturday by an unmanned aerial vehicle. "Two Hellfire missiles were fired at Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was killed. We are confident through our intelligence sources and methods, including multiple streams of intelligence, that we killed al-Zawahiri and no other individual," the official said. They added that Zawahiri's family members were present in other parts of the safe house at the time of the strike, were not targeted and were unharmed. "We have no indications that civilians were harmed in the strike. We took every possible precaution to avoid civilian harm." The official said they were able to watch members of the Taliban try after the strike to conceal Zawahiri's former presence at the location, swiftly removing his wife, daughter and her children to another location.

In a statement, a Taliban spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, confirmed that a strike took place and strongly condemned it, calling it a violation of "international principles". [...]

His death raises questions about the relationship between al-Qaida and the Taliban following the latter's takeover of Kabul in August 2021. The drone attack is the first known US strike inside Afghanistan since US troops and diplomats left the country in August 2021."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tolo News, Biden: Al Qaeda Chief Zawahiri Killed in US Drone Strike in Kabul, 2 August 2022

"[...] He confirmed reports that began hours earlier about the attack. Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed in a US drone strike in Afghanistan over the weekend, Biden confirmed and US officials said earlier, the biggest blow to the militant group since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011. [...] One of the US officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the CIA carried out a drone strike in the Afghan capital Kabul on Sunday. "Over the weekend, the United States conducted a counterterrorism operation against a significant al Qaeda target in Afghanistan," a senior administration official said. "The operation was successful and there were no civilian casualties," the official added. It was not immediately clear how the United States, which does not have US troops on the ground, confirmed that Zawahiri had been killed. [...] The drone attack is the first known US strike inside Afghanistan since US troops and diplomats left the country in August 2021. The move may bolster the credibility of Washington's assurances that the United States can still address threats from Afghanistan without a military presence in the country. In a statement, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that a strike took place and strongly condemned it, calling it a violation of "international principles." A loud explosion echoed through Kabul early Sunday morning. "A house was hit by a rocket in Sherpoor. There were no casualties as the house was empty," Abdul Nafi Takor, spokesman of the interior ministry, said earlier. One Taliban source, requesting anonymity, said there had been reports of at least one drone flying over Kabul that morning."

The National, Al Qaeda leader Al Zawahiri killed in US strike in Afghanistan, Biden says, 2 August 2022

"A senior administration official said the US strike was conducted by a drone that fired two Hellfire missiles into the third floor of Al Zawahiri's Kabul home — killing him, but no one else. [...] The strike was conducted by the "US government", the official said. US outlets said the CIA had carried out the strike early on Sunday. [...] The US had said it would retain "over-the-horizon" strike capability despite no longer having a troop presence in Afghanistan. [...] Al Qaeda has built up its presence in Afghanistan after US forces left the country in August last year, US Central Command chief Gen Frank McKenzie said last December."

Pajhwok, 40 people killed, wounded in Afghanistan last week, 1 August 2022

"KABUL (Pajhwok): At least 40 people were killed and wounded in violence in Afghanistan last week, when a global meeting on Afghanistan was held in Tashkent, and some sources once again asked the government to allow girls high and secondary education.

Major events last week

- Govt says the number of Daesh in Afghanistan is close to zero, but Russia estimates at 6000
- Tashkent meeting ends, govt calls it a success, international community repeats conditions
- European Union, Pakistan emphasize interaction with Afghanistan
- Japan says working together with Afghans to achieve permanent peace, stability.
- Last week, 40 people killed and wounded in Afghanistan

Casualties

Last week, 17 people were killed and 23 others were injured in Afghanistan in separate incidents of violence. Yesterday, a bomb blast killed two people and injured another 13 in Kabul. The emergency hospital in Kabul confirmed receiving 13 injured people from the scene.

Four people were killed in two explosions of unexploded ordnance in Uruzgan and Zabul provinces, and eight others were injured in Zabul. Security officials say three 'troublemaking' armed men were killed in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Nangarhar, three Daesh militants including a commander were killed in Laghman, three armed robbers were killed in Balkh and one in Herat province. Reports say unidentified gunmen killed a civilian in Parwan, a girl was injured as a result of a shooting in Takhar, and one person was killed and another injured in a vegetable market in Ghazni city. The body of a six-year-old girl who was stoned to death in Paktia has been found. Paktia Police said three suspected individuals had been arrested in connection to the stoning and murder of minor girl and referred to judicial organs for investigation, nor more detail had been disclosed in this regard. In the previous week, 10 people were killed and one injured in Afghanistan. In the past conflict before August 15 last year, hundreds of people would get killed and injured in a week.

Daesh presence

Last week, Russia's special representative for Afghanistan said the number of Daesh militants in Afghanistan has reached 6,000. But the caretaker government rejected the claim and said Daesh presence has reached close to zero and the rest are being suppressed. For years, Daesh has claimed responsibility for some attacks in Afghanistan. The group also claimed credit for deadly attacks in Afghanistan in recent months.

Tashkent meeting

Last week, a day-long international conference on Afghanistan was held in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, and representatives from 20 countries and organizations, including Pakistan, Russia and the United States, participated in it. A delegation of the caretaker government of Afghanistan also attended the meeting that ended with the release of a statement by the host country, Uzbekistan.

The declaration asked the Taliban to form an inclusive government, pay attention to the rights of women, and to give all Afghan girls the right to have access to education, emphasizing that these were the "basic conditions for the completion of the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan."

According to the BBC, the Taliban government called the Tashkent meeting a success while the international community reiterated its previous conditions. The declaration was not only confined to political statements, but focused on strengthening peace, stability and economic reconstruction, which will benefit Afghans, Afghanistan's neighbors and the entire international community. At the meeting, the United States and the Afghan side talked about the release of the frozen money of Afghanistan. The American side said how to use three and a half billion dollars from Afghanistan's frozen money for the benefit of Afghans. In the meeting, the representative of Russia, Zamir Kabulov, criticized Afghanistan's freezing of about seven billion dollars. Keeping in view the economic situation of Afghans, he said, the United States has committed "theft" by freezing the money. The head of the Afghan delegation and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the meeting was useful and positive developments were made in many areas. Muttaqi said in the meeting that the new government of Afghanistan wants the country to become a center of peace, stability and economic cooperation. He said Afghanistan was ready for positive interaction with the world within the framework of legitimate interests and asked the global community to start official interaction with the Islamic Emirate. The Afghan delegation met with representatives of different countries in Tashkent and talked about key projects, especially the Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway project, the release of Afghanistan's frozen assets and the production of electricity.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto said in his meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Tashkent that his country wants the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor or CPEC project to be extended to Afghanistan.

World's interaction with Afghan caretaker government

Last week, the European Union and Pakistan insisted on interaction with Afghanistan, but the US State Department claimed that the Taliban government had not fulfilled its promises with the international

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

community and Afghans. But the acting government said it has fulfilled all the promises it made with the United States in the Doha Agreement. The government says it would not allow anyone to use the territory of Afghanistan against the United States and its allies. Japan said peace and stability in Afghanistan was in the interest of the region and the world and it would work together with Afghans to achieve permanent peace and stability in their country."

Gandhara, U.S. Kills Leader of Al-Qaeda In Drone Strike In Kabul Neighborhood, 1 August 2022

"The United States killed Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri, one of the world's most wanted terrorists, in a drone strike in Kabul that has delivered the militants their biggest setback since Osama bin Laden was killed more than a decade ago. Sources told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi on August 2 that the area around the house in a quiet Kabul district where the drone strike occurred has been cordoned off, a day after U.S. President Joe Biden announced the strike that killed Zawahri. There were no other casualties, Biden said. U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Zawahri was killed when he came out on the balcony of his safe house in Kabul. A source told Radio Azadi that the residence was a guesthouse of Taliban-installed Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani and that the minister, along with the Taliban's defense minister, Mullah Yaqoob Mujahid, were the only two high-ranking officials to periodically visit the home. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the Taliban had "grossly violated" the Doha Agreement between the two sides by hosting and sheltering Zawahri. The 2020 Doha Agreement, signed by the Taliban and Washington, paved the way for international troops to leave Afghanistan in August 2021. The militants had pledged that once troops left, Afghanistan would not be a harbor for Al-Qaeda. [...] Biden said that none of Zawahri's family members was hurt and there were no civilian casualties. [...] The drone attack is the first known U.S. strike inside Afghanistan since U.S. troops and diplomats left the country in August 2021."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Former Health Official at Istiqlal Hospital in Afghan Capital Killed by Unknown Gunmen, 1 August 2022

"Sources say that the gunmen killed Shirzad in his vehicle on Sunday, July 31, in the Karta-e-Se area of Kabul."

"The murder of the health official, the source said, is still being investigated for causes. Nevertheless, the source asserted that this young man's death might have been the result of a targeted killing."

"Relatives of Shirzad claim that the Taliban recently sacked him, after five years of service in Afghanistan's health sector."

"Despite the Taliban's claims of security, there have been more attacks and target killings in Afghanistan since they took control."

Gandhara, At Least One Person Killed As Taliban, Iranian Border Forces Exchange Fire, 31 July 2022

"Taliban and Iranian border guards have been engaged in gun battles along the Iran-Afghan frontier, leaving at least one person dead on the Afghan side, police officials said. "We have one killed and one wounded; the cause of the clash is not clear yet," Bahram Haqmal, the police spokesman for the southern Afghan province of Nimroze, told Reuters on July 31. Maysam Barazandeh, the governor of the Iranian border area of Hirmand, told the semiofficial Fars news agency that the fighting had ceased and that there were no casualties on the Iranian side. Both sides accused the other of opening fire first. According to Iran's Tasnim news agency, the clashes broke out after Taliban forces tried to raise their flag "in an area that is not Afghan territory." Taliban fighters have frequently clashed with Iranian security forces since

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the Islamist group took control of Afghanistan last August. Iran has struggled to cope with an influx of some 5 million Afghans who have fled since the Taliban seized power. The two countries share a 900-kilometer border. Tehran has not recognized the Taliban's claim to be Afghanistan's ruling government."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Sunday Explosions in Afghan Capital Inflict No Immediate Casualties: Taliban Officials, 31 July 2022

"Since the Taliban seized power, there have been more attacks in Afghanistan, despite the Taliban's assurances of security."

"However, between mid-August 2021 and mid-June 2022, UNAMA recorded 2,106 civilian casualties. This is despite a general, significant decline in armed violence."

Gandhara, Two Killed In Explosion Inside Kabul Cricket Stadium, Police Say, 30 July 2022

"An explosion has occurred inside Kabul's main cricket stadium during a domestic league match, killing at least two people and briefly halting the game, officials said."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Religious Scholar Gunned Down in Northeastern Afghanistan, 30 July 2022

"Afghanistan's capital and provinces have experienced a rise in insecurity recently."

"Despite the Taliban's claims of security, mysterious killings and other crimes continue in several provinces."

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Un envoy condemns attack at cricket stadium in Kabul, 29 July 2022

"KABUL - The UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov, strongly condemns this afternoon's atrocious attack at Kabul International Cricket Stadium, which has reportedly caused casualties among those attending the match. Numbers are not confirmed at this stage. According to initial reports, an explosion tore through the stands at Kabul's International Cricket Stadium in the Chaman Hozori area of the capital at around 16.10 during a T20 match between Band-e-Amir Dragons and Pamir Zalmi. Local hospitals have reported receiving many victims. Dr. Alakbarov who was present at the stadium at the time of the attack to address the National Cricket Association sends his sincere condolences to the families of the victims and those affected, and wishes the injured a speedy recovery. "Today's blast is yet another harrowing reminder of the terrifying and sudden violence that the population in Afghanistan continues to be exposed to," Dr. Alakbarov said. "Sports bring people hope, inspire children and generations alike, play a crucial role in breaking down barriers and bringing communities together, and serve as an important source of pride. "I reiterate that directing attacks against the population, including sporting facilities, is strictly prohibited." Dr. Alakbarov calls for a thorough and transparent investigation, with perpetrators brought to justice.

Tolo News, Blast Targets Civilians at Kabul Intl Cricket Stadium, 29 July 2022

"Kabul Police Command confirmed that an explosion occurred in the Kabul International Cricket Stadium during the Shpagize competition on Friday. Khaled Zadran, spokesman of Kabul Police Command, said the incident occurred when a grenade was thrown between viewers and many were injured. Officials of Afghanistan's cricket board said that at least four people were injured in the incident. Security officials have not revealed the exact number of the people affected in the incident."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tolo News, Kabulov: Around '6,000' Daesh Militants in Afghanistan, 29 July 2022

"Russia's special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said at a briefing on Thursday that since the Islamic Emirate came to power, the number of ISIS (Daesh) militants has increased by threefold. "Approximately, tentatively, their number has reached 6,000. If you recall, after the Taliban came to power and their harsh actions with regards to the IS militants, their number was about over 2,000, so even with a rough guess this is a threefold increase," he said. As quoted by TASS, the envoy added that this is the most negative aspect in the development of the situation in Afghanistan since it is dangerous. [...]

"Before the Taliban came to power, there had been over 10,000 IS militants," Kabulov said. However, the Islamic Emirate denied any claims regarding the rise in Daesh militants in the country. Qari Yousef Ahmadi, spokesman of the PM, said that ISIS has been suppressed in Afghanistan. "We reject Zamir Kabulov's allegation that there are 6,000 ISIS fighters operating in Afghanistan. There might be a small number, and it can't create any problem," he said. Meanwhile, analysts in the country have different views on this issue. "It is truly something to worry about. Because Russia and Kabulov are present in the region and the embassy is gathering information using a variety of ways, I believe that the information about them is quite accurate," said Waheedullah Faqiri, political analyst.

"Kabulov's remarks are not true. They want to make problems for the Afghan government," said Sayed Akbar, another political analyst. Earlier, the Russian president expressed concern about the growing number of ISIS fighters in northern Afghanistan."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Gunmen Shoot a Greengrocer Dead in Northeastern Afghanistan, 28 July 2022

"Intractable, mysterious killings and other crimes persist in various areas despite the Taliban's claims of security, that the group has been able to preserve the security of the nation and its people."

The New Indian Express, Explosion near Kabul Gurdwara day after Taliban say security issues solved, 27 July 2022

"A day after the Taliban claimed that security situation in Afghanistan had been resolved and urged its minorities -- Hindus and Sikhs -- to return to the country, an explosion took place near the Karte Parwan Gurdwara in Kabul. Though there are not any reports of casualties yet, the blast is reported to have occurred in a Sikh hakim's shop next to the Gurdwara. This is the second time in less than two months that an explosion has taken place in the same place."

Tolo News, West: US Ready to Support Dialogue Among Afghans, 27 July 2022

"Many colleagues also raised grave concerns regarding human rights abuses, including restrictions on journalists and women's ability to contribute to the country's economic growth. I joined several representatives in lamenting the lack of any serious national political process involving the Afghan people." [statement from the US special envoy for Afghanistan]

[...] "US4AfghanPeace and I [the US special envoy for Afghan women and human rights, Rina Amiri] stressed that security, economic stability and peace cannot be achieved without upholding the rights of women, ending abuses against all ethnic and religious communities and fostering an inclusive political process... Was heartened to see international solidarity in support of girls' right to education and strong support for women's right to work in order to contribute to the economy. Whereas most called for an

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

inclusive political process, no one expressed support for Taliban recognition.”

Tolo News, US-Kabul Make Progress on Afghan Reserves: Reuters, 26 July 2022

“Foreign governments and rights groups have accused the Islamic Emirate of human rights abuses including extrajudicial killings during and after the insurgency, and the movement has curtailed women’s freedoms since regaining power.

The international community wants the Islamic Emirate to improve its record on women’s and other rights before officially recognising it.

The Islamic Emirate have promised to investigate alleged killings and say they are working to secure Afghans’ rights to education and free speech within the parameters of Islamic law.”

[...] “The United Nations says millions of Afghans are facing a second winter without enough to eat. Experts said releasing foreign-held funds to the central bank would help it stem the crisis. ‘You need a central bank regulating the value of the currency, regulating prices, ensuring liquidity for imports... this is not optional. People won’t eat,’ said Graeme Smith, a senior consultant for the International Crisis Group.”

Khaama Press, Two Children Killed in a Mortar Shell Explosion in Central Afghanistan, 25 July 2022

“The explosion of unexploded remnants of war across Afghanistan has increased in recent months, primarily killing and wounding children.

A mortar shell explosion in late May, in the northern province of Kunduz, killed 2 children and injured one other, while the same incident in the same province in early June killed one child.

In late May, the detonation of a mortar shell in Ghazni province in central Afghanistan took the life of a child and permanently disabled another.

Due to decades of conflict, a large portion of Afghanistan’s land surface is covered in mines and explosives. Almost 606 square kilometers of Afghan land is polluted with mines and explosives, according to the Taliban’s state minister for disaster management.

At a celebration honoring the International Day for Mine Awareness and Mine Action, an official of the State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs stated, “Landmines and explosive remnants of war kill or maim more than 120 Afghans every month.”

Khaama Press, Taliban Supreme Leader Bans False Accusations Against Group’s Officials, 24 July 2022

“According to the statement released by the Taliban’s office of the spokesperson, “There is no place for rumors in Islam because it causes hatred among the Muslims, it negates trust and affects morale.”

Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, stated that various Islamic Hadiths imply that unsubstantiated claims are deemed lies and should be punished.

The Taliban’s supreme leader stated in this message that there is a “punishment” for accusing the government, citing hadiths and verses from the Holy Qur’an.

Per the statement, it is inappropriate to verbally, nonverbally, or in any other way humiliate Islamic clergy and Taliban government officials.

Additionally, the Prophet of Islam is cited in this statement as saying that spreading false information or making allegations that cause unease in the community constitutes “participation with the enemies.”

This statement comes as the Office of the United Nations Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released a report alleging the Taliban officials denying people’s freedoms, and maintaining inhumane behavior with them, citing torture.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Pajhwok, 10 people killed, 1 injured in Afghanistan last week, 23 July

Ten people were killed and an eleventh injured in violence in Afghanistan last week, when some sources renewed their call for reopening of girls high schools and stressed the international community's practical and constructive cooperation with the Afghan government. (...) According to Pajhwok weekly reports, 20 people were killed and seven others were wounded in Afghanistan in the previous week. Hundreds of people would get killed and wounded in the country in the past conflict on weekly-basis. UNAMA, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, says despite a significant reduction in violence in the past ten months, more than 2,000 civilians were killed and injured in Afghanistan and human rights were violated. But the acting government rejected the UNAMA report as incorrect and based on wrong information. A number of young people in Khost province last week asked international human rights organizations to investigate war crimes committed by the world's superpowers in Afghanistan and bring the criminals to justice. (...) "Closed schools for girls should be opened" The school year started in late March this year, but the government postponed the opening of girls' high and middle schools the same day and said that they were working on a plan in this regard and after completion, these schools will be opened, something yet to happen. (...)"

Jurist.org, Afghanistan Dispatch: 'Kabul is being turned to a city of beggars, 22 July 2022

"During this time [August 2021], more than six different resistance entities have started fighting back against Taliban. The National Resistance Front (NRF) is seemingly the strongest of these, fighting against the Taliban mainly in Baghlan, Takhar and Panjsher provinces."

"The most pressing issue, however, is the creation of thousands of religious Madrasas and training camps. In these Madrasas, children and teenagers are kept in conditons similar to a boarding school Less than minimum food and accommodation is provided to them through government support or begging (by the students of course). Children are taught about bombs, guns and are only given confusing religious literature on belief issues to prepare them for what they will be doing later on."

Khaama Press, Unidentified Men Kill Charity Organization Head in Western Afghanistan, 21 July 2022

"Since the Taliban seized power, reports of people being mysteriously killed by armed persons and groups have significantly increased. On the other hand, the Taliban contend that since they came to power, Afghanistan's security has been strengthened and deny that there has been an increase in unrest in Afghanistan."

Khaama Press, It's Beyond Time for Afghans to Live in Peace: UN Envoy, 21 July 2022

"Despite a significant reduction in armed conflict, UNAMA recorded 2106 civilian casualties between mid-August 2021 and mid-June 2022. The majority of civilian casualties were attributed to targeted attacks by the ISIL against ethnic and religious minority communities.

"It is beyond time for all Afghans to be able to live in peace and rebuild their lives after 20 years of armed conflict," said Markus Potzel, Acting Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. "Our monitoring reveals that despite the improved security situation since 15 August, the people of Afghanistan, in particular women and girls, are deprived of the full enjoyment of their human rights."

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)(Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 9-15 July 2022, 21 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"IS attacked Taliban forces in Kunar province and in Kabul city with remote explosives last week, claiming to kill and injure at least seven Taliban members. IS militants also beheaded another Taliban member in Mazar-e-Sharif city of Balkh province. The Taliban, meanwhile, launched an operation against an IS hideout in Hazrati Imam Sahib district of Kunduz province, killing two militants. A child inside the hideout was also killed during the operation. In June, ACLED records the largest number of armed interactions between IS and the Taliban since November 2021."

"In Hissa-e-Awal (Khinj) district, Taliban forces conducted airstrikes following the clashes, though no casualties were reported. Similar to previous weeks, civilians bore the burden of these clashes, as Taliban forces reportedly arrested and tortured 30 residents in Khost Wa Firing district in Baghlan province following clashes in the region."

"Meanwhile, armed groups targeted Muslim groups across the country last week, including members of Shiite and Salafi communities. In Puli Alam city, Logar, IS killed four members of a Shiite family inside their bakery. In Lashkargah city of Helmand, unknown perpetrators opened fire in a mosque, killing one worshipper and injuring two, while in Kabul city, the head of Salafi scholars in Afghanistan was shot dead by unidentified men. The Taliban also reportedly arrested Salafi adherents in Maimana city of Faryab province, allegedly forcing them to abandon Salafism."

Deutsche Well, Afghanistan: UN slams killings, torture under Taliban, 20 July 2022

"The UN has accused the Taliban of committing hundreds of human rights violations in Afghanistan since taking power last summer, detailing the abuses in a new report on Wednesday."

"Our monitoring reveals that despite the improved security situation since 15 August, the people of Afghanistan, in particular women and girls, are deprived of the full enjoyment of their human rights,' said Markus Potzel, deputy special representative of the secretary-general for Afghanistan."

"UNAMA, however, also documented 160 allegations of extra judicial killings, 56 incidents of torture and ill treatment and more than 170 arbitrary arrests and detentions against former government officials and security forces. The Taliban's Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice as well as the General Directorate of Intelligence were particularly mentioned in violations."

"UNAMA also had 87 reports of violence against women and girls including murder, rape, suicide, forced marriages including child marriage, assault and battery, as well as two cases of honor killings."

"Human rights violations also affected 173 journalists and media workers, 163 of which were attributed to Taliban authorities, including 122 arbitrary arrests and 33 instances of threats."

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan UN RELEASES REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE TALIBAN TAKEOVER 20 July 2022

"The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) today released a report (Human rights in Afghanistan: 15 August 2021 – 15 June 2022) outlining the human rights situation in Afghanistan over the 10 months since the Taliban takeover.

Key findings for the period 15 August 2021 – 15 June 2022:

Over the reporting period, UNAMA documented:

2106 civilian casualties (700 killed, 1406 wounded) predominantly caused by improvised explosive device (IED) attacks attributed to ISIL-KP and unexploded ordnance (UXO).

160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions, 23 instances of incommunicado detention and 56 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former ANDSF and government officials carried out by the de facto authorities.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

59 extrajudicial killings, 22 arbitrary arrests and detentions and 7 incidents of torture and ill-treatment by the de facto authorities of individuals accused of affiliation with self-identified “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province”.

18 extrajudicial killings, 54 instances of torture and ill-treatment and 113 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention and 23 cases of incommunicado detention of individuals accused of affiliation with self-identified “National Resistance Front”.

217 instances of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments carried out by the de facto authorities since 15 August 2021

118 instances of excessive use of force by the de facto authorities between 15 August 2021 and 15 June 2022.

Human rights violations affecting 173 journalists and media workers, 163 of which were attributed to the de facto authorities. Among these were 122 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention, 58 instances of ill-treatment, 33 instances of threats and intimidation and 12 instances of incommunicado detention.[1] Six journalists were also killed during the period (five by self-identified Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province, one by unknown perpetrators).

Human rights violations affecting 65 human rights defenders, 64 of which were attributed to the de facto authorities. Among these were 47 arbitrary arrests, 17 cases of incommunicado detention, 10 cases of ill-treatment and 17 cases of threats and intimidation.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Erosion Of Women's Rights, Extrajudicial Killings Plague Taliban Rule, UN Says, 20 July 2022

“Girls have been banned from school beyond the sixth grade in most of Afghanistan. In March, the Taliban ordered girls' high schools closed on the morning they were scheduled to open.”

“The report also voiced concern over the Taliban authorities' carrying out human rights violations with impunity, especially extrajudicial killings of individuals accused of affiliation with armed groups, but also cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishments, and excessive use of force by Taliban officials.

The report documented a total of 237 extrajudicial killings -- most of them, 160, targeting former members of the Afghan military and government. Suspected Islamic State militants and members of the armed opposition group identified as the National Resistance Front have also fallen victim to extrajudicial killings, the report said.”

UN News, News in Brief, 20 July 2022

“Despite an overall, significant reduction in armed violence, it revealed that terrorist attacks by ISIL extremists have killed around 700, wounded 1,406 others, and are responsible for a broad range of human rights violations. The de facto authorities have arbitrarily arrested journalists, protestors and civil society activists, denying the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression and opinion. Rights of women and girls have progressively eroded, including access to education and the workplace. In many cases their rights have been completely taken away.”

Tolo News, UNAMA Releases Human Rights Report on Past 10 Months, 20 July 2022

“UNAMA highlighted its key findings for the period 15 August 2021 – 15 June 2022:

2106 civilian casualties (700 killed, 1406 wounded) predominantly caused by improvised explosive device (IED) attacks attributed to ISIL-KP and unexploded ordnance (UXO).”

160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions, 23 instances of incommunicado detention and 56 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former ANDSF and government officials carried out by the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

de facto authorities."

59 extrajudicial killings, 22 arbitrary arrests and detentions and 7 incidents of torture and ill-treatment by the de facto authorities of individuals accused of affiliation with self-identified "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province."

18 extrajudicial killings, 54 instances of torture and ill-treatment and 113 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention and 23 cases of incommunicado detention of individuals accused of affiliation with self-identified "National Resistance Front."

217 instances of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments carried out by the de facto authorities since 15 August 2021."

118 instances of excessive use of force by the de facto authorities between 15 August 2021 and 15 June 2022.

Human rights violations affecting 173 journalists and media workers, 163 of which were attributed to the de facto authorities. Among these were 122 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention, 58 instances of ill-treatment, 33 instances of threats and intimidation and 12 instances of incommunicado detention. Six journalists were also killed during the period (five by self-identified Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province, one by unknown perpetrators).

Human rights violations affecting 65 human rights defenders, 64 of which were attributed to the de facto authorities. Among these were 47 arbitrary arrests, 17 cases of incommunicado detention, 10 cases of ill-treatment and 17 cases of threats and intimidation."

"Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, in reaction to the UNAMA report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, said the report is "inaccurate" and there are no extrajudicial killings and if anyone commits them they will be punished based on Sharia. Mujahid called the findings of the report in this regard "propaganda."

Pajhwok Afghan News, [UNAMA releases report on human rights situation in Afghanistan](#), 20 July 2022

"The Acting Afghan Government Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid has rejected the UNAMA report on human rights violations and extra-judicial killing in Afghanistan. On his Twitter handle Mujahid wrote: "UNAMA report regarding human rights situation is not real. No extra-judicial killing is permitted in the country, if someone is found guilty of such incident that person would be labeled a criminal and dealt with according to Sharia Law. UNAMA report in this regard is baseless and propaganda"

"Despite an overall reduction in armed violence between mid-August 2021 and mid-June 2022, UNAMA recorded 2106 civilian casualties (700 killed, 1406 wounded). Most of civilian casualties were attributed to targeted attacks by the armed group self-identified "Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province" against ethnic and religious minority communities in places where they go to school, worship and go about their daily lives."

"Our monitoring reveals that despite the improved security situation since 15 August, the people of Afghanistan, in particular women and girls, are deprived of the full enjoyment of their human rights," added Markus Potzel. The mission acknowledged the Taliban administration had taken some steps for the protection and promotion of human rights. In this regard, the report cited the amnesty for former government officials and security force members, the December 3 decree on women's rights and a code of conduct relating to prisoners."

"The report held the new Afghan rulers responsible for a broad range of human rights violations in the country. Since August 15, it alleged, the rights of women and girls had been progressively curtailed,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

including their rights to fully participate in education, the workplace and other aspects of public and daily life...Simultaneously, it alleged, access to justice for victims of gender-based violence had been limited by the dissolution of dedicated reporting pathways, justice mechanisms and shelters.”

“UNAMA recorded at least 160 extrajudicial killings of former government and security officials by members of the de facto authorities over the past 10 months. The report details extrajudicial killings of individuals accused of affiliation with armed groups, as well as cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments and extrajudicial killings of individuals accused of “moral” crimes and the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials.”

“Intelligence operatives were accused of being involved in perpetrating human rights violations against individuals in their custody, including extrajudicial killings, torture and ill-treatment, as well as arbitrary arrests and detentions. In the 10 months since they took control of Afghanistan, the de facto authorities have made clear their position on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of opinion. They have limited dissent by cracking down on protests and curbing media freedoms, including by arbitrarily arresting journalists, protestors and civil society activists and issuing restrictions on media outlets.”

“With regards to places of detention: encouragingly, the de facto authorities do appear to be seeking to fulfil their obligations in relation to the treatment of detainees, with the Taliban leader having issued guidance on this issue in January 2022. Progress is hindered by financial constraints, resulting at times, in inadequate food, medical care and hygiene supplies for detainees and the cessation of vocational education and training programs for prisoners that were previously funded by the international community. This is compounded by detainees remaining in extended pre-trial detention in some cases, due to the functioning of the justice system.”

“At least 59% of the population is now in need of humanitarian assistance – an increase of 6 million people compared with the beginning of 2021.”

“2106 civilian casualties (700 killed, 1406 wounded) predominantly caused by improvised explosive device (IED) attacks attributed to ISIL-KP and unexploded ordnance (UXO).

160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions, 23 instances of incommunicado detention and 56 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former ANDSF and government officials carried out by the de facto authorities.

59 extrajudicial killings, 22 arbitrary arrests and detentions and 7 incidents of torture and ill-treatment by the de facto authorities of individuals accused of affiliation with self-identified “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province”.

18 extrajudicial killings, 54 instances of torture and ill-treatment and 113 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention and 23 cases of incommunicado detention of individuals accused of affiliation with self-identified “National Resistance Front”.

217 instances of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments carried out by the de facto authorities since 15 August 2021

118 instances of excessive use of force by the de facto authorities between 15 August 2021 and 15 June 2022.

Human rights violations affecting 173 journalists and media workers, 163 of which were attributed to the de facto authorities. Among these were 122 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention, 58 instances of ill-treatment, 33 instances of threats and intimidation and 12 instances of incommunicado detention.[1] Six journalists were also killed during the period (five by self-identified Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province, one by unknown perpetrators).

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Human rights violations affecting 65 human rights defenders, 64 of which were attributed to the de facto authorities.

Among these were 47 arbitrary arrests, 17 cases of incommunicado detention, 10 cases of ill-treatment and 17 cases of threats and intimidation.”

Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in Khorasan Province Exploits Tajik Martyrs for Online Recruitment in Central Asia, 15 July 2022

“On June 18, Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) militants attacked a Sikh place of worship, or *gurdwara*, in Kabul, killing two people, although Islamic State (IS) touted a much higher casualty total (The Hindu, June 19).”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 2-8 July 2022, 14 July 2022

“In Afghanistan, IS continued its attacks on Taliban forces last week. In Hazrati Imam Sahib district in Kunduz province, IS-planted explosives targeted a Taliban vehicle. Meanwhile, in Herat city, an IS clash with Taliban forces killed and wounded a total of 20 Taliban members as well as civilians caught in the crossfire. In Kabul city, the Taliban claims to have raided an IS hideout, killing two militants (Khaama Press, 7 July 2022). However, some sources claim that IS first attacked a Taliban checkpoint with rockets, and clashes followed (Shafaqna, 7 July 2022).

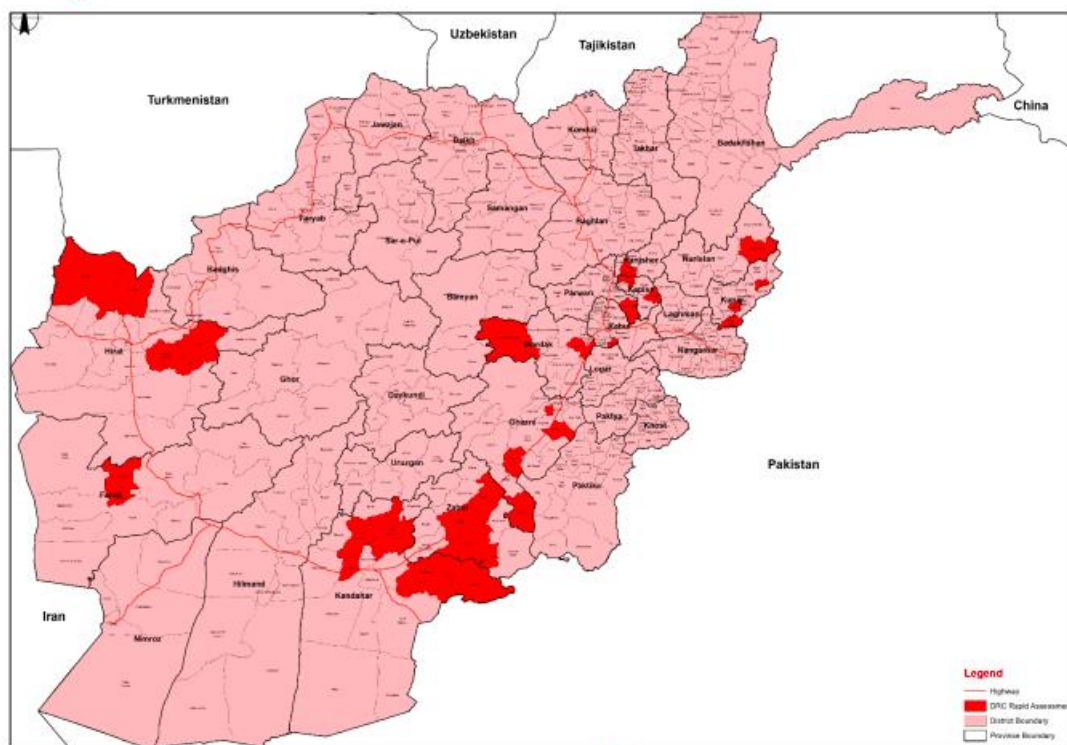
Clashes between Taliban forces and the National Resistance Front (NRF) also continued in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces. The NRF claims to have captured two areas from the Taliban in Khost Wa Firing district of Baghlan, though Taliban officials deny the claim (Afghan Islamic Press News, 8 July 2022). Similar to previous weeks, the Taliban targeted civilians in the region during these operations; they arrested 35 residents in Baghlan for providing food to the NRF (Etilaat e Roz, 7 July 2022), and displaced several families in Panjshir in order to set up military bases (Hasht e Subh, 8 July 2022). Violence in Panjshir is both common and highly volatile; it is considered an area of ‘extreme risk’ by ACLED’s Volatility and Risk Predictability Index.

Elsewhere, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan claims an attack against the Taliban in Khan Abad district of Kunduz province, which reportedly killed 17 Taliban members.”

DRC, The World Lives on Hope – Crisis and Survival in Rural Afghanistan, July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Map of locations assessed



6

“In almost one-third of the districts assessed (29%), the area had been subject to conflict involving additional non-state armed groups, including Islamic State of Khorasan (IS-K) in Kunar, pro-former Government local militias (Parwan), local Hazara militias armed against Kuchi seasonal nomads (Wardak), armed groups aligned with different political parties and tribes (Kapisa), and armed groups fighting internecine tribal conflicts (Nuristan).⁶⁷ This fragmented and high-risk security environment complicated or blocked the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance, as well as essential services such as health and education...”

“In 2021, many rural communities across Afghanistan were affected by intensifying conflict as the IEA launched a renewed offensive to capitalize on the international troop withdrawal. Two-thirds of districts assessed by DRC had sustained damage to houses and other critical infrastructure such as bazaars, roads, schools, and clinics during this period, with homes often comprehensively looted, with between two-thirds and one-half of the population displaced, usually to the nearest city.”

“The majority of districts assessed experienced ground clashes and exchange of artillery fire in 2021, with conflict tending to be centred around the district administrative centre (DAC) and main roads. Shelters located in these locations along with civilian infrastructure (schools, roads, and clinics) were often partially or completely destroyed and extensively looted.”

UN News, Thousands of children endure 'horrific conditions' in conflict zones: UN report, 11 July 2022

"The report highlights almost 24,000 verified grave violations against children, an average of some 65 violations every day. The killing and maiming of children was the most verified grave violation followed

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

by the recruitment and use of children and the denial of humanitarian access.
The places where most children were affected by grave violations in 2021 were Afghanistan, [...]."

ToloNews, OCHA Claims 27,000 Displaced in Balkhab Conflict, 8 July 2022

"The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that at least 27,000 people have been displaced following the fighting in Balkhab district in Sar-e-Pul province." [...] "... in Bamiyan province there are more than 6,000 internally displaced people"

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, HRW Investigation Uncovers Killings Of Alleged IS-K Militants Who Were Forcibly Disappeared, 8 July 2022

"A global human rights watchdog has investigated the killing of more than 100 alleged Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militants after they were disappeared by the ruling Taliban, which seized power in Afghanistan in August.

In a report released on July 7, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that residents of the eastern provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar discovered at least 100 corpses dumped in canals and other places in the region considered a hotbed of IS-K activity.

"Taliban authorities appear to have given their forces free rein to detain, 'disappear,' and kill alleged militants," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at HRW.

Gossman said their investigation focused on an emptied canal in Nangarhar where "over 100 bodies have been dumped between August 2021 and April 2022."

Based on extensive interviews in the two provinces, HRW and its local partners counted 54 bodies of men, many in an advanced state of decomposition, along a 15- to 20-kilometer stretch of the canal.

"The bodies showed evidence of torture and brutal executions: some had missing limbs, ropes around their necks, or had been beheaded or had slit throats," HRW said.

The Taliban has embarked on an aggressive campaign against Afghanistan's tiny Salafist community for alleged links to IS-K. Members of the community accused the Taliban of detaining and killing followers of the puritanical Muslim sect. They also accused the Taliban of raiding their mosques and madrasahs."

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Execute, 'Disappear' Alleged Militants, 7 July 2022

"Taliban security forces have summarily executed and forcibly disappeared alleged members and supporters of an Islamic State offshoot in eastern Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch said today. Since the Taliban took power in August 2021, residents of Nangarhar and Kunar provinces east of Kabul have discovered the bodies of more than 100 men dumped in canals and other locations."

"Taliban forces have carried out abusive search operations, including night raids, against residents they accuse of sheltering or supporting members of the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) armed group, the Afghan affiliate of the Islamic State (ISIS). During these raids, Taliban forces have beaten residents and have detained men they accuse of being ISKP members without legal process or revealing their whereabouts to their families. An unknown number have been summarily executed – shot, hanged, or beheaded – or forcibly disappeared."

"In November, a team from both groups counted 54 bodies of men, many in an advanced state of decomposition, along a 15 to 20 kilometer stretch of the emptied canal. The bodies showed evidence of torture and brutal executions: some had missing limbs, ropes around their necks, or had been beheaded or had slit throats. Healthcare workers in Nangarhar said that they had registered 118 bodies that had been found across the province between August and December."

"A media report cited one Taliban fighter who said, 'We conduct night raids and whenever we find a Daesh

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[ISIS] member, we just kill them’.”

“From September through November, Nangarhar and Kunar residents reported a wave of Taliban operations and the enforced disappearance and killing of Salafis. In some cases, relatives alleged that the Taliban took away their family members, and afterward denied that the men were in their custody. In other cases, residents said they found the bodies of relatives who had been taken away. Some were reportedly found beheaded.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, [Afghanistan's Land Mines: A Legacy Of War](#), 7 July 2022

"According to the United Nations, 150 people are killed by land mines in Afghanistan each month. Eight out of every 10 victims are children who inadvertently pick up an unexploded ordnance, some of which resemble toys."

"About 41,000 Afghan civilians have been killed or wounded by land mines and unexploded ordnance since 1988, according to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). More than two-thirds of the victims were children."

AVA, [The security forces destroyed the Daesh hideout in Kabul](#), 7 July 2022

"A source from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has told the media that the security forces have destroyed the hideout attributed to Daesh in the Khairkhaneh area of Kabul.

[...] Local residents say that yesterday evening, a relatively intense conflict took place at the Shahid intersection in Khairkhane area and continued for several hours.

A security source in a conversation with the media confirmed the occurrence of this conflict and said that the forces of the Islamic Emirate conducted an operation against the hideout of the Daesh group in the area of Khairkhane.

The source added that a number of Daesh members were killed and a number of others were arrested in this operation.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, also said in this regard that "in the area of 315 in the city of Kabul, the operation against the Daesh hideout ended with the death of 2 members of Daesh and the capture of 4 Daesh members. In this operation, many weapons were destroyed and obtained. These professional criminals had a plan of destructive acts in Kabul, which was thwarted". These clashes are taking place in the country's capital while the Islamic Emirate had previously said that the Daesh group in Afghanistan does not have a coherent front and is not considered a threat to the country except for trouble."

ACLED, [Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 25 June-1 July 2022](#), 7 July 2022

"In Afghanistan, clashes between the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Taliban occurred in Kapisa, Baghlan, and Panjshir last week. The NRF and the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) conducted a joint operation against the Taliban in Koh Band district of Kapisa province. This is the second time ACLED records a coordinated attack by the two groups since AFF declared its presence in February. Meanwhile, AFF claims to have repelled attacks by Taliban forces in Baghlan province, killing and injuring a dozen Taliban members (Twitter @AfgFreedomAFF, 30 June 2022). Additionally, an attack by the Afghanistan Liberation Movement killed three Taliban members on foot patrol in Balkh province."

"IS also attacked Taliban forces, targeting a vehicle with explosives in Kabul city, with reports indicating five Taliban members were killed or injured. Elsewhere, in Nangarhar province, Taliban forces claim to have killed five IS members during a special operation last week."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Meanwhile, Taliban forces attacked the forces of a former ethnic Hazara Taliban commander, Mawlawi Mahdi, for a second week in a row. In Sar-e Pol province, Mahdi’s forces reportedly repulsed the Taliban attack that was launched the week prior. Moreover, Mohammed Muradi, a former militia leader who had recently joined Mahdi’s forces (Hasht e Subh, 27 June 2022), was killed by the Taliban in his residence in Ghor province, along with some of his family members and six of his militiamen. Taliban forces later arrested and killed people with suspected links to Mahdi’s militia in Ghor and Sar-e Pol provinces; some sources claim tens of people were killed during these operations (Aamaj News, 29 June 2022; REF/RL, 1 July 2022). The events in Sar-e Pol contribute to the 100% increase in violence in the province over the past week relative to the past month, as flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Surge Tracker.”

“Lastly, a controversial gathering of 3,000 Islamic clerics and tribal leaders held by the Taliban in Kabul was attacked last week, with both IS and the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (NLFA) claiming responsibility (Afghan Islamic Press News, 2 July 2022; Facebook @aazadagan, 1 July 2022; Al Jazeera, 1 July 2022). However, Taliban officials refute the claims, saying the explosions were caused by a gas cylinder and that they shot two gunmen, without specifying their affiliations (Afghan Islamic Press News, 1 July 2022).”

AVA, IEA Will Not Let Foes Undermine Ties with Neighbors, 7 July 2022

"The Afghan Ministry of Foreign spokesman in a series of tweets says: “Several rockets among eight fired within Afghan-Uzbek border proximity late yesterday afternoon landed in both Afghanistan and Uzbekistan territories,”. Adding.

“The security forces immediately rushed to the area and launched serious efforts to identify and apprehend the perpetrators,”.

"Meanwhile, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman of IEA in a tweet said that missiles fired from the territory of Afghanistan towards Uzbekistan were the job of some malefic groups who want to create mistrust between the two friendly neighbors."

EurasiaNet, Islamic State threatens Central Asian and Chinese ventures in Afghanistan, 6 July 2022

"ISKP[’s] [...] strategy includes both kinetic attacks – witness the June 18 assault on a Sikh temple in Kabul, which ISKP claimed had been carried out by a Tajik suicide bomber – and psychological warfare in diverse online networks."

ATN News, Two killed, 20 wounded in Herat shootings, 4 July 2022

Pajhwok Afghan news, 02/07/2022, ‘26 killed, 8 injured in Afghanistan last week’: <https://pajhwok.com/2022/07/02/26-killed-8-injured-in-afghanistan-last-week/>

“Twenty-six people were killed and eight others injured in Afghanistan last week. Five Daesh militants were killed during a raid by security forces on a house in eastern Nangarhar province.

Security forces also conducted an operation in Ghor province, where five militiamen, including their commander, were killed and one injured [...]

One child was killed and four others were injured in explosive remnant of war (ERW) blasts in Uruzgan and Maidan Wardak provinces.

Two people were injured in a bomb attack on the Badakhshan Environmental Protection Authority head. The body of a child was recovered in Panjshir province while two corpses were fished out of a river in Takhar.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Unknown gunmen shot dead a man in Kandahar province while a child was injured in Iranian security forces' firing."

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 11-17 June 2022, 23 June 2022

"In **Afghanistan**, clashes between the Taliban and various armed groups, including IS and anti-Taliban groups, continued last week. IS targeted the Taliban in Kabul city and Kunar and Laghman provinces. The Taliban killed seven IS militants and a commander during anti-IS operations in Taloqan district of Takhar province. Two civilians were also killed and at least two injured during the clashes in Kunar and Takhar. Meanwhile, the National Resistance Front (NRF) continued its attacks on the Taliban in Parwan, Takhar, Kapisa, Baghlan, and Badakhshan provinces last week. Further clashes took place in Panjshir province, where the Taliban deployed new troops (Hasht-e Subh, 17 June 2022), with the Taliban attacking the NRF in Shutul, Rukha, and Unaba districts. Several other anti-Taliban groups also targeted the Taliban last week. In Mohammad Agha district of Logar province, the Watandost Front claimed to have killed five Taliban members. This is the second recorded attack by the Watandost Front, which claims to have seized a village from the Taliban in Ghazni province in May. Additionally, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan claims to have killed Taliban commanders in Helmand province and the intelligence director of the military university in Kabul (Facebook @aazadagan, 15 June 2022). The Afghanistan Liberation Movement also claims the killings of over a dozen Taliban members in Wardak and Urozgan provinces, including the deputy governor of Chak-e-Wardak district of Wardak. Violence targeting civilians also persisted last week, with attacks carried out by both the Taliban and IS. In Mazar-e-Sharif city of Balkh province, IS attacked a vehicle carrying airport staff, killing at least two people. In Kabul city, an IS-planted explosive killed at least four workers of Pul-e-Charki prison. Meanwhile, an unidentified group detonated a bomb inside a mosque during Friday prayers in Hazrati Imam Sahib district of Kunduz province, killing at least one civilian and wounding dozens. This was the second mosque bombing in Hazrati Imam Sahib district this year, following an attack in April that killed dozens. ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Kunduz in the past month. Taliban forces also targeted civilians across the country, including beating, detaining, or killing civilians for shaving off beards or playing music during weddings. In Takhar province, Taliban forces arrested 30 women students for leaving their dormitories without the Taliban's permission. While 10 students were later released, the whereabouts of the rest remain unknown (Afghan Women News, 20 June 2022)."

UNAMA, Briefing by Acting Special Representative Ramiz Alakbarov to the Security Council, 23 June 2022

"The overall security environment is becoming increasingly unpredictable. We are seeing clashes between forces of the de facto authorities and the armed political opposition, especially in Panjshir and Baghlan provinces, as well as improvised explosive device attacks and targeted assassination against de facto authority targets by both armed political opposition and ISIL-KP. Armed opposition attacks against de facto authorities doubled in May compared to April. The number of ISIL-KP attacks has generally decreased compared to same period last year, but their geographic scope has widened to 11 provinces as compared to six previously."

Jamestown Foundation (Central Asia), Russia, China and the US Assist Tajikistan in Strengthening Its Troubled Border With Afghanistan, 22 June 2022

"In the ten months since seizing power in Afghanistan, the Taliban has consistently stressed that its political control has eliminated armed unrest in the country. But undercutting the mullahcracy's confident assertions is ongoing resistance centered in the northern Panjshir and Baghlan provinces. Last month

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

(May), the National Resistance Forces of Afghanistan (NRF), a loose alliance of anti-Taliban factions consisting primarily of former members of the country's military and police (many of them trained by the United States military), recently announced a new offensive against the Taliban's Islamic Emirate (IE) to "liberate" the Panjshir and Andarab valleys (Hasht e Subh, May 8).

Further muddying the situation as the Afghan IE attempts to reassert its authority in Takhar and Badakhshan border provinces, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-KP) militants have not only also contested the Taliban's control but even fired rockets into neighboring Tajikistan. The fluid security situation on the Tajikistani-Afghan frontier has attracted the attention of Russia, China and the US. Each of these rival powers is providing assistance to Tajikistan to strengthen its southern border with Afghanistan while Dushanbe simultaneously copes with domestic disturbances in its restive eastern Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) (see EDM, May 24, June 1).

In a rare bilateral convergence of efforts, both Moscow and Washington are contributing money and expertise to help strengthen Tajikistan's southern frontier with Afghanistan. While Russia began offering military security assistance to Tajikistan immediately following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the US has provided Tajikistan with over \$300 million since 2002 to help combat security threats. Moreover, the United States is planning to help fund construction of Tajikistan's new border guard facility at Ayvoj in 2022 (Tj.usembassy.gov, September 1, 2021).

Since 2016, China has also assisted Tajikistan, having built a security post near Shaymak, in Tajikistan's GBAO, to monitor Afghanistan's eastern Wakkan Corridor (see EDM, December 7, 2021; The Straits Times, October 29, 2021). Efforts to reinforce Tajikistan's southern border represent the most significant international intervention in South Asia since the Taliban victory in Afghanistan ten months ago."

Gandhara, Two Killed, Almost 30 Wounded In Afghan Market Attack Amid Spate Of Attacks, 20 June 2022

"At least two people are dead and 28 others wounded after an explosion ripped through a market in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar. Officials from the Taliban Information and Culture Department in Nangarhar told RFE/RL that five Taliban members were among those injured in the June 20 blast. They did not give a cause for the explosion or the target, but local media reported that it was a car bomb aimed at killing a local Taliban official. No group or individual has claimed responsibility for the blast. The UN mission to Afghanistan immediately condemned the attack, saying children were among the casualties. "UNAMA condemns this morning's attack in a crowded bazaar in Nangarhar province which killed and wounded scores of civilians, among them some children," the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said on Twitter. "Continuing attacks targeting civilians across Afghanistan must cease immediately," UNAMA added. A spate of attacks has rocked the country in recent days. Over the weekend, members of the local branch of the Islamic State militant group attacked a Sikh shrine in Kabul, killing two people and wounding seven others, while a car bomb exploded in the 15th district of Kabul, killing two people."

Tolo News, 2 Civilians Killed, 28 Wounded in Nangarhar Blast, 20 June 2022

"At least 2 civilians were killed and 28 others including 5 members of the Islamic Emirate forces were wounded in a blast today in Ghani district in Nangarhar, said the local department of information and culture. The blast took place in the morning in Shirgar market, according to the department. The provincial department of information and culture said the blast was due to a magnetic mine targeting the vehicle of the head of the district health department. The wounded have been brought to the provincial hospital. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the blast."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA, Daesh claimed responsibility for an attack on a Hindu Temple in Kabul, 19 June 2022

"The Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for a deadly attack yesterday (Saturday, June 18) on a Hindu Temple in Karte Parwan, Kabul province. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) - Kabul: At least two people, including a Sikh citizen and an Islamic Emirate force, were killed and seven others were injured in an attack on a Sikh Gudwara yesterday. Interior Ministry spokesman told to media that the assailants targeted the guards with hand grenades before entering the Temple, then entered and clashed with security forces for two hours. Yesterday's attack, which targeted the Temple of a non-Muslim minority in Kabul, provoked national and international reactions. Meanwhile, the Sikh Dump Management Committee in Delhi called on the Indian government to relocate the remaining members of the Afghan Sikh community to the country. The committee condemned the attack on the Sikh Gudwara in Kabul and expressed concern about the future security of the Sikh minority."

DW, Afghanistan: Deadly attack hits Kabul Sikh temple, 18 June 2022

"Several blasts and gunfire hit a Sikh temple in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Saturday, a Taliban official and witnesses said. At least two people were killed and seven others injured after two gunmen assailed the temple in an hourslong attack, according to Abdul Nafi Takor, a Taliban-appointed spokesperson for the Interior Ministry. He said the assailants also died in fighting against Taliban security forces. Those killed included a Sikh worshipper and a member of the security forces, he said. A car bomb also detonated in the area but caused no casualties, Takor said earlier. Videos on social media showed black smoke emanating from the temple in Kabul's Bagh-e Bala neighborhood. Gunfire can also be heard in the videos. Who might be behind the attack? There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. However, a regional affiliate of the extremist "Islamic State" (IS) group known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province has lately increased attacks on mosques and minorities across the country. An attack claimed by the IS at another Sikh temple in Kabul in 2020 killed 25. The group is seen as the greatest security challenge facing the country's Taliban rulers, who have been clamping down on IS in eastern Afghanistan since seizing control of the country in August last year."

AVA, Consultation of US and Tajik officials / security of Tajikistan-Afghanistan border is going to be increased, 18 June 2022

"The US Central Command (Centcom) has announced that General Michael Kurilla met with the President of Tajikistan and other high-ranking officials. According to the US agency, important security issues, including improving the security of Tajikistan and Afghanistan border, were at the issues of the talks. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), US Central Command (Centcom) says it is ready to train and equip Tajik security forces to defend its borders. During a two-day visit to Dushanbe, Gen. Michael Kurilla, Commander of US Central Command (Centcom), met with Tajik President and senior security officials to discuss important security issues, including improving border security. "Tajikistan's strong borders are vital to the security of the whole of Central Asia," he said. Kurillah also clarified that security co-operation with Tajik security forces is focused on the fight against terrorism and border security operations. CENTCOM's support for Tajikistan includes the installation of ground sensors, telecommunications equipment and patrol vehicles for Tajik border guards. Gen. Kurilla stressed that the US Special Forces have gained extensive experience in the fight against terrorism over the past 20 years and can share that experience with the Tajik Armed Forces. General Kurilla assured Tajik officials that assistance to Tajikistan will continue. "I am committed to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tajikistan," he said. However, after the Islamic Emirate took control of Afghanistan, the Tajik government has repeatedly expressed concern about the possibility of insecurity on the border with Afghanistan."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA, Several explosions in Kabul, 18 June 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) - Kabul: According to eyewitness, these explosions took place on Saturday morning (June 18) at a nearby Hindu temple. Eyewitnesses say that in the aftermath of the several explosions, firing were also heard in the area. Manjinder Singh Sirsa The head of the Sikh Gurdwara in Delhi says that the Hindu temple in Kabul has been attacked by terrorist. He wrote in Twitter that explosions has taken place in the precincts of the temple. Mr. Sirsa added that Gornamo Singh the person in charge of the place of worship has spoken with him. Videos published in social media indicate that Hindus were not harmed in the incident, and based on some reports, this morning they had gathered for a religious ceremony. The Interior Ministry has not yet commented on the nature of the blasts. No individual or group has claimed responsibility for the blast. It is said that two years ago, a number of terrorist entered to the Hindu Temple and killed many hindus. Meanwhile, Zabihullah Mujahid The "Islamic Emirate" spokesman said last week that the government is committed to protecting civil, religious freedoms and supporting all Afghan in every sections."

BBC, Afghanistan gurdwara attack: Sikhs say 'We don't feel safe', 18 June 2022

"The attack on a Sikh prayer site in the Afghan capital, Kabul, began early in the morning. Militants opened fire outside the fortified doors leading to the compound housing a Sikh gurdwara, as well as the homes of members of the community. The assailants killed the security guard, and armed with grenades they managed to make their way inside, whilst Taliban members stationed at nearby checkpoints rushed after them. "My house is just in front of the gurdwara, as soon as I heard firing I looked out the window, people were saying attackers are inside," Kuljit Singh Khalsa told the BBC. "It was chaos, then all of a sudden there was a blast from outside." A bomb hidden inside a car, parked next to a Taliban checkpost, had been detonated, killing the unit's commander and ripping through the surrounding shops and homes. The attack had begun around half an hour before daily morning prayers were due to start. "If it had been later, there would've been even more people inside," Mr Khalsa said. [...] So far, there has been no claim of responsibility but it appears likely that IS was also behind this latest attack. Afghanistan's Shia and Sufi Muslim minorities have also repeatedly been targeted by the group. IS is much less powerful than the Taliban and does not control any territory, but has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in the country's history. Overall, levels of violence in Afghanistan have fallen dramatically since the Taliban returned to power - ending their insurgency - but IS is undermining the Taliban's promise to have finally brought security to the nation. [...] All the attackers were killed around three hours after the assault began, during which time intense gunfire and multiple explosions could be heard. At least one Sikh man and one member of the Taliban's security forces were killed. Wandering through the still smoking wreckage of the Gurdwara, Sikh community members said they were grateful for the Taliban's help in bringing the attack to an end, but that they did not feel safe and wanted to leave the country. "We've appealed a lot to the Indian government, to find a way to give us visas, we don't want to live here anymore," said Sukhbir Singh Khalsa. "Those of us left here are only here because we don't have visas, no-one wants to stay here. This has happened now, tomorrow it will happen again, and then again after that."

Al Jazeera, One killed, several wounded in Afghan mosque bombing: Police, 17 June 2022

"An explosion at a mosque in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province has killed at least one worshipper and wounded seven others, a Taliban official said. Dozens of people had gathered inside the mosque in the district of Imam Sahib for Friday prayers when an explosive device detonated, said Obaidullah Abedi, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kunduz police chief."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

“Afghan women are rapidly facing the worst-case scenario many feared. While Afghanistan has ratified a number of international treaties including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the de facto authorities remain far from complying with those international obligations, in both policy and practice, to respect and protect the rights of women and girls. [...] During my visit, I recognised the significance of the general amnesty granted to the former officials of the former Government and members of the security forces, as an important step towards reconciliation after so many decades of war. I am however concerned that the Human Rights Service of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to receive credible reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, ill-treatment and extra-judicial killings – particularly of persons associated with the former government and its institutions. [...] UNAMA also continues to record the impact of attacks on civilians. In April alone, a spate of improvised explosive devices attacks resulted in civilians being killed and injured at schools, places of worship, markets and while on public transportation. Ethnic and religious minorities have also been directly attacked. I remind the de facto authorities of their responsibility to protect all Afghans subject to their control. I also remain concerned about the information received of alleged human rights violations and abuses against civilians in the northern provinces, including Panjshir, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front. There are serious allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and torture. I call upon both parties to this conflict to observe restraint and to fully respect international human rights law and applicable international humanitarian law.”

AVA, Militant commander killed in special forces raid in Kabul, 13 June 2022

“Zabiullah Mujahid, the IEA’s spokesman, said the militant commander was killed and another was arrested during the operation. Mujahid did not however say which group the insurgent belonged to. “A prominent enemy commander named Yusof had been killed and another named Mohammad Agha had been arrested during the operation,” Mujahid tweeted. “These people were important members of a group of enemies who were responsible for attacking mosques and other worship places in Kabul and blowing up electricity pylons,” Mujahid added. Mujahid also said further details of the operation would be shared with the media later.”

AVA, Gunmen shoot airport workers in Balkh, 13 June 2022

“Gunmen opened fire on a vehicle carrying airport workers in Afghanistan’s northern Balkh province on Sunday, killing two of them and wounding six more, police said. Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, The attack happened as the victims were travelling from Mazar-i-Sharif International Airport to the city center. Asif Waziri, a spokesman for Balkh police, said that the attack happened around 3:00p.m. in PD 10 of the provincial capital Mazar-i-Sharif. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.”

Ariana News, Seven Daesh members killed in Takhar operation, 12 June 2022

“Seven members of Daesh militant group were killed in an operation by security forces in Afghanistan’s northern Takhar province on Saturday, police said. The militants were hiding in a house in Prozhay Sharqi, District 4 of the provincial capital Taluqan. Habibullah Shakir, the police chief of Takhar, said that security forces carried out the raid on Saturday afternoon based on an intelligence report. He said that the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

operation lasted for one hour, as a result of which seven militants were killed, three more were arrested and some weapons and ammunition were seized. Two civilians were also killed during the raid, he said. Zabihullah Mujahid, the government's spokesman, said the raid targeted Daesh's funding, equipping and training center. He said that eight key militants including their commander Yonus Uzbekistani were killed in the operation. Separately, Sunday saw two bomb blasts happening in northeastern provinces of Badakhshan and Kunduz. One child was injured in the Badakhshan explosion while the one in Kunduz left three people wounded."

AVA, UNAMA's outgoing head meets with Haqqani, 12 June 2022

"In a series of tweets Saturday night Lyons said that in a meeting with Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting minister of interior, she emphasized the need to fight terrorism and narcotics and to strengthen cooperation for humanitarian operations. She also said there was a need to work together to fight the recent cholera outbreak in the country. The Ministry of Interior also issued a statement acknowledging the importance of the work done by Lyons and said they appreciated her efforts and her level of engagement with the new authorities. Meanwhile, Lyons said during another meeting with Abdullah that they discussed the fight against terrorism and the key role to be played by regional countries in creating peace and stability in Afghanistan. These were Lyons' final meetings in Afghanistan after her two year tenure ended this past week."

AVA, Dr. Abdullah met with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in Kabul, 12 June 2022

"The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in Kabul announced his meeting with Dr. Abdullah last night (Saturday, June 11). According to her; the fight against terrorism was one of the important topics discussed during the meeting. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA): Deborah Lines, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Kabul, said on Twitter last night (June 11) that she had two separate meetings with Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the former National Reconciliation Council, and Sirajuddin Haqqani, Minister The interior of the Islamic Emirate has emphasized the importance of the fight against terrorism. In a meeting with Dr. Abdullah Abdullah spoke about the fight against terrorism and the region's key role in shaping Afghanistan's future. Ms. Lines also recalled her meeting with Sirajuddin Haqqani in another tweet, saying that the focus was on fighting terrorism, counter-narcotics, strengthening cooperation for humanitarian operations, and responding to the recent cholera outbreak. Meanwhile, Ms. Lions's mission is nearing completion and she recently held farewell meetings with UN diplomats."

AVA, Security Situation in Parwan is Admissible, 12 June 2022

"During a meeting, in Sapedar palace the chief police commander of Parwan Mawlawi Azizullah provided details on the security situation and said security and peace are ensured in the province, according to a statement. Deputy Prime Minister Kabir praised the security situation in that province, said the Islamic Emirate security forces are in the service of the people, and will never spare any efforts in this respect. In the meeting, the deputy political directed the Necessary orders to the chief police commander of Parwan and other local member officials of the province to ensure better security in that province. Parwan is one of Kabul's neighboring provinces to the north, which after the collapse of the former government, witness no insecurity or security incidents on the rise of the Islamic Emirate."

Pajhwok, 15 people killed, 4 injured in Afghanistan last week, 11 June 2022

"Nineteen people were killed and injured in Afghanistan last week, while views expressed by different countries and international organizations regarding Afghanistan showed that the country was still under

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

their focus. [...] Last week, 15 people were killed and four others were injured in Afghanistan last week. According to reports one civilian, five security personnel were killed and another civilian was injured in a roadside blast in Kandahar province last week. The landmine was planted in the past. A man was also killed as a result of a blast in Kunduz province. According to local sources, unknown gunmen killed two persons in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces while bodies of three persons were recovered in Baghlan last week. Reports showed Pakistani forces shot dead a man in the Angor Ada area when the slain person wanted to cross the Durand Line into Pakistan. One person was killed and another injured as a result of a violent dispute between two families in Uruzgan province. In Nangahrar, security forces killed one person over alleged robbery and injured two others. [...] According to weekly Pajhwok reports, last week six people were killed and four others injured in Afghanistan.”

Al Jazeera, Minibus bomb attack kills four in Afghan capital: Police, 11 June 2022

“A bomb blast on a minibus killed at least four people and injured several others in the Afghan capital Kabul, police said. The explosion on Saturday occurred in the eastern Bagrami district of the city, according to Afghanistan’s TOLONews network, and is the latest in a series of deadly blasts that have rocked Afghanistan in recent months. [...] Police spokesman Khalid Zadran said a team of Taliban security personnel had been deployed to the area to investigate the bombing of the minibus, which had caught fire. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the blast that occurred in an area mainly inhabited by members of the Sunni Pashtun community. Bomb attacks have increased recently in Afghanistan, as the Taliban marks almost a year since seizing power in August 2021.”

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 28 MAY-3 JUNE 2022, 9 June 2022

“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, Taliban forces came under attack from anti-Taliban groups, the Islamic State (IS), and the National Resistance Front (NRF) in Afghanistan. Civilians in Panjshir province were detained and reportedly tortured following NRF-Taliban clashes. In Pakistan, IS and unknown groups clashed with security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, while Baloch separatists increased attacks against security forces and civilians in Balochistan. In India, security forces conducted operations against militant groups amid increasing militant attacks on civilians in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), while communal clashes broke out between Muslim and Hindu groups in Uttar Pradesh state. In Sri Lanka, anti-government demonstrations continued amid the country’s worst economic crisis in decades. In Bangladesh, clashes involving Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supporters continued across several divisions. In Afghanistan, the Taliban continued to arrest and reportedly torture civilians across Panjshir province last week, accusing them of cooperating with NRF forces. In Hissa-e-Awal (Khinj) district, 100 people were arrested on 1 June, including minors and the elderly, despite local residents contending that the detained did not have any links to the NRF (Subhe Kabul, 2 June 2022). In Badakhshan province, civilians were also forcibly recruited to fight against the NRF, with the Taliban reportedly torturing those who refused (Hasht e Subh, 1 June 2022). The arrest and reported torture of civilians comes amid ongoing clashes between the Taliban and the NRF, mostly centered in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces. These trends contribute to the 225% increase in violence in Panjshir in the past month relative to the past year flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Threat Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir in the past month. Other armed groups, including the Afghanistan Liberation Movement, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan (NLFA), and IS, also continued to target Taliban forces last week. The Afghanistan Liberation Movement claims the killing of eight Taliban members in Qalat district of Zabul, and the NLFA claims attacks in Kandahar and Takhar province. In Kandahar, the NLFA killed a senior Taliban commander during an attack in Zhire district. In Takhar, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

group attacked a prison in Taloqan city, freeing two former military officers and killing nine Taliban members. Meanwhile, IS increased its attacks on Taliban forces compared to the week prior, killing at least seven Taliban members in Kabul, Kunar, Kunduz, and Nangarhar.”

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance.’, 9 June 2022
“Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a law student in Kabul reports on conflict between Taliban fighter and resistance forces in the Panjshir valley area of the country. For privacy and security reasons, we are withholding our correspondent’s name. The text has only been lightly edited to respect the author’s voice. The Afghan resistance war on the Taliban is very likely to escalate, according to a recent report by UN experts. The report notes that the main military threats against Taliban are the National Resistance Force-NRF (an anti-Taliban movement made of The Northern Alliance that fought against the Soviets, plus former government military personnel), and ISIS-K. The Taliban have proved to be fragmented, and internal conflicts are evident all the way to the bottom of their ranks. In recent months, the Taliban have preferred members of their own ethnic group in provinces which are made up of predominantly Persian speakers, have confiscated lands from Hazara people and awarded them to Pashtuns, have conducted targeted killings of former military personnel, and – the jewel on top – have sexually harassed women whose husbands or other family members have fought against them in the past. An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance. Given the history of Afghanistan, the day of a full uprising is not far off; and the provocative and oppressing behaviour of the Taliban against other ethnic groups – such as backing their own tribal members and kin to monopolize trade, government jobs and any service a government is expected to provide – is making the idea of an uprising and a full escalated war against them more plausible and expected. The UN report speculates that after weather change in the country the fighting against Taliban could intensify. The Washington Post meanwhile reports that Taliban are engaged in fighting in Panjshir province, noting that the “Taliban have been denying any conflict, yet thousands of their fighters are stationed in the valley”. The fighting in Panjshir has been intense and more than a hundred Taliban have been killed and many more injured in recent weeks. The NRF has been fairly successful in their guerrilla attacks and have taken out Taliban fighters and important figures in the valley. The major part of the casualties inflicted on the Taliban come from their own counter offenses to finish of the resistance once and for all, but having the higher ground gives the NRF an incredible advantage in keeping them at a distance and carrying out strikes which have delivered fatal blows to Taliban fighters. In response, the Taliban have been detaining hundreds of civilians in Panjshir, have carried out tens of field executions and have been torturing friends and families of the NRF members for information, some of whom have been reported dead after intense torture. In one incident a shepherd was killed by torture and his family were threatened to keep his death quiet or meet the same fate as him. Crimes against humanity, genocide and death by torture are happening in Panjsher, Andarab and Takhar provinces as I write this report. An open letter to the UN has been signed by 60 experts, professors and PhD holders around the world to call for an immediate stop to human rights violation against Tajiks in the aforementioned provinces.”

Gandhara, 'Rubbing Salt Into Our Wounds': In Pakistan, Opposition Grows To Impending Deal With Tehrik-e Taliban, 8 June 2022

“Lawyer Fazal Khan says he feels furious following Pakistan's ongoing peace negotiations with the hard-line militant group Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). His eldest son, eighth-grader Sahibzada Omar Khan, was killed in the TTP's most horrific attack.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

"The Taliban captured Baghlan and Panjshir in early September, weeks after toppling the Western-backed Afghan government and seizing power in Kabul. Since April, deadly clashes have erupted between resistance forces and the Taliban in both provinces. Last month, heavy clashes broke out in parts of Panjshir, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Residents alleged that some civilians accused of having links with the NRF were executed. Others were beaten and tortured in Taliban custody, they said."

"Meanwhile, locals told Radio Azadi that the Taliban detained more than 100 civilians in the Paryan district of Panjshir in the past week. Their whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, the Taliban said it had detained an unspecified number of people accused of having links with the NRF. Locals have also alleged that Taliban fighters have recently beheaded several NRF fighters who were captured, a claim the Taliban has rejected. The ongoing fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Panjshir."

DW, Taliban faces threats from 'Islamic State', UN Says, 3 June 2022

"The Taliban regime faces multiple threats from al-Qaida, the "Islamic State" (IS) group, and an insurgency in the northern region of Panjshir, according to a new report prepared for the UN Security Council. The report suggested that neither IS nor al-Qaida is expected to be able to launch international attacks "before 2023 at the earliest, regardless of their intent or of whether the Taliban acts to restrain them."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 21-27 MAY 2022, 1 June 2022

"Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, Islamic State (IS), unknown groups, and the Taliban attacked civilians in Afghanistan, while anti-Taliban groups and IS continued to attack the Taliban. [...] In Afghanistan, IS, unidentified groups, and the Taliban targeted civilians last week. On 25 May, at least nine civilians were killed and dozens injured in Mazar-e-Sharif city in Balkh province when remote bombs detonated in three minibuses carrying people from the Hazara community. IS claimed responsibility for the attack (Al Jazeera, 25 May 2022). This attack was the third IS attack in Mazar-e-Sharif city in the past month, with the previous attacks targeting Shiite Muslims. On the same day, another explosion occurred inside a mosque in Kabul city, killing at least five people. Similar to other deadly mosque attacks in Kabul on 29 April and 13 May, the perpetrators of the attack remain unknown.

Taliban forces also carried out attacks targeting civilians across the country. Among these attacks, the Taliban opened fire at a wedding ceremony in Surkh Rud district of Nangarhar province for unclear reasons, injuring the bride and many others. The Taliban also targeted civilians for playing music in Kabul city.

Meanwhile, anti-Taliban groups carried out attacks against the Taliban across the country last week. The National Resistance Front (NRF) continued offensives in Panjshir province, as well as Parwan and Kapisa, claiming to have killed at least 40 Taliban members in Panjshir. Meanwhile, the Taliban reportedly conducted operations against two NRF bases in the province. Taliban forces also continued to detain and torture locals in Panjshir, including elders and children (Hasht-e Subh, 26 May 2022). These trends contribute to the 256% increase in violence in the province last month relative to the past year, as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of this increased violence to come in Panjshir in the past month. Elsewhere, in Ghazni province, the Afghanistan Liberation Movement claimed to have killed the Taliban's chief of intelligence in a mine explosion (Shafaqna, 27 May 2022). In Kabul province, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan claimed to have conducted an attack on the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban police chief's house in Qarabagh district, reportedly killing seven Taliban members (Subhe Kabul, 25 May 2022).

IS also carried out multiple attacks against the Taliban in Kabul city, including a suicide bombing that killed at least two Taliban members during a commemoration ceremony for former Taliban leader Akhtar Mansour (TOLO News, 22 May 2022; Twitter @Natsecjeff, 22 May 2022). IS also targeted a Taliban vehicle with an explosive device, killing or injuring all those on board."

Tolo News, Jirga in Kabul From Tribal Areas for Talks With TTP: Report, 1 June 2022

"A grand Jirga of 50 people arrived in Kabul on Wednesday morning to attend the ongoing negotiations between the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the government of Pakistan, a Pakistan news agency reported. According to the report, the Prime Minister Mullah Hassan Akhund also met with the two sides. "The tribal elder of Pakistan and other important figures are in Kabul. The Jirga will assist in talks going on between the Pakistan government institutions and TTP," said Tahir Khan, a Pakistani government official. The talks are said to be focusing on the extension of a ceasefire, the implementation of Shariah law, release of TTP prisoners and the return of the tribal areas to their previous state. "Pakistan had good relations with the Afghan Taliban before and now as well. The Pakistani Taliban has relations with the Afghan Taliban," said Shir Hassan Hassan, a political analyst. "Now, there is this drama of negotiations under the title of peace, they (Pakistan) want to show the world that the Afghan Taliban has relations with the Pakistani Taliban," said Azizi Marij, a military analyst. The Islamic Emirate has yet to comment on this."

Pajhwok, Peace Monitor: Weekly Report: 21 killed, 38 injured in Afghanistan last week, 28 May 2022

KABUL (Pajhwok): Fifty-nine people were killed and wounded across Afghanistan in violent incidents last week when the formation of a planned grand jirga, structure of the Reconciliation Commission and strategy for *hijab* evoked mixed reactions. [...] Twenty-one people were killed and 38 others injured, excluding casualties from natural disasters, in Afghanistan last week. According to reports, six people were killed and 18 others injured in a bomb blast inside a mosque in Kabul last week. Ten people were killed and 15 others injured in separate blasts in northern Balkh province. Daesh claimed responsibility for the Balkh attacks. Last week, two people were wounded in a mortar shell blast in Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces. Two people were killed in security forces' firing on a wedding procession in Nangarhar province. A man was killed in Maidan Wardak province last week when one person was injured in Kabul. Reports said unknown gunmen killed a woman in Faryab last week while security force killed three kidnappers during a raid in Parwan province. [...] During the previous week, 17 people had been killed and 16 others injured in Afghanistan."

The National News, Explosions in Afghanistan kill 14 people, 26 May 2022

"The explosions targeted one mosque and three minivans"

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The expert expresses concern about information, received directly, of human rights violations and abuses against civilians in Panjshir, Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Takhar Provinces, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front. There are serious allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced displacement. The Special Rapporteur urges the parties to this conflict to observe restraint and to fully respect international human rights law and applicable international humanitarian law. He calls on the authorities to permit human rights monitors access to these areas. The Special Rapporteur highlights the high number of reports since August 2021 of intimidation, harassment, attacks, arrests, and in some cases killing or disappearance of journalists, prosecutors, and judges for exercising their duties, as well as of civil society for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association. “I have received credible information about physical ill-treatment and mental harm inflicted on a range of actors, including human rights defenders, that previously made up a core part of the Afghan vibrant civil society”, observed the Special Rapporteur.”

UNAMA, STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL - ON AFGHANISTAN, 26 May 2022

“The Secretary-General condemns the recent attacks in Afghanistan, including on passenger vehicles in Mazar-e-Sharif City and the Masjid Sharif Hazrat Zakaria mosque in Kabul City, which have claimed the lives of numerous civilians, among them members of the Hazara Shia community and at least 16 children. The Secretary-General extends his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a swift recovery to those injured. Attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including mosques, are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law. The Secretary-General reiterates his call on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, as well as their right to freely practice their religion.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report # 5 1-30 April 2022, 26 May 2022

“Children face extreme violence in Afghanistan with targeted attacks against schools and mosques, as well as air-strikes and explosive remnants of war (ERW) killing at least 34 children in April”

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

“The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] noted that armed hostilities in many parts of the country had ceased and there was a consequent reduction in conflict-related casualties since the Taliban takeover. He said the recently established commission for the return of leading Afghan personalities may provide an opportunity for dialogue and potentially strengthen governance. While the granting of the general amnesty to officials of the former Government and members of the security forces could be a first step toward reconciliation, he remains alarmed about reports of ongoing extrajudicial and revenge killings of former members of the security forces and officials and door-to-door searches. [...] Bennett called for investigations into a series of attacks on places of worship and schools in Kabul, Kunduz, and Balkh provinces, instances of which have been claimed by the ISIS-K group. He said that such attacks specifically targeting members of the Hazara, Shia, and Sufi communities are becoming increasingly systematic in nature and reflect elements of an organizational policy, thus bearing hallmarks of crimes against humanity.”

UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Severity Overview (April 2022), 26 May 2022

“Key Findings (as of March 2022)

Consolidating access severity scores across all humanitarian partner groups – UN Agencies, International NGOs and National NGOs – reveals that from the 401 districts across Afghanistan, the level of access

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

constraints were found to be:

- High in 19 districts (representing 5 per cent of all districts).
- Moderate in 93 districts (23 per cent).
- Lower in 289 districts (72 per cent).

Interferences by the de facto Taliban authorities are the most common impediments faced by all humanitarian partners, including for those ranked with lower access constraints. 82 per cent of the districts across Afghanistan face high (32) and medium (297) priority of needs, 26 per cent of which are also perceived to have high (14) and moderate (70) access constraints. Findings in this document thus reveal that while physical access has markedly improved since August 2021 - mainly due to the significant reduction in armed conflict - various access constraints nevertheless persist, with varying impact on humanitarian actors ability to implement programmes and deliver assistance and services. Note that 1) the mere existence of an access impediment according to the criteria - such as the establishment of a checkpoint - does not necessarily slow down or hinder the response; and 2) the perception of quality of access is informed by severity and the magnitude of the potential impact on affected people and humanitarian staff, and not just by frequency (which speaks to the low perception of access constraints compared to the high number of impediments reported)."

Long War Journal, Tajik terrorist serves as Taliban commander in northern Afghanistan, 25 May 2022

"As the Taliban continues to maintain that it doesn't allow foreign fighters in Afghanistan, a Tajik national and commander for the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaat Ansarullah remains in control of several districts in a northern Afghan province. During the Taliban's swift offensive across Afghanistan last spring and summer, the Taliban placed five districts in the northern province of Badakhshan under the control of Mahdi Arsalon, a Tajik national and a commander in the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaat Ansarullah (JA). Arsalon was given control of the districts by Qari Fasihuddin, an ethnic Tajik Taliban commander who served as the shadow governor of Badakhshan at the time. Fasihuddin has since been appointed to serve as the Taliban's chief of army staff. The clear cooperation between the Taliban and Jamaat Ansarullah directly contradicts repeated Taliban claims that their regime does not provide safe haven to foreign fighters. In an interview with CNN this past week, the Taliban's Minister of the Interior, and leader of the Haqqani Network, Siraj Haqqani doubled down on the assertion, declaring that the Taliban does not support foreign fighters and does not allow Afghanistan to serve as a breeding ground or launching pad for terrorism. Numerous terror groups, including Al Qaeda, the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Hizbul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, the Turkistan Islamic Party, Katibat Imam Bukhari, and a host of others are known to operate inside Afghanistan. These groups are closely allied with the Taliban and helped the group take control of the country in order to establish the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. On his Facebook account, Arsalon recently posted videos of Jamaat Ansarullah fighters, or "Tajik Taliban" forces, operating along the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border in Badakhshan's districts of Kuf Ab, Khwahan, Maimay, Nusay, and Shekay."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 7-13 MAY 2022, 19 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, the Taliban intensified operations against the NRF in the northern Panjshir and Baghlan provinces last week. These clashes led civilians to flee their homes, while reportedly also being targeted and tortured by the Taliban (CBS News, 16 May 2022; RFE/RL, 13 May 2022). Further clashes between the NRF and Taliban forces were reported in Parwan, Kapisa, and Warsaj district, Takhar province, after the NRF claimed to have seized key points in Warsaj from the Taliban the week prior. At least 12 civilians were killed by Taliban forces in Warsaj district, as some civilians, including the former governor of Warsaj, were

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

tortured for information on the NRF (Subhe Kabul, 11 May 2022). Taliban forces also carried out airstrikes in Warsaj, prompting civilians to flee. ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in both Panjshir and Takhar in the past month. Meanwhile, IS and anti-Taliban groups targeted Taliban forces across the country. IS killed at least three Taliban members and injured others in attacks in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. In Ghazni province, the anti-Taliban Afghanistan Liberation Movement conducted a rocket attack in Waghaz district, claiming to have caused Taliban casualties. Also in Ghazni, the Watandost Front, or Patriotic Front, claimed to have seized control of a village in Ab Band district during an attack on a Taliban base – reportedly the group's first armed interaction with the Taliban (Subhe Kabul, 20 May 2022)."

Tolo News, US DoD Expects Kabul's Restrictions on Al-Qaeda to 'Loosen', 18 May 2022

"The DoS (Department of State) [in the US] assessed that the Taliban has taken steps to implement many of its counterterrorism commitments in the 2020 Doha Agreement with the US Government regarding al-Qaeda and other groups, though continued monitoring and engagement will remain essential. However, USCENTCOM assessed that the Taliban will likely loosen these restrictions over the next 12 to 24 months, allowing al-Qaeda greater freedom of movement and the ability to train, travel, and potentially re-establish an external operations capability," said a Lead Inspector General Report to the US Congress. The report cited Daesh as the top terrorist threat in Afghanistan with "approximately 2,000 members operating in the country." Analysts said that some of the organizations are inflating the issues in Afghanistan. "The reports of the officials and some American organizations in this regard are most likely based on political issues, they either overemphasize or downplay the issue but the truth is as long as these groups are present on Afghan soil and are active here and being supported, it is dangerous for Afghanistan and they should be considered an imminent threat," said Asadullah Nadeem, a military veteran. But the current Afghan government denied the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan. "There are no movements, no forces in our country which can plan attacks against others. The Islamic Emirate, based on its policy, doesn't allow anyone to use the Afghan soil against others," said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate."

BBC News, Afghan resistance attack Taliban, sparking reprisals in Panjshir, 17 May 2022

"The Taliban have been accused of human rights abuses during clashes with resistance forces in Panjshir province, to the north of Kabul. One local resident told the BBC his unarmed elderly relative had been shot by the group, who seized power in Afghanistan last August. Another saw a neighbour beaten by the Taliban until he fell unconscious. A local Taliban spokesman denied any abuses had taken place or that any of the group's members had been killed. The fighting is localised and at this stage does not represent a challenge to the Taliban's control of the country, but it is the most significant sustained armed opposition the group has faced since coming to power. In recent days, fighters belonging to the National Resistance Front launched a guerrilla attack on Taliban forces in the area, who responded by sending a large number of reinforcements to Panjshir. Taliban forces were ambushed and a number were allegedly killed - something Taliban officials have denied. Details on casualty figures, and even the extent of the fighting, are difficult to ascertain. The Taliban appear to be downplaying the clashes, while claims by the NRF often seem exaggerated. Two local sources said that about 15 unarmed civilians had been killed by the Taliban in Panjshir so far."

Gandhara, New Reports Of Fighting In Afghanistan's Panjshir Trigger Fresh Claims Of Taliban War Crimes, 13 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Resistance to the Taliban is flaring up in northeastern Afghanistan, and as reports of deadly fighting increase, so are claims of war crimes against civilians.

The fighting is centered in the center and south of Panjshir Province, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban and the last province to fall to the extremist group after it seized control of the rest of the country in August.”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: armed resistance against the Taliban continues, 12 May 2022

"Since their takeover of Afghanistan the Taliban have tried to cover up any news of revolt and resistance against them, although as reported by Afghanistan International since August of last year there have been at least 13 clashes between Taliban and the anti-Taliban movements in Baghlan province, 8 in Panjshir province and 3 in Takhar province. Also there have been minor clashes and attacks on Taliban in six other provinces, the capital being excluded. As recently as last Friday, May 6, there were reports of yet another conflict between the Taliban and the National Resistance Force; an NRF spokesperson claimed 22 Taliban killed and 6 wounded. The Taliban have denied the existence of any conflict in Panjshir at first, though videos of fighting and of the Taliban's reinforcement convoys moving toward Panjshir have been shared on social media. Hasht-e-sobh, the most read news paper in the country, has confirmed that 20 bodies of Taliban fighters have been carried to the southern provinces. Hasht-e-sobh, quoting from ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), reports that at least six freedom fighter groups are currently engaged against the Taliban and are gaining influence among the public here. The National Resistance Force is the current dominant group among the anti-Taliban movements. The Azadegan (Free People) Front has been jointly fighting the Taliban in the recent days with the NRF. The National Liberation Front is another group, which in a recent strike killed a prominent Taliban figure in the west of Kabul who was known to be the organizer of suicide attacks against Shiites people. The Wolves of Jawzjan is an anti-Taliban movement mainly formed by Uzbeks. The formation of The Afghan Liberation Movement, a Pashtun-led group, is thought to be a giant step for the anti-Taliban movements, although the other two are minor groups."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 23 APRIL-6 MAY 2022, 12 May 2022

"Meanwhile, armed groups continued to carry out attacks against civilians over the past two weeks, especially targeting minority Muslim communities ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid Al Fitr on 30 April. IS militants carried out deadly explosive attacks targeting Shiite Muslims in Balkh province and Kabul, killing at least 11 people in Mazar-i Sharif city on 28 April. Meanwhile, in the deadliest attack thus far in 2022, unidentified militants detonated an explosive during Friday prayers at a mosque in Kabul city on 29 April, killing 50 Sufi Muslims. Further explosive attacks targeted power pylons in Kabul and Parwan provinces, causing power outages across 11 provinces during Eid Al Fitr (Al Arabiya News, 30 April 2022). While some of the explosions were claimed by IS, the attackers of the other attacks remain unknown."

International Institute for Strategic Studies, Conflict in Afghanistan: A new regional security map and state-building implications since the Taliban takeover, 11 May 2022

[see video via hyperlink]

ToloNews, EU 'Concerned' by Reports of Civilian Casualties in Panjshir, 11 May 2022

"The European Union Ambassador to Afghanistan, Andreas von Brand, expressed concerns over the "reports of killings of civilians and mistreatment in Panjshir." However, the local officials in Panjshir denied the reports of civilian casualties."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

" The videos that are being circulated on social media shows clashes in Panjshir but the Islamic Emirate said the situation in Panjshir is normal. According to the Islamic Emirate, there are some clearing operations that have been launched in the provinces of Panjshir and Baghlan. This comes as the Resistance Front claimed it had overrun some areas in Panjshir, Baghlan and Takhar provinces and that its forces inflicted casualties on the Islamic Emirate, but the Islamic Emirate denied it."

ToloNews, Islamic Emirate: "Adversaries in Panjshir Surrendered", 10 May 2022

"The Islamic Emirate said that more than 100 of their opponents have surrendered through the mediation of tribal elders. Meanwhile, the Resistance Front claimed that many civilians have been targeted by the Islamic Emirate in Andarab district of Baghlan. The Islamic Emirate denied the civilian casualties."

ToloNews, 5 Islamic Emirate Troops Killed in Panjshir Clash: Local Official, 9 May 2022

"At least five members of Islamic Emirate forces were killed and two were wounded in a clash that took place on Friday in Dara district of central Panjshir province, local officials said on Monday."

Khaama, Resistance Front: 22 Taliban Militants Killed; Taliban: We Had No Casualties in the Panjshir Conflict, 9 May 2022

"Hostilities had grown in Dara district, but a small-scale damage had been done to Taliban troops, including the destruction of three vehicles and the injury of three members," Abu Bakr Siddiqui, spokesman for the Taliban governor in Panjshir province, told the media today, 9th May. Six Taliban were captured and seven Taliban tanks were entirely destroyed, according to the spokesperson for NRF. While the spokesman for the NRF claims that the Taliban are under pressure in Panjshir and have suffered casualties, a Taliban spokesman for the province claims that their "operation" to clear members of the NRF in the AbdullahKhel village has forced them to flee to the mountains. However, public sources in Panjshir province state that two military helicopters evacuated all Taliban bodies and wounded to Kabul yesterday."

Pajhwok Afghan News, Pajhwok Peace Monitor: Weekly Report, 8 May 2022

"At least six people were killed and as many others were injured in Afghanistan last week. The death toll does not include casualties caused in natural disasters. According to reports, a woman was killed and three other civilians were injured in a car bomb blast in third police district of capital Kabul. Separately, a car bomb in Hesa-i-Dawum district of Panjshir province injured the district police chief's brother, local sources said. Reports say unidentified gunmen killed two civilians in Uruzgan province and a child was killed and two others were injured in an IED blast in Helmand province. Crime branch chief of Tala wa Barfak district of Baghlan and an official of the province's power utility were shot dead by unidentified gunmen. A woman was killed in Zaranj city, capital of Nimroz province, and a man was killed in a dispute over irrigation water in Chak district of MaidanWardak province. [...] At least six people were killed and eight others were injured in Afghanistan the week before last."

Gandhara, Taliban Investigating Report That Islamic State Fired Rockets Into Tajikistan, 8 May 2022

"The Islamic State (IS) extremist group said earlier on May 8 that it had fired eight rockets from Afghanistan into the territory of neighboring Tajikistan, according to an Afghan media report. The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) news agency quoted an IS press release claiming the militants had fired the rockets from the Khawaja Ghar district of Afghanistan's Takhar Province toward unspecified military targets in Tajikistan on May 7. In a statement, however, Tajikistan said bullets, not rockets, were fired accidentally

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

into Tajik territory during a firefight on the Afghan side of the border between Taliban forces and IS militants."

Khaama, The National Resistance Front to Reassume the Control of Sections of Panjshir Province, 7 May 2022

"The Resistance Front claims that operations in Panjshir have resumed, with their first operation claiming sections of the province. The Resistance Front's spokesman, Sibghatullah Ahmadi, tweeted last night, May 7, that the districts of AbdullahKhel and Abshar, with the exception of their centers, had fallen to the Front. He also labeled all of the Resistance Front's held territories as crucial and strategic, noting that the district centers were under siege and that the Taliban had asked more time to surrender. The operation was carried out as the Taliban Red Unit was conducting house-to-house searches in the two districts, according to the spokesman for the Resistance Front. The operation has killed 13 Taliban fighters, and Ahmadi claims that five of their armored vehicles have been destroyed."

Khaama, Mujahid: No Military Operations Have Been Carried Out Against Our Forces in Panjshir and Takhar, 7 May 2022

"In response to statements by Sebghatullah Ahmadi, spokesman for the Resistance Front, claiming sections of Panjshir province had fallen into the front's control, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said no military actions had been carried out against their forces in Panjshir."

Khaama, ISIS Trying to Regroup in Afghanistan: Gen. Milley, 6 May 2022

"Chairman of the US Joint Chief of Staff General Mark Milley said Tuesday the terrorist groups – including the Islamic State (ISIS) – are trying to regroup in Afghanistan, according to sources, exclaiming it poses a threat to the United States mainland."

Dawn, Blasts cut power to millions in Afghanistan, 1 May 2022

"KABUL: Millions of people across 11 provinces in Afghanistan faced blackouts on Saturday after two power transmission towers were blown up just west of the capital, authorities said. Two pylons in the province of Parwan were bombed late on Friday, cutting off electricity to the capital and neighbouring provinces. "The enemies... have blown up two electricity pylons with bombs," Hekmatullah Maiwandi, a spokesman for the state-run DABS electricity company, said in a video statement. Five teams from the firm have been deployed to carry out repairs, he added. "The pylons are installed on top of mountains and our teams are trying to fix them," Maiwandi said. Temporary repairs would be performed to partially restore power by Saturday night before a full restoration of the towers can be completed in two weeks, he added. Police said two suspects have been arrested over the explosions. The outages come ahead of the Eidul Fitr holiday that marks the end of the holy month of Ramazan. Many residential buildings and businesses in Kabul, a city of about five million people, booted up private generators over the weekend to ensure electricity supply ahead of Eid celebrations."

SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, 30 April 2022

[SIGAR issues its 55th Quarterly Report on April 30, 2022. Public Law 110-181 directs SIGAR to submit a quarterly report to Congress. This congressionally mandated report summarizes SIGAR's audits and investigative activities.]

"According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), political violence and protest incidents under the Taliban (October 2021– March 2022) declined by 80% compared to average incidents

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

under the former Afghan government during the same time last year (October 2020– March 2021).¹ State noted that the Taliban security forces controlling the country this year are the same forces that were warring against the Afghan government last year, and that this year’s reduced violence is a result of that change, among other reasons.² For example, of the 5,183 civilian casualties during the first six months of 2021, UNAMA attributed 39% to the Taliban and only 23% to the former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).³ Since the Taliban takeover and the end of war against the former ANDSF, a much greater percentage of incidents involve battles with the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) (15% of incidents compared to 2% previously) or protest events (15% of incidents compared to 1% previously).⁴ As seen in Figure S.1, overall incidents remained low compared to last year, but rose somewhat from November 2021 through January 2022; incidents involving IS-K continued a downward trend after reaching a high [...] point in October 2021. State noted that it is unclear if the recent trend is due to Taliban security operations or the onset of winter,⁵ when fighting typically wanes. [...]

Tolo News, Security Officials: Kabul Checkpoints Increased for Eid, 30 April 2022

“Following the recent attacks in Kabul and other provinces, officials of the Ministry of Defense and the Kabul Police Command said that strict security measures have been taken during Eid to provide security for the citizens of the country. “People can spend their Eid days with a peace of mind and calmness because their brothers, the Mujahideen, are at their service and will ensure their security, and we will not allow any group or movement to disrupt security,” said Enayatullah Kharazmi, spokesman for the Ministry of Defense.”

Pajhwok, 115 people killed, injured in Afghanistan last week, 30 April 2022

“Casualties

At least 31 people were killed and 84 others injured in Afghanistan last week. Casualties from natural disasters not included in these figures.

Five people were killed and 58 others injured in a bomb blast inside a mosque in Kabul City’s Allaaddin area on Friday afternoon, according to health officials.

Kabul police, however, said 10 people were killed and 30 others injured in the blast. No group has claimed responsibility for the blast.

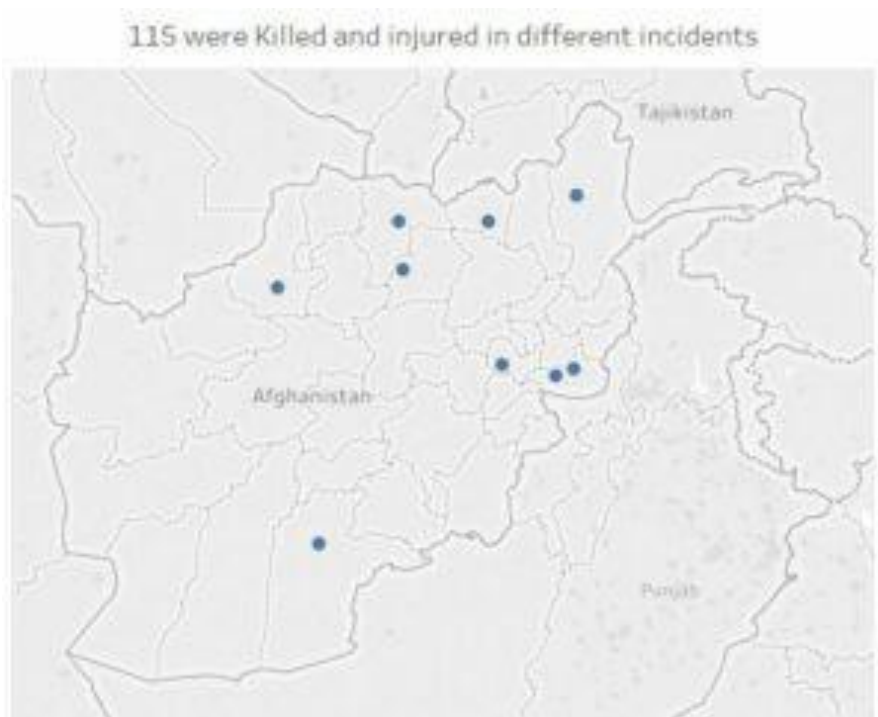
Eleven people were killed and 17 others injured in two separate blasts in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, last week. Daesh claimed responsibility for the two blasts.

A child was killed when armed men opened firing on a rickshaw in Jalalabad City last week. One child was killed, two others and a woman were injured in a warhead blast in Sararud district.

Mining Department Director was killed and two others injured in a roadside blast in Faizabad City, the capital of northeastern Badakhshan province last week. Unknown gunmen killed a teenage boy in front of his home in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province.

According to local sources, five coalminers were killed in the Dara-i-Suf Paen district last week. Four people wounded in a landmine blast in Kunduz while a body was recovered in the Pashtonkot district of Faryab province.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.



The previous week, 128 people were killed and 161 others injured in Afghanistan.”

The Guardian, [Blast at Kabul mosque kills more than 50 worshippers](#), 29 April 2022

“A powerful explosion has killed more than 50 worshippers after Friday prayers at a Kabul mosque, the latest of a series of attacks on civilian targets in Afghanistan during Ramadan. The blast hit the Khalifa Sahib mosque in the west of the capital in the early afternoon, according to Besmullah Habib, the deputy spokesperson for the interior ministry. The attack came as worshippers at the Sunni mosque gathered after Friday prayers for a congregation known as Zikr – an act of remembrance practised by some Muslims but seen as heretical by several Sunni groups.”

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) [News](#), [UNAMA statement on deadly attack in Kabul](#), 29 April 2022

“KABUL – The United Nations in Afghanistan condemns in the strongest terms today’s deadly attack in a Sufi Mosque in the Darulaman area of Kabul, which reportedly resulted in scores dead and wounded. Today’s attack on the Khalifa Sahib Mosque is the latest in a series of indiscriminate assaults on civilian targets in the capital and provinces, and directly affected at least two UN staff members and their families who were inside the mosque at the time of the attack. “Today’s attack, carried out on the last Friday of the Holy month of Ramadan and on the eve of the Eid-ul-Fitr, totally disregards human lives and religious sanctity. No words are strong enough to condemn this despicable act, targeting a place of worship, as Muslims across Afghanistan prepare to celebrate the Eid,” said Mette Knudsen, the UN Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan. “Recent attacks against civilians, targeting ethnic and religious minorities, represent a disturbing trend in Afghanistan. These violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws must end immediately.” The latest attack in Kabul

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

follows a spate of attacks in recent weeks in mosques and schools in the major cities of Kabul, Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif, which appear to have specifically targeted members of the Hazara, Shia and Sufi minorities, including yesterday's attack in Mazar-e-Sharif which also resulted in several killed and injured."

ACLED, [REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 16-22 APRIL 2022](#), 28 April 2022

"In Afghanistan, dozens of civilians were killed by IS and unknown groups during attacks across the country last week, including deadly bombings at mosques in Balkh and Kunduz provinces. In Balkh province, an IS-planted explosive went off in a Shiite mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif city on 21 April, killing at least 10 people and injuring over 30. Taliban officials claim to have since arrested the main IS militant behind this explosion (Ariana TV, 22 April 2022). The following day, in Kunduz province, unknown perpetrators planted explosives inside a Sunni mosque in Hazrati Imam Sahib district, killing at least 33 people during Friday prayers. The attacks took place as the Muslim holy month Ramadan is ongoing, augmenting insecurity for the worshippers.

Meanwhile, in Kabul, multiple deadly explosions — perpetrated by IS and unknown groups — targeted members of the Hazara community. This surge of attacks triggered a large protest in Kabul, with protesters demanding that the Taliban provide security and calling the attacks against the Hazara community acts of "genocide" (Hasht-e Subh, 22 April 2022). Taliban forces intervened with aerial fire to disperse the protest and injured two people. These trends contribute to the 157% increase in violence in Kabul over the past week relative to the past month, as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker. IS also increased its attacks on the Taliban last week, killing at least 13 Taliban members during clashes in Kabul, Kunar, Logar, Nangarhar, and Takhar provinces. IS explosions targeting civilians and clashes with the Taliban last week marked a significant increase in IS activity compared to recent months (for more on IS activity in Afghanistan, see this infographic). While the Taliban has been carrying out anti-IS operations since their takeover of Afghanistan, last week's attacks raise concerns about the effectiveness of such operations and the possibility of IS launching larger offensives in the coming months (The Washington Post, 22 April 2022).

Meanwhile, the NRF and the AFF continued to attack Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan last week, with the AFF also attacking the Taliban in southern Kandahar province. The Liberation Front of Afghanistan and Wolf Unit anti-Taliban groups also claimed separate attacks in Kapisa and Balkh provinces, respectively. The Wolf Unit is reportedly led by the son of Uzbek-Afghan warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, while the Liberation Front of Afghanistan declared its formation in February without any affiliation (The Institute for the Study of War, 9 March 2022). Additionally, the militia of Atta Mohammad Noor — a former governor of Balkh province and prominent warlord — clashed with the Taliban in Mazar-e Sharif city following the explosion in the Shiite mosque. Noor's nephew was reportedly killed in the clash, along with a number of militiamen and Taliban members."

Afghan Voice Agency, [We should not forget the dangers hiding under Afghan soil](#), 27 April 2022

"A few weeks ago, four children lost their lives in Herat, Afghanistan when an old grenade exploded in their hands.

A couple of months ago, nine children perished in a similar accident in the village of Degnan in Nangahar Province.

Since the beginning of 2022, many more have been killed, hurt and wounded in this way. In 30 years, more than 41,000 civilians have lost their lives to unexploded ordnances. In 2021, 79 percent of the victims were children."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghan Voice Agency, US, Swedish diplomats discuss attacks on Afghan civilians, 27 April 2022

"More than 50 girls and boys had lost their lives in a series of grave rights violations in Afghanistan in one week alone, a senior official said earlier in the week."

Khaama Press, ISIS, Not a Threat, It's eliminated in Afghanistan: MoI, 25 April 2022

"The phenomenon called Daesh has been eliminated up to 98 percent in Afghanistan and is no more a serious threat. Security forces are still trying to eliminate the last and only hideouts of the heinous phenomenon"

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), The evil plan of the United States is to lead Afghanistan into a devastating civil war, 25 April 2022

"Over the past week, some provinces of the country have witnessed terrorist attacks against Shiites, during which dozens of people have been killed or injured.

During this period, two terrorist attacks took place in Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif, in which more than 30 people were martyred and dozens were injured. UNICEF says 50 Afghan children have died in one week as a result of the terrorist attacks."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Shia and Sunnis are the victims of terrorists, 24 April 2022

"The bloody incidents in Kabul, Mazar and Kunduz all together showed that the perpetrators of these killings came from one source and although the number of victims of these incidents was very different; But there is a common goal behind these horrific killings and that is to provoke a religious war among Shia-Sunni."

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan – Terrorist attacks, 22 April 2022

"France condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks of April 19 and 21 on schools in Kabul as well as yesterday's attacks on the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif and in Kunduz province. These attacks, for which Daesh (IS-K) claimed responsibility, killed several dozen people and wounded more than a hundred, including young children."

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), At least 16 killed as explosions rock Afghan cities, 21 April 2022

"At least 16 people have been killed in bomb attacks in two Afghan cities, including 12 people at a Shia mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif in Balkh province which has been claimed by the ISIL (ISIS) group.

Twelve people were killed and 58 wounded – including 32 in serious condition – by the blast on Thursday at the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif. [...] Another roadside blast in Kabul wounded three, including a child, he added."

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), A Bleak Future with Education Under Attack in Afghanistan, 20 April 2022

"Multiple bomb blasts on April 19 outside a high school and an education center in Kabul's Dasht-e Barchi neighborhood left at least six people dead and twenty wounded, including children, and casualties could be much higher. This is just the latest assault on education in Afghanistan, which have traumatized families and dimmed hopes for their children's future."

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 9-15 April 2022, 20 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Meanwhile, in Takhar province, Taliban forces engaged in internal clashes in Baharak and Chahab districts, resulting in at least nine fatalities. While the exact reason for the infighting remains unknown, locals in Chahab claimed that Taliban forces from the Uzbek and Pashtun ethnic groups fought against a Tajik Taliban commander (Hasht-e Subh, 11 April 2022) (for more information on Taliban infighting and the latest disorder trends in Afghanistan, see this joint ACLED and Afghan Peace Watch report). These trends contribute to the 110% increase in violence in Takhar last week relative to the past month flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Surge Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Takhar in the past month.”

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), World outraged by deadly bombings at Kabul schools, 20 April 2022

“The United Nations has condemned Wednesday’s deadly bombings at two educational institutions in western Kabul. At least six people were killed and 22 others wounded in the multiple blasts, which also drew strong denunciation from Afghan political leaders. The blasts struck the Abdul Rahim Shahid High School and the nearby Mumtaz Education Centre in the Shia-dominated Dasht-i-Barchi area.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Qatar, Turkey Condemn Kabul Blasts on School, 20 April 2022

“Foreign Ministries of Qatar and Turkey in their respective press release condemned the terrorist attack on a secondary school in the west of Kabul adding the attack will have a negative impact on human rights in the country. “We condemn these inhuman terrorist attacks in the strongest possible terms,” said the Turkish Foreign Ministry in the press release.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Multiple Blasts Target Shia Hazara Neighborhood in Kabul, Killing 6, 19 April 2022

“Kabul, Afghanistan – At least six people, including young students, have been killed and 11 further wounded after three blasts targeted a boy’s school in west Kabul’s Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood on Tuesday morning, according to local security officials.”

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Blasts target school in Kabul, 19 April 2022

“Explosions in the Afghan capital have hit a school for boys. A local police spokesperson said at least six people were killed, with many more injured. Several blasts targeted educational facilities in Afghan capital, Kabul, on Tuesday, with an explosion at a boys' high school killing at least 6 people, officials said. The explosions targeted the Mumtaz Education Center and the Abdul Rahim Shahid high school in the western Dasht-e-Barchi area of Kabul. The children were leaving school at the time of the first blast. A second explosion hit shortly after the first. Witnesses told the Associated Press that a suicide bomber blew himself up inside the school complex that can house up to 1,000 students.”

BBC News, Kabul blasts kill six and wound 20 at boys' school, 19 April 2022

“Two bomb blasts at a boys' school in the Afghan capital Kabul have killed at least six people and wounded more than 20, officials say. The blasts happened at the Abdul Rahim Shahid high school in the Shia-dominated west of the city. The number of dead and wounded is likely to rise. A nearby tuition centre was also targeted in a grenade attack. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Islamic State militants have attacked the area in the past.”

Ariana News At least 6 killed and 11 wounded in three explosions in Kabul, 19 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials confirmed three explosions occurred in the Dasht-e Barchi area of PD18 in Kabul city on Tuesday morning and that at least 17 people were killed or wounded. The blasts reportedly took place in front of the Abdul Rahim Shahid Public School. Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul police headquarters, confirmed that three explosions had taken place at the public school, saying that locals and students had been killed.”

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), Deadly blasts target boys’ school in Afghan capital Kabul, 19 April 2022

“Explosions targeting educational institutions killed at least six people and wounded 17 in a mostly Shia neighbourhood of Afghanistan’s capital. Students were among the casualties in the blasts at one school in Kabul’s Dasht-e-Barchi neighbourhood, police said on Tuesday.”

Afghan Voice Agency, Kabul denies presence of TTP fighters in Afghanistan, 19 April 2022

“The Taliban government has spurned reports regarding the presence of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants in Afghanistan. However, the government’s spokesman acknowledged on Monday there could be issue in mountainous and far-flung areas of the country. Zabihullah said Afghan forces were capable of defending their homeland. He hoped tensions with Pakistan would be defused via diplomatic channels. Earlier in the week, 47 Afghans were killed and over 20 others wounded in Pakistani military raids and rocket strikes in and Khost provinces.”

Afghan Voice Agency, Blasts in West of Kabul, 19 April 2022

“Three back-to-back blasts happened in the west of Kabul on Tuesday morning, two near a school and one near a tuition center, leaving five people wounded, according to initial information and interviews of eyewitnesses. The first blast happened near Mumtaz Tuition Center and was followed by two back-to-back explosions close to Abdul Raheem Shaheed High School, which is located in the same area. The Ministry of Interior confirmed a blast near Abdul Raheem Shaheed High School, saying an investigation has started into the incident and details will be shared later. The blasts in front of Abdul Rahim Shaheed High School happened while the students were leaving their classes, eyewitnesses said.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, At Least Six Dead In Series Of Blasts At School In Afghan Capital, 19 April 2022

“At least six people were killed and 11 wounded in three blasts that rocked a boys’ school in a Shi’ite Hazara neighborhood of Kabul on April 19, police in the Afghan capital said. Khaled Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul Police Command, told RFE/RL that the explosions occurred at the Abdul Rahim Shahid High School, located in the capital’s western neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi. There were children among the casualties, although it was not immediately clear how many.”

ToloNews, Students Targeted in Attacks on Schools in Western Kabul, 19 April 2022

“Two educational institutions were targeted by blasts on Tuesday in the Dasht-e-Barchi area in the west of Kabul city. The first blast took place near a training center and was followed by two more blasts nearby that targeted Abdul Raheem Shaheed school. The second blasts occurred as students were coming out of the school. The Kabul department of security confirmed the death of six people and said that 11 others were wounded. However, witnesses believe that the number of casualties is higher.”

ToloNews, Blasts Targeting Schools in Kabul Trigger Outrage, 19 April 2022

“The blasts on Tuesday targeting educational institutions in western Kabul have sparked widespread

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

reactions from Afghan politicians and foreign diplomatic missions as well as Kabul-based humanitarian watchdogs. Jawed Hazhir, a spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health, said that based on reports from public hospitals, five people were killed and 20 more were wounded in the blasts. However, security departments said there were six fatalities and 11 wounded. The blast targeted educational institutions and many of the casualties were young students, reports said."

The Guardian, Six killed in bomb blasts at Shia school in Afghan capital, 19 April 2022

"At least six people have been killed and 11 wounded in two bomb blasts at a boys' school in a Hazara Shia neighbourhood of the Afghan capital, Kabul. The frequency of bomb blasts in the country has declined significantly since the Taliban ousted the US-backed Afghan government in August last year, but Islamic State has claimed several attacks."

Afghan Voice Agency, Death toll in 'Pakistan strikes' on Afghanistan rises to 47: officials, 18 April 2022

"Afghanistan has reported a death toll of at least 47 after Pakistani military air strikes hit the provinces of Khost and Kunar provinces. Pakistani security forces carried out airstrike on Waziristan refugees in Sperai district of southeastern Khost province and in the Shaltan district of eastern province, inflicting casualties on people. "Forty-one civilians, mainly women and children, were killed and 22 others were wounded in air strikes by Pakistani forces near the in Khost province," Shabir Ahmad Osmani, director of information and culture in Khost told Pajhwok. Meanwhile Najibullah, an official with the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Khost told AFP, the death toll in the province was 48."

Afghan Voice Agency, Unidentified Armed Men Attack a Taliban Base in Logar, 18 April 2022

"This is the first armed attack on Taliban's base in Logar province since the Taliban returned to power. Local sources in province have confirmed that at around 1:00 AM Monday night anonymous armed men attacked a Taliban base in -e Alam city, the center of Logar province. Sources told Hasht-e Subh that the attack took place at the Tangi base in Kanjak area of Pol-e Alam city, confirming that the clash between the two sides lasted for about twenty minutes. No casualties have been reported so far."

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), At least 47 dead in Afghanistan after Pakistan attacks: Officials, 17 April 2022

"Air attacks by Pakistan on eastern Afghan provinces of Khost and Kunar killed mainly women and children, officials say. "Forty-one civilians, mainly women and children, were killed and 22 others were wounded in air strikes by Pakistani forces near the Durand Line in Khost province," Shabir Ahmad Osmani, director of information and culture in Khost, told AFP on Sunday."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Witnesses Say Dozens Killed In Pakistani Air Strikes On Eastern Afghanistan Region, 16 April 2022

"Witnesses say dozens of people, including women and children, have been killed in eastern Afghanistan by Pakistani air strikes. The bombings took place overnight on April 16 in border areas in Khost Province, according to tribal elders and eyewitnesses. Witnesses told Radio Mashaal that more than 30 civilians had died in the air strikes. The dpa news agency, quoting a local Taliban official, said at least 40 civilians had been killed."

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), 29 people suffer casualties in Afghanistan last week, 16 April 2022

"Positive things happened in Afghanistan's economic and security sectors last week as casualties declined

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

by 60 percent, while \$96 million in cash assistance also arrived in the country. Last week's major developments:

- Last week, Afghanistan received \$96 million in cash assistance
- US, India, Iran stressed the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan
- UN, US expressed concerns over human rights situation in Afghanistan
- Acting Afghan government rejected the international community's concern over human rights situation in Afghanistan
- US, UN again demanded the reopening of all-girls schools in Afghanistan
- 26 people were killed and three others injured in Afghanistan last week

Afghan Voice Agency, Attack Claim by NRF Forces on Taliban Base Near Balkh International Airport, 13 April 2022

"The National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have claimed of targeting a Taliban base near Mawlanea Jalaluddin Mohammad International Airport in -e-Sharif province, killing and injuring a number of the Taliban rebels in the province. It is said that they carried out the attack at around 1:00 AM on Tuesday night.

However, the Taliban press members in the province have refused to provide details about the casualties. The National Resistance Front forces have increased their operations on the Taliban insurgents in , Kunduz, Takhar, Panjshir, , Jowzjan, and provinces."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Internal conflict that continued until August 15 resulted in civilian deaths, abductions, prisoner abuse, property damage, displacement of residents, and other abuses. The security situation deteriorated largely due to successful insurgent attacks by the Taliban and terrorist attacks by ISIS-K. ISIS-K terrorist attacks continued to destabilize the country after August 15, and Taliban efforts to defeat the terrorist group resulted in numerous violent clashes. According to UNAMA, actions by nonstate armed groups, primarily the Taliban and ISIS-K, accounted for most civilian deaths although civilian deaths decreased dramatically following the Taliban's territorial takeover in August.

Killings: UNAMA counted 1,659 civilian deaths due to conflict from January 1 to June 30, and 350 from August 15 to December 31. Pro-Islamic Republic forces were responsible for 25 percent of pre-August 15 civilian casualties: 23 percent by the ANDSF, and 2 percent by progovernment armed groups such as militias. Antigovernment elements were responsible for 64 percent of the total pre-August 15 civilian casualties: 39 percent by the Taliban, 9 percent by ISIS-K, and 16 percent by undetermined antigovernment elements. UNAMA attributed 11 percent of pre-August 15 civilian casualties to "cross fire" during ground engagements where the exact party responsible could not be determined and other incident types, including unattributable unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. [...] After the August 15 Taliban takeover, there were fewer security and security-related incidents throughout the rest of the year. According to UNAMA, between August 19 and December 31, the United Nations recorded 985 security-related incidents, a 91 percent decrease from the same period in 2020. Security incidents

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

also dropped significantly as of August 15 from 600 to less than 100 incidents per week. Available data indicated that armed clashes also decreased by 98 percent as of August 15 from 7,430 incidents to 148; airstrikes by 99 percent from 501 to three; detonations of IEDs by 91 percent from 1,118 to 101; and killings by 51 percent from 424 to 207.”

Ariana News, IEA forces shot at Pakistani military helicopter that crossed Durand Line: sources, 9 April 2022

“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) forces shot at a Pakistani military helicopter that crossed the Durand Line into Nimroz province on Thursday, sources told Ariana News on Saturday.

A Pakistani general was wounded as a result of the shooting, according to sources.

The incident comes as IEA has instructed its border forces to respond to any incursion by neighboring countries.”

Ariana News, Qatari forces reportedly at Kabul airport, 7 April 2022

“An Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority official has said there are a number of Qatari forces stationed at Kabul airport. The source, who did not want to be named, told BBC the Qataris have been stationed at the airport for a few months. He said there were less than 50 and they were only there to secure Qatari airport staff.”

Aljazeera, Afghanistan: Kabul mosque hit by grenade attack, 6 April 2022

“At least six people have been wounded in a grenade blast at a mosque in a densely populated area of the Afghan capital, Kabul, police said, minutes after worshippers offered midday prayers. Attacks on public targets have largely diminished since the Taliban seized power in August last year, but ISIL (ISIS) affiliates continue to operate in parts of the country. (...) No group has claimed responsibility, but the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP, ISIS-K) group has carried out recent attacks in Kabul and other cities.”

RUSI, How Much of a Threat is the Islamic State in Khorasan?, 28 March 2022

“Since early November, IS-K has only been carrying out small hit-and-run raids against Taliban patrols and a few targeted assassinations against low-level individuals – such as officials of the previous government – and Taliban sympathisers. Almost all these attacks have resulted in just a handful of Taliban casualties, even according to IS-K claims; the Taliban mostly have not been commenting, but IS-K (as well as other Islamic State branches) tends to overstate its claims.

The overall picture therefore shows IS-K’s biggest achievement as having been able to expand attacks against very soft targets to several cities, where it did not previously operate militarily. Such cities include Kandahar, Charikar and Kunduz. That, alongside operations inside Kabul and Jalalabad, was likely primarily intended to keep the Taliban off balance and force them to allocate major human resources to securing the cities, as well as discrediting the emirate’s claim to be in full control. It worked initially, but the wave of attacks has petered out quite quickly, probably because IS-K cells in these new areas of operation were quite vulnerable and appear to have been mostly taken out by the Taliban.

In January–February, the pace of IS-K operations slowed considerably. The lull in major terrorist attacks continued, and the number of hit and run raids has gone down. While winter usually sees a slower pace of operations in Afghanistan, that would not normally affect urban guerrilla operations, nor operations in the warm areas of eastern Afghanistan, where IS-K forces are mostly concentrated. In particular, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

slower pace of IS-K operations in and around Jalalabad lends some credibility to Taliban claims that their counterinsurgency efforts there have been successful there.”

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 12-18 March, 2022, 24 March 2022

“In Afghanistan, the NRF attacked Taliban forces in northeastern Panjshir, Baghlan, Parwan, Nangarhar, Takhar, and Kapisa provinces last week. In Takhar province, the group increased its attacks compared to the weeks prior, killing multiple Taliban members across several attacks, resulting in a 300% increase in violence in the province last week relative to the past month, as flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Surge Tracker. Additionally, in eastern Nangarhar province, the NRF claimed to have killed several Taliban members, including a commander. This is the second time that the NRF has claimed an attack against the Taliban in Nangarhar.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Freedom Front — a new armed group formed to fight Taliban forces — claimed to have inflicted Taliban casualties in Takhar and Parwan provinces last week (Twitter @AfgFreedomAFF, 11 March 2022). The group also shelled the local market of Kishm district of Badakhshan province, but it remained unclear if there were any casualties. ACLED has recorded several new armed groups positioning themselves as anti-Taliban forces since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in August 2021, but this is the first time that a newly-emerged anti-Taliban group has claimed multiple attacks within a week.

Separately, Taliban forces killed several former government and security forces members in Baghlan, Kapisa, and Farah provinces last week. The Taliban also continued to detain civilians without providing a reason, with several civilians claiming that they were tortured under detention in Panjshir province. These trends contribute to the 165% increase in violence in Panjshir over the past month relative to the past year, flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Threat Tracker, which first warned of increased violence to come in the province in the past month. Moreover, the Taliban briefly detained the head of news and two journalists from TOLO news, the largest TV station of Afghanistan, last week.”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: Taliban ignore real problems while invading private homes in arbitrary searches, 13 March 2022

“The Taliban have killed many former government officials, civil and military alike. The publicly killing of people by the Taliban has been widely reported in social media. Two videos recent published by the Taliban show that they have killed a school teacher in Panjshir and another in Baghlan province. Recently, the Taliban have carried out a large security sweep across Afghanistan’s major provinces, including Kabul, Parwan, Panjshir, Kapisa, and a few others in the north. People and lawyers have expressed concerns over these door-to-door search. The Taliban, on the other hand, have dubbed it a “Clearance Operation” without specifying who will be affected or what the searches’ goals are. The Taliban have not disclosed any information on the searches’ outcomes, even after they have been completed.”

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

“Nangarhar reported the highest number of security-related fatalities between May and October 2021.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 4th March 2022, 10 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, the National Resistance Front (NRF), the Islamic State (IS), and unknown groups continued to attack Taliban forces in Afghanistan. The Taliban launched nationwide operations during which they arrested IS members and reportedly detained and tortured civilians. Additionally, former judges and engineers working for the government held protests in Kabul. In Afghanistan, clashes between the NRF and the Taliban continued in Parwan, Baghlan, Badakhshan and Panjshir provinces last week. In Panjshir, the NRF damaged two Taliban helicopters in Shutul district, and claimed to have taken over three Taliban checkpoints in Unaba district. These trends underline how violence continues to surge in Panjshir, with an increase of 168% in the last month relative to past year, as flagged by *ACLED’s Subnational Threat Tracker*, which first warned of increased violence to come in Panjshir last month. Unidentified groups also targeted Taliban forces with explosives in Kabul and Helmand provinces. In Helmand, a Taliban commander managed to escape unhurt from an explosion targeting his vehicle. Meanwhile, IS killed a Taliban member during a clash in Kunduz. Elsewhere, in Parwan, the Taliban killed an IS militant and arrested others, including a Tajik citizen.”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘the Taliban have started to search the whole city of Kabul’, 9 March 2022

“Door to door inspections are making people live in fear each day, until a group of armed terrorists barges into their homes. Breaking and looting has been reported in abundance. This mass search was presumably about collecting guns and ammunitions from the houses. Much like the rest of the world and in particular the United States, many Afghans also hold private rifles and hand guns. This gave the Taliban the perfect excuse to search every house in Kabul city, though many report that former government officials and military personnel are their primary targets.”

OHCHR, Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

“From 15 August 2021 to 15 February 2022, UNAMA and OHCHR documented at least 1,153 civilian casualties, including 397 deaths. [...] Several suicide and non-suicide attacks were perpetrated by ISKP against Shi’a Muslims, mostly from the Hazara ethnic group. I also note a clear pattern of more than 50 extra-judicial killings of individuals suspected to be linked to the ISKP extremist group, including cases of beheadings in Nangarhar province with bodies left in public places. [...] Human rights defenders have been killed, arbitrarily detained, or subjected to other attacks and threats since August. The first two months of this year have seen a number of disturbing cases of enforced disappearances and incommunicado detention of civil society activists and protestors.”

HRC49, Oral Statement on the Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

“The Taliban is increasingly resorting to violent means to frighten the population into silence, including the enforced disappearances of HRDs, particularly women’s rights activists, arbitrary detentions and torture of journalists, extrajudicial killings of former government security forces and officials, and crackdown on peaceful protests. The crackdown on the rights of women and girls continues to intensify, with new restrictions on their freedom of movement, and rights to education, health, and work. Over the past week, the Taliban have undertaken a systematic campaign of house-to-house searches in Kabul and other major cities, destroying private property, intimidating residents, and violating their right to privacy.”

The Irish Times, Taliban Search Operation Drives Many Afghans into Arms of the Resistance, 3 March 2022

“The search operation began early on Friday at dozens of checkpoints spread across Kabul, initially focused on the city’s northern neighbourhoods. During the past 20 years, these areas, mainly inhabited by the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tajik minority, often flew the tricolour flag of the Northern Alliance, an insurgent coalition that fought the Taliban government in the 1990s. [...]

They looked for weapons and other military equipment, and scrutinised the registration papers for his cars, threatening to impound one because he didn't have proper documentation. Next door, at his friend's house, they tore off freshly installed roofing material, finding nothing.

Some residents said that the Taliban forces conducted only cursory searches and reported no damage to property. But at other homes, mostly in neighbourhoods belonging to ethnic minorities, Taliban soldiers broke the locks on front doors, damaged televisions and storage boxes, and destroyed yards by digging for contraband, according to interviews with nearly a dozen Kabul residents.[...]

The resistance, for now, consists of a smattering of armed fighters spread across some of the most inhospitable mountains of northern Afghanistan, according to interviews with more than a dozen resistance fighters and leaders.

The best-known group is the National Resistance Front, or NRF, which was formed in the twilight of Afghanistan's western-backed government before it collapsed this past summer. The force has an estimated several hundred fighters, many of whom were low-ranking officers in the former government's security forces. [...]

The group has limited resources, no significant public backing from foreign governments and no clear chain of command, according to NRF fighters and leaders in Afghanistan.[...]

Some residents – mostly Pashtuns – are thankful that the Taliban are taking a hard stance against criminality, a policy the Taliban have long been known for. But members of ethnic minorities have accused the Taliban of targeting them for their ethnicity, adding to their resentment of an interim government that, like the Taliban itself, is composed mostly of southern Pashtuns.”

Business Standard, Taliban to Continue House-to-House Searches in Kabul Despite Criticism, 3 March 2022

“Despite domestic and international criticism, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan have continued their house-to-house searches in Kabul after the "clearing operation" was launched a week ago aimed at tightening security in the capital city. [...]

A Taliban commander in Kabul's Police District 10 has claimed that "weapons, government vehicles, military uniforms have been seized. We have raided some places which were the sanctuaries of kidnappers".”

UNAMA, Briefing to the United Nations Security Council by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ms. Deborah Lyons, 2 March 2022

“[...] security problems remain, and I would like to note the tragic and senseless killing last week of eight polio vaccinators in northern Afghanistan. It is particularly unfortunate given the progress that we have been making with the de facto authorities on expanding the polio programme. [...] recent sweeping house-to-house searches in Kabul, carried out by the main security institutions ostensibly as a crime-fighting measure, are also of concern.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Two Killed In Border Clash Between Afghan Taliban And Pakistani Guards; Border Crossing Closed, 24 February 2022

“Two people were killed and 13 others wounded in a clash between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani forces in the southern Afghan border town of Spin Boldak, health officials in Kandahar told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi on February 24.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

A spokesman for the Taliban governor in Kandahar, Mahmoud Azzam, confirmed the clash between Afghan Taliban border guards and Pakistani forces in Spin Boldak but gave no further details. An official at the Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar, who wished to remain anonymous, told Radio Azadi that two bodies and 13 wounded people, including civilians and Taliban insurgents, had been brought from the scene."

Ariana News, IEA forces and Pakistani military clash in Spin Boldak, 25 February 2022

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) government has acknowledged that IEA forces have clashed with Pakistani forces in Kandahar's Spin Boldak district.

IEA spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the reports on Thursday and blamed the Pakistani military for starting the clashes.

"There was a problem with Pakistani guards locally in the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar.

"Unfortunately, the first shot was fired by Pakistani guards," Mujahid wrote on his Twitter page.

"The situation is under control and we are investigating why this happened," he said.

At least two people were killed in the incident, according to health officials and local officials.

Following the incident, about 90 students, from Dr Mamoon Tahiri Institute of Health Sciences, came forward to donate blood for the wounded.

Officials from the institute meanwhile said that at least two civilians were killed and about 30 others were wounded in the clashes."

TOLO News, Armed Men Steal Equipment from Kabul Health Center, 21 February 2022

"Armed men stole equipment at a health center in police district 13 of Kabul city last night, the health staff of the center said on Monday. Darich-e-Sahat clinic was delivering health services to poor families for more than two years in western Kabul city. "The door was knocked on ... then armed thieves entered and threatened me to be silent. They took all of the equipment," said Sayed Farhad, watchman of the clinic. Health staff at the center delivered services for 50-70 patients per day. "Here, we are delivering free services without fees in various sections including maternity, the children's section, the laboratory, X-rays, and ear, nose and throat," said Shaib Shaaban, the head of the clinic. [...] Residents of the area urged the security officials to punish the perpetrators. The security department of Kabul said investigations have begun into the incident."

France 24, Taliban aiming to create 'grand army' for Afghanistan, 21 February 2022

"Latifullah Hakimi, head of the Taliban's Ranks Clearance Commission, also told a news conference they had repaired half the 81 helicopters and planes supposedly rendered unserviceable by US-led forces during last year's chaotic withdrawal.

"He said Taliban forces took control of more than 300,000 light arms, 26,000 heavy weapons and around 61,000 military vehicles during their lightning takeover of the country.

"There has been little evidence the Taliban have absorbed former troops into their ranks, but over the weekend they named two senior ex-Afghan National Army officers to top posts in the defence ministry.

"Both are specialist surgeons attached to the country's main military hospital."

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 5-11 February, 17 February 2022

"In Afghanistan, at least 10 civilians were killed in targeted attacks by the Taliban and unknown groups across the country last week. In Badghis province, one worshipper was killed and at least eight were

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

injured in a bomb explosion in front of a mosque in Qala-i-Now city during Friday prayers. The attack was not claimed by any group. In Baghlan province, Taliban forces also reportedly killed a former policewoman and another civilian accused of supporting the NRF. Amid multiple attacks on civilians in Baghlan since the start of 2022, ACLED's *Subnational Surge Tracker* had warned of increased violence to come in the province. A shopkeeper in Kabul's Mir Bacha Kot district was also killed by Taliban forces, triggering locals to hold an anti-Taliban protest."

The Jamestown Foundation, Moscow and Kabul Beef up Forces on Tajikistan's Border as Badakhshan Deteriorates Again, 15 February 2022 [Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 19 Issue: 19 By: Paul Goble]

"In mid-February, as Russians and Afghans mark the 33rd anniversary of the final withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, both countries are beefing up their forces along the Afghan-Tajikistani border. The trigger has been a renewed deterioration of the security situation in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province, which forms a third of the territory of Tajikistan geographically and is defined by the rugged Pamir Mountains. [...] The surge in Russian and Afghan forces in the region as well as intensifying Chinese activity at military "bases" in eastern Tajikistan raise both the stakes and the risks that a local ethnic conflict will grow into something much larger. Indeed, what has been a conflict within the trans-border Pamir region and between it and Dushanbe now appears on the brink of becoming a dangerous international incident if any of the sides tries to exploit the situation or miscalculates how others may respond."

Gandhara News, Six Months And An Eternity: Afghans Lose Hope Under Taliban Rule, 15 February 2022

"Repression: The Taliban announced a general amnesty soon after seizing Kabul. "I would like to assure the international community, including the United States, that nobody will be harmed," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told journalists on August 17. "We don't want any internal or external enemies."

But a half-year later, the United Nations and human rights watchdogs continue to report grave abuses. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan "continued to receive credible allegations of killings, enforced disappearances, and other violations," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a report to the Security Council late last month. The experiences of Afghans echo the UN assessment.

"My brother has been missing for three months," an Afghan man said of his sibling, a senior former Afghan army officer. "We don't know whether he is alive or dead," he added, while requesting anonymity to avoid reprisals by the Taliban.

The man claimed this week that the Taliban detained his brother three months ago. "Where is the general amnesty they promised?"

Afghan women have endured the brunt of Taliban restrictions and discrimination. Most teenage Afghan girls are still waiting to return to school, while women have lost jobs, businesses, and the expanded societal roles they had gained over the past two decades.

"Women have been completely marginalized politically," Zahra Rahnavard, a resident of Kabul, told RFE/RL. "[The Taliban] had promised to preserve women's rights, but we see nothing.... Everyone is in a state of despair and hopelessness."

[...] Khaleda Tahsin, 51, another Afghan journalist, is giving up on journalism after 22 years spent chasing her country's evolving story nonstop. She braved suicide attacks, threats, and intimidation from both the government and the insurgents. But the sole breadwinner for the family is calling an end to her career.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

She resigned from her job as the editor in chief at Radio Killid, a private station, this month because the conditions for women's work had so rapidly deteriorated under the Taliban. "Conditions for work, particularly for women, have become tough," she told RFE/RL. "I don't have any peace of mind because of all the security threats." Tahsin says that while women journalists can still work in theory, they have no protections. "Our major challenge is that we do not have access to information while the authorities remain unaccountable," she said. Survival is clearly on the minds of most Afghans."

The Guardian, Taliban have detained 29 women and their families in Kabul, says US envoy, 12 February 2022

"The Taliban have detained 29 women and their families in Kabul, a senior US diplomat said on Saturday, adding to concerns about rising numbers of people seized and held indefinitely in Afghanistan.

Rina Amiri, US special envoy for Afghan Women, Girls and Human Rights, said that women were among 40 people seized on Friday. "These unjust detentions must stop," she said in a tweet.

It has since been deleted, but other sources confirmed that multiple women had been detained in Kabul. The state department did not respond to requests for comment on why it was removed.

"I am increasingly concerned about the wellbeing of missing women activists in Afghanistan. Several have 'disappeared', some not heard from in weeks," António Guterres had said on Twitter on Thursday. "I strongly urge the Taliban to ensure their safety so that they can return home."

"Every disappearance highlights one of the huge gaps in Afghanistan today, the lack of rule of law," said Heather Barr, associate women's rights director at Human Rights Watch.

"This is not how you act when you are trying to be a government, and it highlights the callousness with which they seem to think they can just abduct women and sloppily deny it."

There are also concerns about Alia Azizi, a senior prison official who has been missing for more than four months after reporting for work. Several women who worked for the security forces under the previous government have been attacked and killed since the Taliban came to power."

Gandhara News, At Least One Dead In Blast At Mosque In Afghanistan, 11 February 2022

"The Taliban says at least one person was killed and eight others wounded in a bomb explosion at a mosque in northern Afghanistan.

Baz Mohammad Sarwari, the Taliban's director of Information and Culture for Badghis Province, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi that it was unclear whether the blast on February 11 was caused by a suicide bomber or an explosive device, and that a probe had been launched into the incident.

He said the blast happened after Friday Prayers at the mosque, where earlier dozens of worshippers were said to have gathered inside.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the explosion. The local Islamic State affiliate has in the past claimed responsibility for similar attacks.

[...]"

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Project, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan, 3 February 2022

"In Afghanistan, attacks on civilians continued last week. In Herat city, eight ethnic Hazara civilians were killed when their bus was targeted by an IS-planted bomb. Violence in Herat is both common and highly volatile; it is considered an area of 'extreme risk' by ACLED's *Volatility and Risk Predictability Index*.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Moreover in Nahr-i-Saraj district of Helmand province, a child was killed and two people were injured in a mortar shell explosion. The attack was not claimed by any group. These trends contributed to an increase in violence in Herat and Helmand provinces last week when compared to last month. Meanwhile, a prisoner died while in detention and three people were killed in Taliban raids in Nangarhar province; *ACLEDA's Subnational Surge Tracker* first warned of increased violence to come in Nangarhar last month. Taliban forces also shot dead three members of a family in Kabul city. The motive behind these killings remains unclear.

The Taliban's restrictive policies continued to trigger women's protests in Kabul, Bamyan, and Balkh provinces last week, as protesters demanded the whereabouts of women activists detained the week prior (TOLO News, 29 January 2022). In Kabul, another protest was staged by women in support of the Taliban government, calling for the international community to release Afghanistan's frozen assets that have exacerbated economic turmoil in the country (TOLO News, 26 January 2022). Taliban forces did not intervene in last week's protests unlike the week prior. Meanwhile, the NRF and the Taliban clashed in Baghlan province, with both parties claiming to inflict over 10 fatalities on the other. Combat activity doubled in Baghlan province last week when compared to the past month. The NRF and the Taliban engaged in dozens of clashes in January, mainly concentrated in Panjshir province."

UNHCR, *Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran*, 8 February 2022

"On 3 February 2022, the 29th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the United Nations Security Council was made public. The report states that Afghanistan has the potential to become a safe haven and a potential magnet for Al-Qaida and a number of terror groups with ties to the Central Asia region and beyond (UNdocs). While the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan (ISIL-K) controls limited territory, it has demonstrated a continuing ability to mount sophisticated attacks, adding to the complexity of the security situation in Afghanistan. The Taliban views ISIL-K as its primary threat, as the group aims to position itself as the chief rejectionist force in Afghanistan. Despite this and the Doha agreement of February 2020, in which the Taliban committed itself to preventing any international terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan, there are no recent signs that they have taken steps to limit the activities of foreign terrorist fighters in the country. However, there has been no reports of significant new movements of foreign terrorist fighters to Afghanistan despite reports that Bin Laden's son, Abdallah, visited Afghanistan in October for meetings with the Taliban."

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 8 February 2022

"Record levels of harm to civilians occurred in the first six months of 2021, as the conflict increased. Although wide-spread fighting generally ceased after 15 August, apart from small pockets of conflict, civilians in Afghanistan remain at risk of harm due to ISIL-K attacks, and leftover improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war, which disproportionately affect children."

UNAMA, *Report of the Secretary-General: The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 2 February 2022

"15. During the reporting period [August to January 2022] the security dynamics changed significantly following the Taliban declaration, on 6 September, of the end of its military offensive against government

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

forces. There has been a significant decline in the overall number of conflict-related security incidents as well as civilian casualties since then. Between 19 August and 31 December, the United Nations recorded 985 security-related incidents, a 91 per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2020. The number of security incidents fell significantly after 15 August, from 600 to fewer than 100 incidents per week. Available data indicate that armed clashes decreased by 98 per cent, from 7,430 to 148 incidents; air strikes by 99 per cent, from 501 to 3; detonations of improvised explosive devices by 91 per cent, from 1,118 to 101; and assassinations by 51 per cent, from 424 to 207. There has been an increase in other types of security incidents such as crime amid a rapid deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation. The eastern, central, southern and western regions accounted for 75 per cent of all recorded incidents, with Nangarhar, Kabul, Kunar and Kandahar the most conflict-affected provinces. Despite the reduction in violence, the de facto authorities encountered several challenges, including an increase in attacks against their members. Some of the attacks are attributed to the National Resistance Front comprising some figures from the former Government and opposition. These groups have been operating primarily in Panjshir Province and the Andarab district of Baghlan Province but have not made significant territorial inroads. Armed clashes are regularly documented, along with forced displacement and communication outages. Intra-Taliban tensions along ethnic lines and competition for positions have also resulted in violence, such as the armed clash between Taliban forces in Bamyan city on 4 November.

16. The de facto authorities made efforts to consolidate their control of the border areas amid concerns of neighbouring countries that extremist groups might launch attacks on their territories from Afghan soil. Tensions and security incidents have been reported in the areas of Afghanistan bordering Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, including incidents between Taliban and Iranian border forces on 21 August and 1 November, and a deadly stampede at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border crossing in Spin Boldak on 31 October. Tensions between Tajikistan and the de facto authorities escalated with the deployment of Taliban and Tajik forces and reports of the presence in northern Afghanistan of ISIL-KP cells and of Afghan opposition figures associated with the National Resistance Front.

17. Attacks claimed by or attributed to ISIL-KP increased and expanded beyond the movement's previous areas of focus in Kabul and eastern Afghanistan. Between 19 August and 31 December, the United Nations recorded 152 attacks by the group in 16 provinces, compared to 20 attacks in 5 provinces during the same period in 2020. In addition to the de facto authorities, the group also targeted civilians, in particular Shia minorities, in urban areas. ISIL-KP claimed responsibility for suicide attacks on a Sunni mosque in Kabul on 3 October and on two Shia mosques in Kunduz and Kandahar cities on 8 and 15 October, in addition to an attack on a military hospital in Kabul on 2 November. Two attacks in western Kabul on 10 December targeting a predominantly Shia/Hazara neighbourhood remain unclaimed. The de facto authorities claim to have prioritized operations against ISIL-KP and report surrenders of its affiliates."

UNAMA, Briefing by Special representative Deborah Lyons to UN Security Council, 26 January 2022

"Third, there must be more meaningful actions behind the Taliban's promise to contain terrorist groups in Afghanistan. Since my previous briefing [to the UN Security Council on 17 November 2021] it appears that the de facto authorities have attempted to constrain the Islamic State's ability to carry out major attacks, and yet small-scale attacks are still being carried out, particularly against religious minorities. The existence of numerous terrorist groups in Afghanistan remains a broad international and especially regional concern. The desire of the de facto authorities to take on this threat across the board remains to be convincingly demonstrated. And yet at the same time, a certain amount of realism is required regarding its capacity to do so. Given the common interest in addressing this threat, if sufficient trust can be

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

established this could be an area for potential cooperation between the international community and the de facto authorities. A new conversation, a new dialogue on this is warranted.”

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 8-14 January 2022, 20 January 2022

“Last week [8-14 January 2022] in South Asia and Afghanistan, Taliban infighting took place in several provinces in Afghanistan, while groups of women protested the persecution of former security workers under Taliban governance. In Pakistan, security forces clashed with Islamic State (IS) militants in Balochistan province, while Baloch separatists launched targeted attacks against civilians and military forces. In India, Naxal-Maoist rebels targeted civilians and development projects. Lastly, violent events increased in northeast India, where pre-election violence was reported in Manipur and West Bengal states.

In **Afghanistan**, internal fighting between different Taliban factions led to four armed clashes in the past week. In Panjshir province, rival Taliban factions loyal to the local police chief and governor clashed. Elsewhere, the arrest of a Taliban commander of Uzbek ethnicity sparked riots and infighting in Maimana city of Faryab province. The following day, a group of Uzbek Taliban clashed with other Taliban members near the provincial governor’s residence. While there was no official statement about the reason for the arrest, some sources claim that he had been charged with having links to IS and a former anti-Taliban forces commander (Twitter, @Mukhtarwafayee, 13 January 2022). During the riots, Uzbek Taliban fighters in the province also complained about ethnic-based discrimination and economic inequality (Wall Street Journal, 14 January 2022). Internal disputes among the Taliban have also drawn regional concern, with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon claiming that at least 11 Taliban were killed during infighting near the Tajikistan border in early January (Eurasianet, 14 January 2022). Experts have previously argued that fighting between rival Taliban factions has increased since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan (Foreign Policy, 12 November 2021). Since the Taliban assumed power, ACLED has recorded over a dozen such clashes in different provinces.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, At Least Four Shot Dead In Eastern Afghanistan, 19 January 2022

“A Taliban commander and three other people were killed when a man opened fire on a vehicle in Afghanistan’s eastern Kunar Province, a local Taliban official said on January 19.

The incident occurred in the Narang district of Kunar, the Taliban director of information and culture in the province, Mawlawi Najibullah, told the media.

Another nine people were wounded, Najibullah said, adding that the attacker had escaped to a civilian house and when the owner had denied him shelter, he killed him too.

The attacker was detained after being wounded and police are investigating the case, he said.

A local elder put the number of dead at six, including four Taliban members.

The elder said the attacker had switched allegiance from the Taliban to the Islamic State (IS) group in the past.

“He opened fire on the car with a machine gun,” the elder said.

IS, which is active in eastern Afghanistan, has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August.

The Taliban and IS have been fighting each other since the latter emerged in Afghanistan in early 2015.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, Sarajudin Haqqani asks Taliban commanders not to seek revenge on previous officers, 19 January 2022

“Local officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in the eastern Kunar province confirmed that a local commander including six others was killed in gunfire on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.

Intelligence officials of the IEA said that the commander, his son, and five others were shot killed in the Narang district of the province.

The officials said that the people were killed as a result of personal enmity.

The incident is not new in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover, people across Afghanistan have often been killed as a result of the enmity.

In the meantime, shooting civilians by the Taliban affiliates in check posts is another issue that has concerned people across Afghanistan.”

Khaama Press, Two killed in Taliban’s gunfire in western Herat province, 18 January 2022

“Local residents in the western Herat province said that the Taliban affiliates opened fire at a car in their checkpoint in Kazemi area of the city that resulted in the killing of the driver.

Eyewitnesses also said that a local doctor named Jalali was also shot on the scene and was killed.

The incident happened on Monday night, January, 17.

Local officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Herat province have not commented on the incident yet.

Shooting at people is not something new since the Taliban’s takeover on August 15 last year, the affiliates have shot civilians in Kabul and Laghman province as we

Two days ago, the Taliban shot at two women and a boy that killed the boy and wounded the two women. Earlier, the Taliban in the Afghan capital Kabul had shot killed a girl and a boy.”

Avapress, The End of Unrest in Faryab: Taliban Fails to Quell Protests, 16 January 2022

“Four days ago, hundreds of residents of province and Uzbek forces affiliated with the Taliban protested over the detention of Makhdoom Mohammad Alam , a senior Taliban commander from the ethnic group. After Makhdoom Alam was arrested by the Taliban’s intelligence forces, protestors rallied in Maimana to demand his release. [...]

Rashid added that there were no differences between the Uzbek, Pashtun, and Tajik Taliban, stressing that the situation in the province had returned to normal. [...]

Ghulam Nabi Ghafoori, the deputy head of the Ulema Council in Faryab province, told a rally that people had no right to protest against the Islamic regime. He added that the government has the authority and responsibility to detain, imprison or even fire its agent for his reform. [...]

On the second day of the protests in Maimana, two civilians and three Taliban militants were killed. Before the fall of the previous regime, Makhdoom Alam was in charge of the Taliban’s military in Faryab province. The senior Taliban commander is being detained as some former government officials accuse the Taliban-led government of suppressing and detaining non-Pashtun Taliban militants.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Takeover Worsens Rights Crisis, 13 January 2022

“The number of civilians killed and injured in the conflict surged in the first six months of 2021 from attacks by both Taliban and Afghan government security forces, the latter primarily from airstrikes. The ISKP carried out numerous attacks on civilian facilities, including schools and mosques, killing hundreds, most of them members of Afghanistan’s Hazara community. ISKP attacks continued after the Taliban takeover.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

OCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan (2022), 11 January 2022

“Following decades of war, intense conflict in the first seven months of 2021 brought severe harm to the people of Afghanistan. According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), civilian casualties in the first half of 2021 reached record levels, with particularly sharp increase in killings and injuries since May 2021 when international military forces began their withdrawal and fighting intensified. 5,138 civilian casualties (1,659 killed and 3,524 injured) were recorded between January and June 2021 – a 47 per cent increase from the same period in 2020.

“While the significant decrease of widespread armed conflict in most parts of Afghanistan after 15 August led to a drastic reduction in civilian casualties from ground engagements and airstrikes, UNAMA continued to document civilian casualties from improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. From 15 August to 31 December 2021, UNAMA documented more than 1,050 civilian casualties, including more than 350 civilians killed.

“Close to 700,000 people were internally displaced by conflict in 2021 - 60 per cent children and 20 per cent women while close to 9.2 million people are estimated to remain in situations of forced displacement since 2012. Following the takeover in August, although violence overall has reduced, attacks by NSAG continue to occur, with violence associated with the Islamic State – Khorasan province (ISK) in particular increasing from 60 to over 300 attacks by November 2021. Further complicating the situation is the presence of explosive hazard contamination across the country, particularly improvised mines and explosive remnants of war, which continue to impact at least 1,500 Afghan communities.”

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan, 4-10 December 2021, 16 December 2021

“In Afghanistan, IS attacks on the Taliban more than doubled last week. In addition to ongoing attacks in Kabul and Nangarhar provinces, IS also attacked the Taliban in Logar and Takhar provinces, killing one Taliban member and injuring another. This marks the second IS attack recorded in Logar since 2018, while no previous IS attacks have been recorded in Takhar since the beginning of ACLED’s Afghan coverage in 2017.”

“Meanwhile, IS also detonated three IEDs in Kabul city last week, killing two civilians in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood. This is the third IS attack in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, an area heavily populated by members of the Hazara Shiite minority (Al Jazeera, 10 December 2021), since the Taliban regime came to power in August 2021. Since the Taliban takeover, ACLED records more than a dozen IS attacks in Afghanistan that have directly targeted civilians. The ongoing attacks come as a Taliban spokesman again claimed that IS is not a “big threat” in Afghanistan, and that IS had been “dismantled in Kabul and Jalalabad” (Anadolu Agency, 9 December 2021).”

Al Jazeera, Taliban rule marked by killings, ‘litany of abuses,’ UN says, 14 December 2021

“The United Nations says it has received “credible allegations” of extrajudicial killings of more than 100 former Afghan national security forces and others associated with Afghanistan’s former government since its fall three months ago, with most taking place at the hands of the ruling Taliban.

[...]

In a speech to the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, Nada Al-Nashif, the UN deputy high commissioner for human rights, said at least 72 of the more than 100 alleged killings were “attributed to the Taliban”. In several cases, Al-Nashif added, “the bodies were publicly displayed. This has exacerbated fear among this sizeable category of the population.””

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA Press, One dead in Kabul explosion, 14 December 2021

"The incident took place at around 10:00 a.m. Tuesday in the -e-Logar area of Kabul's PD8, a spokesman for the ministry of interior confirmed.

He said two other civilians were also injured in the blast.

The incident was caused by the detonation of an IED planted in a pot in the side of the road, the Mol said. No individual or group has claimed responsibility for the incident."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: 'Former Taliban insurgents are now joining their police forces,' 12 December 2021

"According to Taliban sources, they are planning a police force of 30,000 to 40,000 people, which they believe will be sufficient because the war is over.

Former Taliban insurgents are now joining their police forces. This is a gradual process that will necessitate training for these individuals. The average number of so-called Taliban police in the districts is roughly 20 to 30 people who are in charge of guarding the district center and occasionally patrolling on motorcycles. Taliban police are not present in the villages, and the Taliban have chosen one or two Arbaki representatives from each village to report to them on what is going on in the villages. If the Arbakis are unable to solve problems at the village level, the center will dispatch a larger force.

The Ministry of Interior's personnel are concentrated in cities, particularly Kabul, where they work to maintain public order and combat ISIS. According to Taliban sources in Kabul, the main challenge is tracking down terrorist cells and ISIS-K. ISIS-K has been able to increase the intensity of its attacks in Kabul and Jalalabad. In the last three days there were three major attacks by the ISIS-K in Kabul which killed at least ten people and injured many others. According to the Aamaq website, which is affiliated with the ISIS-K group, members of the group carried out "three attacks" on vehicles in Kabul's Shiite neighborhood on Saturday. Saeed Khosti, a Taliban spokesman for the Interior Ministry, told reporters that a bomb had exploded in Kabul's Barchi neighborhood, killing two civilians and injuring three others. Another woman was injured in another blast in the same area, he said.

Because the Taliban is unable to effectively track down the perpetrators of these attacks, it appears that they are killing any suspected members of the group as well as any suspected supporters. The justice system is currently almost paralyzed. So far, there have been several cases of people being hanged without even a formal trial. The Taliban recently announced the reactivation of the judiciary, which will be entirely based on Sharia law. They also stated that the majority of judicial staff would be Taliban members, who had previously been part of the Taliban during the insurgency."

Pajhwok, 13 people suffer casualties in Afghanistan last week, 11 December 2021

"[C]asualties remained low last week when seven people were killed and six others injured in four incidents in Kabul, Nangarhar and Kapisa provinces. [...]

Seven people were killed and six others injured during separate incidents of violence in the country. Two alleged armed robbers were killed and another two injured during a clash with security forces in central Kapisa province. [...]

Two civilians were killed and four others injured as a result of bomb blasts in Kabul's Dashti Barchi area. Also in Kabul armed thieves killed a woman and a child and a child was killed after being hit by a stray bullet in Nangarhar province's Kama district.

The blasts in Kabul were claimed by Daesh.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

In the previous week, four civilians had been killed and a fifth injured during separate incidents across the country, bringing the casualties to record low.”

Al Jazeera, Deadly blasts hit Afghan capital Kabul, 10 December 2021

“At least two people have been killed and four others injured in two separate bomb explosions in the Afghan capital Kabul, according to the Taliban government.

“Two civilians have been killed and three others were wounded” when a bomb exploded on Friday on a minibus in the Dasht-e-Barchi district of Kabul, the Taliban’s interior ministry spokesman Sayed Khosti told reporters.”

The Guardian, Nearly 100 former British Council staff remain in hiding in Afghanistan, 9 December 2021

“Nearly 100 former British Council staff employed to teach British values and the English language remain in hiding in Afghanistan after having so far been refused the right to come to the UK by officials. [...]

He told the Guardian: “These people are living in constant fear of their lives. They were contracted under a British government-funded scheme to teach English teachers British values of diversity, inclusion and equality, the values that ... the Taliban oppose. They were always told they were employees of the British government.”

In an email he sent to the prime minister soon after the fall of Kabul in September, he warned Boris Johnson: “Many of them have had the Taliban visit their homes, or the homes of their relatives, asking questions and making threats. Many of them have had to relocate, while others are living in hiding.””

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forcibly Evicting Ethnic Uzbeks, Turkmen In Northern Afghanistan, 9 December 2021

“Taliban fighters have been accused of helping to forcibly evict more than 1,000 people in northern Afghanistan, with the evictions targeting members of the ethnic Uzbek and Turkmen communities.

Ethnic Uzbeks and Turkmen allege that Pashtuns seized their homes and land in the northern province of Jowzjan with the help of the Taliban, a predominately Pashtun group.

The evictions came as Taliban fighters have expelled hundreds of Shi’ite Hazara families from their homes and farms in five provinces since the militants seized power in Afghanistan in August.

Rights groups say the Taliban’s forced displacement of residents is an attempt to distribute land to their own supporters and collectively punish communities that backed the former government. [...]

“Nobody could resist,” he says. “If we raised our voices, we would be killed.” [...]

But in comments to the BBC on November 29, Taliban spokesman Bilal Karimi denied any forced displacements had taken place in Jowzjan.”

OCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 (Part Two), 2 December 2021

“Threats to civilians and acute protection needs remain high, and there are grave concerns about the rollback on women’s rights and restrictions on their participation in life and society. Densely populated areas are also contaminated with explosives, putting more people, particularly those trying to return, at risk of death and maiming.”

Khaama Press, Bomb blast in Kabul wounds five civilians including Taliban, 30 November 2021

“A bomb that was planted on the main road in Police District six of the Afghan capital wounded five people including the Taliban fighters but the Taliban have not commented on the casualties”.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Pajhwok Afghan News, 2 civilians wounded in Kabul blast; suspect arrested, 30 November 2021

"Two people were injured as a result of blast on Dar-ul-Aman Road of Kabul on Tuesday morning, an official said"

Thomson Reuters, Afghan humanitarian crisis, drug trafficking alarm India, Russia, China, 26 November 2021

"The spread of illicit drug trafficking in opiates and methamphetamine from Afghanistan and beyond... poses a serious threat to regional security and stability and provides funding for terrorist organizations"

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan)(UNOCHA), Afghanistan Weekly Humanitarian Update (15-21 November 2021), 26 November 2021

"During the reporting period, 17 civilians including women and children were injured by abandoned Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs) in rural areas in Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces." [...] "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"

Pajhwok Afghan News, 2 people injured in Kabul explosion, 23 November 2021

"Two security personnel were injured in a magnetic mine blast in second police district of capital Kabul on Tuesday, police officials said."

REUTERS, Islamic State claims twin blasts in Afghan capital Kabul, 17 November 2021

"Islamic State claimed responsibility for two explosions that hit a heavily Shi'ite Muslim area of the Afghan capital Kabul on Wednesday, killing at least one person and wounding at least six others including three women.

The blasts were the latest in a series of attacks in Kabul claimed by the militant Sunni group in recent days, with Shi'ite areas in the west of the city targeted several times. The group has also launched attacks on Shi'ite mosques in the northern city of Kunduz and the southern city of Kandahar.

One car bomb blast in Dasht-e Barchi, in western Kabul, killed a civilian and wounded six, interior ministry spokesman Qari Sayeed Khosty said in a tweet.

There was no confirmation of casualty numbers. A Taliban official who spoke on condition of anonymity said seven people had been killed and nine wounded.

A second explosion was reported in the nearby Karte 3 area, local residents said. A Taliban official said security forces were still gathering information."

PAJHWOK AFGHAN NEWS, 4 children injured in Badghis blasts, 16 November 2021

"Four children have been injured in two separate blasts in the Jawand and Muqar districts of northwestern Badghis province, according to hospital sources on Tuesday. [...]

Separately another child was injured in a blast in Muqar district. He was evacuated to the hospital and was currently under treatment.

He said these children were playing and landmines planted in the past went off on them."

AVA Press, 2 Civilians Killed in Operations against ISKP Hideouts in Kandahar, 16 November 2021

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Taliban interim government officials in have confirmed that some civilians

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

have been killed in operations by Taliban forces against the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) hideouts in this province.

The commander of Kandahar says that he simultaneously carried out six operations against ISKP hideouts in the different areas of Kandahar.”

[The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) published on 15th November 2021 a *Brief compilation on recent developments and key actors in Afghanistan*, which you may wish to consult. The compilation covers: *Developments in 2021, The Taliban, Taliban-associated groups (Haqqani Network; Al Qaeda); Islamic State - Khorasan Province; National Resistance Front (NRF)*]

Khaama Press, *ISIS-K claims responsibility for Kabul’s explosion*, 15 November 2021

“The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan branch (ISIS-K) confirmed that Saturday’s explosion in the western part of Kabul was conducted by them.

The explosion that happened on Saturday, November 13 in Dasht-e-Barchi of Kabul left three dead and six more wounded. [...]

ISIS-K has claimed that they have planted bombs in a minivan that killed 20 people but the Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid had said the incident that killed a civilian and wounded three more happened after the car caught fire.

ISIS-K is now the only terror group that conduct a terror attack after the Taliban takeover on August 15.

The Taliban on the other hand has been underrated by the militants and has claimed to have arrested 600 ISIS-k affiliates in the past three months.”

GANDHARA NEWS, *Kabul Bomb Blast Wounds Two As Islamic State Claims Responsibility For Earlier Explosion*, 14 November 2021

“Two people were reported wounded after a bomb exploded on a busy avenue in the Afghan capital -- the latest attack hitting the Afghan capital since the Taliban seized power three months ago.

[...] A magnetic bomb attached to a car detonated in Kabul's fifth police district, wounding two civilians.

The Taliban spokesman for Kabul police said that the blast was caused by a roadside bomb that detonated as a taxi was passing, according to AP. [...]

No one claimed responsibility, but militants of a local IS affiliate of the Islamic State (IS) extremist group have carried out multiple deadly bomb attacks across the country after the Taliban toppled the internationally backed Kabul government in Kabul in mid-August.

The bomb attack came two days after a bomb blast hit a Shi'ite neighborhood of western Kabul in an attack claimed by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K).”

PAJHWOK AFGHAN NEWS, *World once again turns attention to Afghanistan last week*, 13 November 2021

“Attacks and civilian casualties:

According to reports, nine people were killed and 20 others were injured in different incidents last week. Local officials said that a bomb blast at a mosque in Spin Ghar district of Nangarhar province injured 15 worshippers.

Also in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, three civilians were killed while a child was killed and another was injured in an IED blast in Hesarak district of the province.

More than 65 percent of last week’s casualties happened in Nangarhar, while 46 percent casualties of the previous week when 18 people were killed also happened in this province.

According to another report, a bomb blast in Tirinkot city, capital of Uruzgan province, killed three

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

members of a family and injured five others. In addition, unidentified gunmen killed two former government soldiers in Chahab district of Takhar province.

ISIS has claimed responsibility for the bomb blast at a mosque in Nangarhar's Spin Ghar district, but no one has claimed responsibility for the other attacks."

Khaama Press, Explosion in Kabul killed and injured civilians, 13 November 2021

"An explosion killed at least one and wounded three more civilian people in Police District 18, Dasht-e-Barchi of Kabul on Saturday afternoon, November 13.

Spokesperson of the Taliban Zabiullah Mujahid in a Twitter post confirmed the casualties but said that the incident happened after a car caught fire but eyewitnesses have said that the car was targeted by a magnetic bomb.

Though no group has claimed responsibility for the incident, the Taliban officials have acknowledged that they have started investigations about that.

Dasht-e-Barchi in the west of Afghanistan is a residence where mostly the Hazara (Shite Muslims) are living who are often targeted by the ISIS-K affiliates."

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan: Deadly explosion hits mainly Shia suburb of Kabul, 13 November 2021

"At least one person has been killed and four others wounded in an explosion that hit a vehicle in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, officials said.

The incident on Saturday took place in Dasht-e Barchi, a Kabul suburb dominated by members of the mostly Shia Hazara community, who for years have been targeted by ISIL-affiliated fighters."

Khaama Press, Explosion in Nengarhar killed three and wounded 15 worshipers, 12 November 2021

"Provincial officials of the eastern Nangarhar province have confirmed the explosion in a mosque of Spin Ghar district but did not disclose the exact number of casualties.

Local officials and eyewitnesses said that the blast killed at least three people and wounded 15 more.

The explosion has targeted worshipers in a mosque during Friday prayer and those killed include the Imam of the mosque too. [...]

No one has claimed responsibility for the explosion yet but the ISIS-K fighters have been targeting mosques in Afghanistan.

This is the third mosque being targeted by ISIS-K affiliates since the Taliban takeover on August 15."

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan: Mosque in Nangarhar province hit by blast, 12 November 2021

"An explosion has hit a mosque in the Spin Ghar area of Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan during Friday prayers, killing at least three people and wounding 15 others, according to residents and Taliban officials.

A doctor at the local hospital told AFP news agency that at least three people have been killed. "So far three killed, 15 wounded," the doctor said. Al Jazeera was unable to independently verify the toll."

TOLO News, Officials: 2 Killed in Blast at Nangarhar Mosque, 12 November 2021

"A blast occurred inside of a mosque on Friday in Spinghar district of Nangarhar province, local officials confirmed.

The blast occurred while dozens of people gathered to perform the Friday prayers.

The worshipers suffered casualties, but the number of fatalities has yet to be reported.

Local officials said two people were killed and 17 were injured in Friday's explosion in Nangarhar, all of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

whom were worshippers.
Eyewitnesses, however, said the number of casualties is higher.
No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.”

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan | 30 October-5 November 2021, 11 November 2021

“In Afghanistan, IS continued attacks targeting the Taliban and civilians last week. In Kabul, IS militants killed at least 25 Taliban members and civilians during an attack on the Kabul Military Hospital. IS suicide bombers detonated themselves at the Kabul Military Hospital gate before militants exchanged gunfire with Taliban fighters. Five IS militants also died in the attack. This is the fourth deadliest IS attack since the Taliban regime came into power in August 2021. IS and Taliban fighters also clashed in Balkh and Nangarhar provinces. Despite these attacks, the Taliban have claimed that IS is “more or less under control” and lacks support from the local population (Al Arabiya, 5 November 2021).

Separately, ACLED also records unclaimed attacks on civilians across five Afghan provinces last week. In one instance, the bodies of four women civil society activists were recovered in Balkh province, including a well-known women’s rights defender. Taliban forces have considered personal feuds a potential reason for the killings (The Guardian, 5 October 2021). However, a victim’s husband claims that she was killed by an organized network targeting civil society activists, who introduced themselves as representatives of a human rights organization (Hasht-e Subh, 5 November 2021).”

TOLO News, US Worried by Increase of Daesh Attacks in Afghanistan, 9 November 2021

The United States is worried about an uptick in attacks by Islamic State's affiliate in Afghanistan and remains deeply concerned about al Qaeda's ongoing presence there, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Tom West said on Monday.

World Politics Review, Addressing Afghanistan’s Crisis Will Require Dealing With the Taliban, 9 November 2021

As the Taliban government struggles to contain the crisis with minimal resources, it will likely fail to maintain control over all of its territory. The Islamic State’s affiliate in Afghanistan, known as ISIS-Khorasan, is stepping up its attacks in the country and could establish a firm territorial base there.

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Update, 8 November 2021

The Afghanistan security situation remains of high concern, with people describing parts of the country as being in “total chaos”. Last week, the Deputy Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, Farhan Haq, reported ongoing violence resulting in casualties in Afghanistan: in Jalalabad, unverified pictures appeared online showing bodies swinging from a rope; residents also reported various targeted killings and video footage circulated of gunmen firing into a car, apparently killing its occupants, one of whom was identified by local journalists as a Taliban official. The Taliban have downplayed such incidents, saying that after decades of war, it will take time for the country to be completely pacified.

BBC News, More than 20 killed in attack on Kabul military hospital, 2 November 2021
More than 20 people have been killed and at least 16 injured in a gun and bomb assault on a military hospital in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Attackers targeted the 400-bed Sardar Daud Khan hospital starting with two massive explosions outside the building, officials said.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gunmen then broke into the hospital grounds, witnesses said.
An affiliate of the Islamic State group, IS-K, later said it had carried out the attack.

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan, 27 October 2021
“Last week in South Asia and Afghanistan, violence continued between the Taliban and the National Resistance Front (NRF) in Afghanistan, as the Islamic State (IS) sustained its attacks on Taliban forces. [...] In **Afghanistan**, the number of armed clashes increased last week, amid ongoing clashes between the Taliban and the NRF. Clashes were reported in the Pul-e-Hisar, Andarab, and Deh Sala districts of Baghlan province. While the exact number of casualties remains unknown, several NRF and Taliban fighters were reportedly killed, including two NRF commanders.”

UN News, Act swiftly and with determination on Afghanistan, UN chief urges, 27 October 2021
““Afghanistan is confronting an epic humanitarian crisis and is on the verge of a development catastrophe”, the UN chief [Antonia Guterres] told the gathering. He urged countries to speak with one voice. [...]

Mr. Guterres said **he was deeply disturbed by violations of human rights**, including the rights of women, children and ethnic minorities, and recent deadly terrorist attacks on religious institutions. **He called for ongoing engagement “to help move things in the right direction.”**
For his final point, the UN chief stressed that Afghans, and the region, “also need a country that is secure – not one that is a haven for terrorism or a centre for drug trafficking.” This, he said, is vital to peace and stability, both in the region and around the world. “

TOLO News, 16 People Killed in Herat Clashes: Sources, 25 October 2021

“At least 16 people including seven children and three women were killed in clashes that erupted between the forces of the Islamic Emirate and a group of armed men in the western province of Herat, sources claimed on Monday.

The sources said that the house belonged to Daesh. Three members of the Islamic Emirate were also killed, the sources added.

However, Mawllavi Naeemulhaq Haqqani, provincial director of information and culture, said that a number of kidnappers were killed in the clashes. [...]

In the past two months, Herat has not seen a deadlier incident.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Last week, casualties in Afghanistan fall to record low, 23 October 2021
“Casualty figure in Afghanistan fell to its lowest level or [sic] nine people in the past week, when some countries stressed aid to Afghanistan at a summit in Moscow and the Afghan government said it was ready for any civilized interaction with the world.

Attacks and civilian casualties

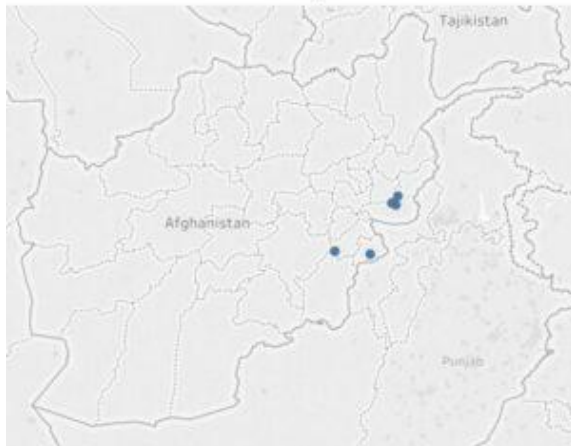
According to reports, six people were killed and three others wounded in different attacks last week.

Three children were killed and one was injured in a roadside bomb blast in Mata Khan district of Paktika province. A man was found stabbed to death and unidentified gunmen killed a former border policeman in Khost city, capital of Khost province. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Casualties were also low six weeks ago when eight people were killed and one was wounded.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

9 Civilians were killed and injured in different incidents



Last week's death toll was 16 times lower than the previous one.

Previous week, 56 people were killed and 90 others injured in various incidents across the country. Forty-seven of them were killed and 90 others were injured in an attack on a Shia mosque in Kandahar province. ISIS claims responsibility for Kandahar attack."

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (11-17 October 2021), 21 October 2021

On 15 October, scores of civilians were killed and injured after a suicide bomb attack at a Shia mosque in Police District 1 of Kandahar City; 23 civilians including women and children were injured by abandoned IEDs in rural areas during the reporting period.

UNHCR, UNHCR Iran: Afghanistan Situation Update, 18 October 2021

"The overall security situation in the country remains relatively calm, though isolated but violent incidents continue to take civilian lives. On 15 October, suicide bombers attacked a mosque in Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, killing dozens of people and wounding dozens more, the second such attack on a Shiite place of worship on successive Fridays in the country. The Islamic State Khorasan, also known as ISIS-K and ISKP, claimed responsibility. These attacks can be seen as a display of the organization's newly established reach, as it begins a reinvigorated campaign of violence against the people of Afghanistan and the new Taliban government."

Pajhwok Afghan News, Efforts on to build strong, independent army: Mazloom, 16 October 2021

"The first deputy defense minister says they are trying to train an army that can defend Afghanistan's borders and people."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, Intensifying Violence Between Taliban, IS-K Heralds New War In Afghanistan, 13 October 2021

"But the Taliban's intensifying rivalry with the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), a rival militant group, has signaled the beginning of another phase of war in Afghanistan -- a development that many Afghans dread will provoke further bloodshed.

"Every day, two or three people are killed," Abdullah, a resident of the eastern province of Nangarhar, a stronghold of IS-K, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi.

Abdullah said IS-K bomb attacks and assassinations have increased since the Taliban seized control of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghanistan on August 15.”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Last week was again deadliest for Afghans, 10 October 2021

“Last week, 223 people suffered casualties in Afghanistan.

Attacks and civilian casualties:

According to reports last week 58 people were killed and 165 others injured in different incidents of violence in the country.

The deadliest incident last week happened in Kunduz province where 46 civilians were killed and 143 others injured in a suicide attack. Daesh or Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack.

Elsewhere, three people including a were killed and three civilians injured in two incidents in Nangarhar province.

One person was found dead in Nangarhar. In province, a bride was killed and two people were injured after a person hurled a hand grenade to a wedding party. Two people were killed and three others injured in an explosion in a gathering of people attending the funeral of the mother of Zabihullah Mujahid, deputy information and culture minister.

In Laghman province, an Islamic scholar was shot dead while a person was killed and 14 others injured in an explosion in a seminary in Khost province. A robber was killed during a clash with Taliban in Kapisa province. A person was killed by unidentified armed men in Achin district of Nangarhar province. A former policeman was killed in an attack of armed robbers in province.

No groups have so far claimed responsibility for these attacks and explosions.

A week before 16 civilians were killed and nine others wounded in various incidents.”

The New York Times, ISIS Bomber Kills Dozens at Shiite Mosque in Northern Afghanistan, 8 October 2021

“An Islamic State suicide bomber devastated a Shiite mosque in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz on Friday, killing dozens of worshipers in a deadly continuation of the terrorist group’s campaign against the Hazara minority.

The massacre, while the mosque was crowded for Friday Prayer, was the group’s second attack against a mosque in just a few days. And it was the realization of Afghan Hazaras’ fears that the Islamic State’s predation would go unchecked under the rule of the Taliban, which itself preyed on the Hazara in the past.

Witness accounts described a powerful explosion with many casualties. Matullah Rohani, a Taliban official in Kunduz, told local media that at least 43 people were killed by the attack and more than 140 were injured.

A local Shiite community leader put the death toll much higher. Sayed Ahmad Shah Hashemi, who represents Kunduz Province’s Shiite population, told The New York Times that more than 70 people were killed in the attack.”

“Hours after the bombing, it was claimed by the Islamic State Khorasan, also known as ISIS-K. It was the group’s deadliest strike since the suicide bombing at the international airport in Kabul on Aug. 26 that killed about 170 civilians and 13 U.S. troops.”

Khaama Press, ISIS-K claims responsibility for explosion on Eidgah mosque in Kabul, 5 October 2021

“The Khorasan branch of the Islamic State (ISIS-K) claimed responsibility for the deadly explosion on the Eidgah mosque on Sunday, October 3.

The explosion took the lives of at least eight and leftover 20 more wounded among them the Taliban fighters.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Taliban did not disclose an exact number of their fighters killed and wounded though, a source told the Khaama Press that most of them were the Taliban fighters.

The explosion which is said to have been conducted by a suicide bomber targeted a big mosque close to the Presidential Palace where people and the Taliban officials had gathered for the mourning and prayer ceremony of the slain mother of Zabiullah Mujahid- spokesperson and deputy minister of information and culture.

The Taliban fighters raided a house in the northern suburb of Kabul only hours after the incident and killed ISIS-K affiliates.

Zabiullah Mujahid had later said that they eliminated a cell of the ISIS-K fighters and killed all those existed in [who were part of it].”

The Guardian, Civilians killed in deadliest Kabul attack since US withdrawal, 3 October 2021

“At least five civilians have been killed in a bomb blast at the entrance to a Kabul mosque on Sunday, a Taliban official said, the deadliest attack in the Afghan capital since US forces left at the end of August. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but suspicion fell on Islamic State extremists, who have stepped up attacks on the Taliban in recent weeks, particularly in the IS stronghold in eastern Afghanistan. It is believed that a roadside bomb went off at the gate of the sprawling Eidgah mosque in Kabul when a memorial service was being held for the mother of the Taliban’s chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid. Five people were killed, said Qari Saeed Khosti, a spokesman for the interior ministry.”

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (13-19 September 2021), 23 September 2021

“In the reporting period, the security situation in the south remained calm but uncertain. The presence of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) is affecting access of people to areas in Uruzgan, Hilmand, and some parts of Kandahar provinces.”

“The security situation in the East remains volatile and unpredictable. On 18 September, five people were reportedly killed and 21 people were wounded by multiple IED detonations across the city of Jalalabad in Nangarhar Province”

“On 18 September, two civilians were reportedly injured by an IED attached to a private vehicle in Police District 13, Kabul. On 14 September, two civilians were reportedly killed and 12 others were wounded when an old mortar shell exploded in Ajristan district in Daykundi province.”

Reuters, Taliban say no al Qaeda or ISIS in Afghanistan, 21 September 2021

“Afghanistan’s Taliban rulers said on Tuesday there was no evidence of Islamic State or al Qaeda militants being in the country, days after Islamic State claimed responsibility for bomb attacks in the eastern city of Jalalabad. [...] Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid rejected accusations that al Qaeda maintained a presence in Afghanistan and repeated pledges that there would be no attacks on third countries from Afghanistan from militant movements.”

Long War Journal, Islamic State bombs Taliban convoys in eastern Afghanistan, 20 September 2021

“The Islamic State’s Khorasan Province has claimed responsibility for a series of bombings that targeted Taliban convoys throughout the city of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. The group claims that 35 Taliban members were killed or wounded in the attacks, though the casualty figures could not be independently verified.

Amaq News Agency, a media arm for the Islamic State, released a single-page statement on the attacks, as well as a short video showing an improvised explosive device being detonated underneath a Taliban

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

vehicle. A screen shot from the video can be seen above.

Amaq claimed that seven bombings were carried out on Sept. 18 and 19, with the final explosion occurring outside of the Indian consulate in Jalalabad. Other jihadists have assaulted the Indian consulate inside the city in the past, but there is no indication in Amaq's reporting that the diplomatic location was deliberately targeted on this occasion."

Lawfare, Thinking Long Term About the Future of Afghanistan, 19 September 2021

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

Reuters, U.N. Afghanistan mission extended, Afghan envoy asks to keep seat, 17 September 2021

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

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

"It has been very difficult to follow what is happening. There has been almost no independent reporting, since communications were and the road into the Panjshir closed. The information vacuum has been filled by pro-Taleban and pro-resistance social media accounts and media appearances, often making unverifiable and conflicting claims in an attempt to dominate the narrative. (See, for an example, this TOLO News report from 2 September in which the Taleban claimed to have captured Shutul district centre and 11 outposts, killing 34, while the National Resistant Front denied the loss of the district and claimed to have killed at least 350 Taleban fighters in the various clashes.)

It has been even more difficult to get a handle on reports of possible atrocities, in Panjshir and Andarab, or of the rounding up of young Panjshiri men in neighbourhoods like Khairkhana in Kabul. The online clamour by diaspora pro-resistance supporters that there is both an ongoing genocide and a Pakistani invasion going on in Panjshir – generally without much details or 'supported' by footage that is either old, from other places, and in one case even from a computer game – threatened to drown out the gathering of corroborated reporting.

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

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

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (30 August – 5 September 2021), 13 September 2021

"In the reporting period, the overall security situation in the south remained relatively calm. Civilians

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

including women and children reportedly continued to be affected by roadside Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonations and gunfire.”

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan, 31 July - 3 September 2021, 9 September 2021

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

Crime rates under the Taliban, including kidnappings and abduction

Afghan Voice Agency, Afghanistan over the past year, 29 August 2022

“While there are a number of concerning developments, the fact that there has been a significant reduction in violence and civilian casualties following the end of large-scale conflict is beyond debate. This is positive and should be welcomed.”

Khaama Press, Soricide: Man Kills His Married Sister and another Man for Extramarital Sexual Intercourse in Northern Afghanistan, 23 August 2022

“Using a Kalashnikov rifle, a man shot and killed his married sister and another married polygamous man for engaging in extramarital sexual intercourse in the absence of her husband, according to local Taliban officials in the northern province of Faryab. A man and a woman were allegedly shot in the Kohistan district of Faryab province for engaging in an affair, according to local sources. According to Mohammad Ismail Furqani, Taliban’s Counter-Crimes director of the Faryab Chief of Police, the “honor killing” event occurred on Monday night, 22nd of August in the Kohistan district of Faryab province as the killer caught his sister and the man “red-handed”, having sex. [...] More suicides, homicides, target killings, and honor killings have occurred recently as a result of an increase in domestic violence, personal enmity, family blood feuds, and illicit relationships.”

Khaama Press, Child, 11, Accidentally Kills another Child with Kalashnikov Rifle While Playing in Northern Afghanistan, 18 August 2022

“According to local sources, an 11-year-old boy accidentally shot and killed his 10-year-old playmate in Faryab province of northern Afghanistan as they were playing with a Kalashnikov rifle. The tragedy, took place on Tuesday, the 16th of August, in the Hashtomin village of Kohistan district in the northern Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

province of Faryab. Local sources report that Mohammad Nader, 10, was killed by Abdul Rahman, 11, while he and two other kids were playing with a gun at home. [...] Similar incidents that involved a child inadvertently killing another while playing with guns have occurred in the past and resulted in casualties in several provinces across the country. The number of children killed in Afghanistan also rises as a result of children falling victim when playing with guns, unexploded mortar shells, ordnance, and other remnants of war. In the course of seven months, landmines and explosive remnants of war have injured or killed 301 children in Afghanistan, according to a UNICEF report. The actual number is thought to be significantly larger.”

Khaama Press, Hanging Body of 14-Year-Old Boy Found Swinging from Tree in Central Afghanistan, 17 August 2022

“Local Taliban government officials in the central Afghan province of Ghor say that they have discovered a young boy’s body hanging from a tree in Firozkoh city, the provincial capital of Ghor. The body of this youngster was reportedly discovered yesterday evening in the Wardak Haa region to the east of Firozkoh city, the center of Ghor province. A 14-year-old boy’s body was reportedly discovered hanging from a tree, according to the source. [...] There is still no explanation for why or how this teen was hanged, as the newsletter of the Taliban police in Ghor province has not provided details. Despite the Taliban’s claims of security, that the group has provided and maintained security in Afghanistan, it should be underlined that mysterious murders and other crimes persist and have recently become more frequent in several provinces across Afghanistan.”

UN News, ‘immensely bleak’ future for Afghanistan unless massive human rights reversal, experts warn, 12 August 2022

“Moreover, the humanitarian and economic crisis in Afghanistan, which has already caused immeasurable harm to millions, shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, it is predicted to worsen, they added, partly due to the interruption of international assistance and the freezing of Afghan assets abroad.

[...]

The experts said the Taliban have committed a “plethora” of human rights violations, with the virtual erasure of women and girls from society, as well as their systematic oppression, being particularly egregious.

“Nowhere else in the world has there been as **wide-spread, systematic and all-encompassing an attack on the rights of women and girls** – every aspect of their lives is being restricted under the guise of morality and through the instrumentalization of religion. Discrimination and violence cannot be justified on any ground”.

[...]

“Indeed, the daily reports of violence – including extra-judicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture, heightened risks of exploitation faced by women and girls including for the purposes

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of child and forced marriage, and a breakdown in the rule of law – gives us no confidence that the Taliban has **any intention of making good** on its pledge to respect human rights."

Citizens now have no means for redress as the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has been abolished, along with other independent oversight mechanism and institutions.

The administration of justice has also been compromised. The applicable law is unclear, and judges and other officials have been replaced, which has especially affected women.

The experts pointed to other violations, such as the curtailing of press freedom, and the rise in attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, some of which were claimed by the ISIL-KP terrorist group."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Veterinary Doctor Killed in Central Afghanistan by Unknown Gunmen, 3 August 2022

"A young veterinary doctor was brutally murdered on Tuesday by four unidentified individuals in Ghor province, in central Afghanistan, said local Taliban officials."

"Despite the Taliban's assurances that they provide security, mysterious murders and other crimes are still occurring and have recently become more frequent in several provinces."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Religious Scholar Gunned Down in Northeastern Afghanistan, 30 July 2022

"Local sources in the Afghan northeastern province of Kunar say that unidentified gunmen killed a religious scholar in Kunar province. According to the sources, the victim is identified as an Imam (prayer leader) of a mosque in Kunar province, who went by the name Sheikh Mohammad Israel Sahibzada. The religious scholar is reportedly killed by unknown armed men on Friday evening, 29th of July, as he was returning home from prayer in the Sahibzada village in Kunar province. While the Taliban officials have not yet responded to the accident, the perpetrators are alleged to have fled the crime scene. Afghanistan's capital and provinces have experienced a rise in insecurity recently. A leading Salafi scholar and well-known religious figure, Sardar Wali Saqib, was murdered at his place of residence two weeks ago in Kabul."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Gunmen Shoot a Greengrocer Dead in Northeastern Afghanistan, 28 July 2022

"Intractable, mysterious killings and other crimes persist in various areas despite the Taliban's claims of security, that the group has been able to preserve the security of the nation and its people."

UN News, Afghanistan: Report highlights multiple human rights violations and abuses under Taliban, 20 July 2022

"The de facto authorities have limited dissent by cracking down on protests and curbing media freedoms according to the report. The report condemns arbitrary arrests of journalists, protestors, and civil society activists."

"Women and girls have seen their rights to access education, the workplace and participate in public life,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

restricted. Not allowing girls to go to secondary school means that a generation of girls will not complete their full 12 years of basic education, UNAMA highlighted.”

“While the report acknowledges steps taken by Taliban authorities to reduce violence, UNAMA still recorded 2,106 civilian casualties, with 700 killed, and 1,406 wounded. Those casualties are mainly attributed to targeted attacks by the terrorist group which identifies itself as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province, against ethnic and religious minority communities.”

“According to the report, those worst affected, were those linked to the former government and its security forces, with 160 extrajudicial killings confirmed, as well as 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions, and 56 instances of torture. The human rights situation has been exacerbated by a nationwide economic, financial and humanitarian crisis of unprecedented scale. At least 59 per cent of the population is now in need of humanitarian assistance – an increase of six million people compared with the beginning of 2021.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), Arbitrary Power and a Loss of Fundamental Freedom, 20 July 2022

“UNAMA has published its first major report on human rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban came to power on 15 August 2021. It covers a multitude of issues, including detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings, the rights of women and girls and civilian casualties. One recurring theme is the arbitrary way the new administration often works and the unpredictability of its laws, punishments and procedures [...]”

Human Rights Watch, UN Reports on Taliban Repression, Abuse in Afghanistan, 20 July 2022

“A new report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) makes for very grim reading, confirming many of the concerns Afghan human rights advocates have raised since last August, when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. UNAMA catalogues serious human rights abuses that Taliban forces have committed, including summary executions and enforced disappearances of former members of the Afghan National Security Forces, which have continued months after the Taliban takeover. It chronicles the series of Taliban decrees on the rights of women and girls that have given rise to “severe restrictions on their human rights, resulting in their exclusion from most aspects of everyday and public life.” And UNAMA describes how “arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists, human rights defenders, [and] protesters have had a chilling effect on freedom of the media and civic activism.” The response from the Taliban authorities was predictable. They ignored the many cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances UNAMA documented, and they denied the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice had “ever beaten anyone, harmed or forced anyone to do anything ... or said anything to women about dress code.” Much of their response was limited to the situation of prisoners, including the peculiar and false assertion that inmates “are satisfied” with prison food. As UNAMA describes, prisoners have been routinely denied food and water as punishment. Taliban officials, who for years denounced torture by the former government and US forces, did not respond to allegations that they have also tortured prisoners, including by using electric shock. UNAMA also notes that while civilian casualties have declined as the armed conflict has largely ended (with at least 118,443 civilians dead and wounded since UNAMA started counting in December 2008), attacks by Islamic State-linked armed groups continue to take a terrible toll, killing more than 700 civilians and wounding more than 1400 since August. Eleven months after Afghanistan’s abrupt transition to Taliban rule, the UNAMA report

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

demonstrates the crucial importance of continued monitoring and documentation of the steady erosion of rights in Afghanistan, and acts as an important reminder of the heavy price Afghans are paying."

ATN News, Two killed, 20 wounded in Herat shootings, 4 July 2022

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Pakistani Visas, Taliban Taxes, Afghan Bodybuilders, 17 June 2022

"Rising Crime In Kabul Radio Azadi reports on rising crime in Kabul, where some residents say they remain at home after dark to avoid thieves. The claims have punctured the Taliban's narrative that it has established security in Afghanistan since seizing power in August. "The criminals can get you anywhere after sunset. They will rob you of money and your mobile phone. They will also beat you," said Abdul Majid, a laborer in Kabul's Ahmad Shah Baba neighborhood, who was robbed last week."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Taliban must immediately stop unlawful killings and arbitrary arrests in Panjshir, 16 June 2022

"Zaman Sultani, Amnesty International's South Asia Researcher, said: "Constantly, reports are coming of arbitrary arrests and unlawful killings of civilians by the Taliban in Panjshir. Events in the last couple of weeks leave little room for doubt that there is a growing pattern of extrajudicial executions and arbitrary arrests committed by the Taliban... Amnesty International is gravely concerned about reports that those arbitrarily arrested are also facing physical torture and beatings that, in some cases, even resulted in death, as has been reported in the case of Abdul Munir Amini on 4 June"

"On 12 June 2022, the Taliban shot dead Murzataza, a resident of Khesa-Awal district of Panjshir who reportedly was also suffering from mental illness. On 4 June 2022, the spokesperson for the Taliban Governor of Panjshir Province in a video statement to the media said that fewer than 40 people were arrested. In Panjshir the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, an armed group fighting against the Taliban, has strong presence. One of those arrested, Abdul Munir Amini, was reportedly tortured to death. Media reports suggest that a larger number of civilians than admitted by the Taliban have been arbitrarily arrested from various different districts of Panjshir in the past few weeks."

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"During my visit, I recognised the significance of the general amnesty granted to the former officials of the former Government and members of the security forces, as an important step towards reconciliation after so many decades of war. I am however concerned that the Human Rights Service of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to receive credible reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, ill-treatment and extra-judicial killings – particularly of persons associated with the former government and its institutions. [...]

UNAMA also continues to record the impact of attacks on civilians. In April alone, a spate of improvised explosive devices attacks resulted in civilians being killed and injured at schools, places of worship, markets and while on public transportation. Ethnic and religious minorities have also been directly attacked. I remind the de facto authorities of their responsibility to protect all Afghans subject to their control. I also remain concerned about the information received of alleged human rights violations and abuses against civilians in the northern provinces, including Panjshir, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front. There are serious allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and torture. I call upon both parties to this conflict to observe restraint and to fully respect international human rights law and applicable international humanitarian law [...] Civil society actors, including women's rights activists and human rights defenders have been subjected to killings, enforced disappearances, incommunicado detention, attacks, harassment, threats and arrests. While some have been released, others remain deprived of their liberty, separated from their loved ones and deprived of their right to speak out"

AVA, Gunmen shoot airport workers in Balkh, 13 June 2022

"Gunmen opened fire on a vehicle carrying airport workers in Afghanistan's northern Balkh province on Sunday, killing two of them and wounding six more, police said. Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, The attack happened as the victims were travelling from Mazar-i-Sharif International Airport to the city center. Asif Waziri, a spokesman for Balkh police, said that the attack happened around 3:00p.m. in PD 10 of the provincial capital Mazar-i-Sharif. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack."

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir, 10 June 2022

"Taliban security forces in northern Afghanistan's Panjshir province have unlawfully detained and tortured residents accused of association with an opposition armed group, Human Rights Watch said today. Since mid-May 2022, fighting has escalated in the province as National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have attacked Taliban units and checkpoints. The Taliban have responded by deploying to the province thousands of fighters, who have carried out search operations targeting communities they allege are supporting the NRF. During search operations in other provinces, Taliban forces have committed summary executions and enforced disappearances of captured fighters and other detainees, which are war crimes. "Taliban forces in Panjshir province have quickly resorted to beating civilians in their response to fighting against the opposition National Resistance Front," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The Taliban's longstanding failure to punish those responsible for serious abuses in their ranks puts more civilians at risk." A human rights advocate who has interviewed several former detainees and a source with direct information about Taliban detentions spoke to Human Rights Watch about the Panjshir situation. Former detainees in early June reported that Taliban security forces detained about 80 residents in Panjshir's Khenj district and beat them to compel them to provide information about the NRF. After several days, the Taliban released 70, but have continued to hold 10 people whose relatives they accuse of being members of the group, a form of collective punishment. Former detainees said the district jail held nearly 100 others who have alleged links to the NRF. None had access to their families or lawyers. Others have been held in informal detention facilities."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatch: 'An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance.', 9 June 2022

"Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a law student in Kabul reports on conflict between Taliban fighter and resistance forces in the Panjshir valley area of the country. For privacy and security reasons, we are withholding our correspondent's name. The text has only been lightly edited to respect the author's voice. The Afghan resistance war on the Taliban is very likely to escalate, according to a recent report by UN experts. The report notes that the main military threats against Taliban are the National Resistance Force-NRF (an anti-Taliban movement made of The Northern Alliance that fought against the Soviets, plus former government military personnel), and ISIS-K. The Taliban have proved to be fragmented, and internal

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

conflicts are evident all the way to the bottom of their ranks. In recent months, the Taliban have preferred members of their own ethnic group in provinces which are made up of predominantly Persian speakers, have confiscated lands from Hazara people and awarded them to Pashtuns, have conducted targeted killings of former military personnel, and – the jewel on top – have sexually harassed women whose husbands or other family members have fought against them in the past. An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance. Given the history of Afghanistan, the day of a full uprising is not far off; and the provocative and oppressing behaviour of the Taliban against other ethnic groups – such as backing their own tribal members and kin to monopolize trade, government jobs and any service a government is expected to provide – is making the idea of an uprising and a full escalated war against them more plausible and expected. The UN report speculates that after weather change in the country the fighting against Taliban could intensify. The Washington Post meanwhile reports that Taliban are engaged in fighting in Panjshir province, noting that the “Taliban have been denying any conflict, yet thousands of their fighters are stationed in the valley”. The fighting in Panjshir has been intense and more than a hundred Taliban have been killed and many more injured in recent weeks. The NRF has been fairly successful in their guerrilla attacks and have taken out Taliban fighters and important figures in the valley. The major part of the casualties inflicted on the Taliban come from their own counter offenses to finish of the resistance once and for all, but having the higher ground gives the NRF an incredible advantage in keeping them at a distance and carrying out strikes which have delivered fatal blows to Taliban fighters. In response, the Taliban have been detaining hundreds of civilians in Panjshir, have carried out tens of field executions and have been torturing friends and families of the NRF members for information, some of whom have been reported dead after intense torture. In one incident a shepherd was killed by torture and his family were threatened to keep his death quiet or meet the same fate as him. Crimes against humanity, genocide and death by torture are happening in Panjshir, Andarab and Takhar provinces as I write this report. An open letter to the UN has been signed by 60 experts, professors and PhD holders around the world to call for an immediate stop to human rights violation against Tajiks in the aforementioned provinces.”

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

"In the latest incident, the family of a 40-year-old farmer in Panjshir's Bazarak district said he was arrested and tortured to death by the Taliban. The militant group admitted that Munir Ahmad had died in its custody on June 2. "This is not the first time that local people have been arrested, tortured, imprisoned, and even killed," a relative who did not want to be named told Radio Azadi.

Meanwhile, locals told Radio Azadi that the Taliban detained more than 100 civilians in the Paryan district of Panjshir in the past week. Their whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, the Taliban said it had detained an unspecified number of people accused of having links with the NRF. Locals have also alleged that Taliban fighters have recently beheaded several NRF fighters who were captured, a claim the Taliban has rejected. The ongoing fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Panjshir."

Tolo News, 2,000 Detained for Various Crimes in Past Month in Kabul, 5 June 2022

"The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said that more than 2,000 people were arrested on charges of various crimes in the last month in Kabul. Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, Abdul Nafay Takor said that at least 859 crimes happened within this period and that dozens of security incidents were thwarted. Takor said that serious steps are being taken to counter the drug challenges in the country and that 390 people were arrested on charges of drug dealing."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022

"Radio Azadi reports on the one sector of Afghanistan's collapsing economy that is thriving: the smuggling of people trying to escape the country. The Taliban has banned the transit of undocumented migrants across the border to Pakistan and Iran. But smugglers have overcome the ban by bribing corrupt Taliban border guards. "We fit about 20 people in each vehicle, and the Taliban charges 1,000 afghanis (about \$11) per car," said Mahmud. He earns \$800 a month smuggling up to 150 people weekly from Zaranj in Nimroz into Iran."

INSO, Crime data dashboard [No date]

[Click on hyperlink to see infographic on monthly incidents, arrests, note that the source is undated]

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 21-27 May 2022, 1 June 2022

"In Afghanistan, IS, unidentified groups, and the Taliban targeted civilians last week. On 25 May, at least nine civilians were killed and dozens injured in Mazar-e-Sharif city in Balkh province when remote bombs detonated in three minibuses carrying people from the Hazara community. IS claimed responsibility for the attack (Al Jazeera, 25 May 2022). This attack was the third IS attack in Mazar-e-Sharif city in the past month, with the previous attacks targeting Shiite Muslims. On the same day, another explosion occurred inside a mosque in Kabul city, killing at least five people. Similar to other deadly mosque attacks in Kabul on 29 April and 13 May, the perpetrators of the attack remain unknown. Taliban forces also carried out attacks targeting civilians across the country. Among these attacks, the Taliban opened fire at a wedding ceremony in Surkh Rud district of Nangarhar province for unclear reasons, injuring the bride and many others. The Taliban also targeted civilians for playing music in Kabul city. Meanwhile, anti-Taliban groups carried out attacks against the Taliban across the country last week. The National Resistance Front (NRF) continued offensives in Panjshir province, as well as Parwan and Kapisa, claiming to have killed at least 40 Taliban members in Panjshir. Meanwhile, the Taliban reportedly conducted operations against two NRF bases in the province. Taliban forces also continued to detain and torture locals in Panjshir, including elders and children (Hasht-e Subh, 26 May 2022). These trends contribute to the 256% increase in violence in the province last month relative to the past year, as flagged by ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of this increased violence to come in Panjshir in the past month. Elsewhere, in Ghazni province, the Afghanistan Liberation Movement claimed to have killed the Taliban's chief of intelligence in a mine explosion (Shafaqna, 27 May 2022). In Kabul province, the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan claimed to have conducted an attack on the Taliban police chief's house in Qarabagh district, reportedly killing seven Taliban members (Subhe Kabul, 25 May 2022).

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The expert expresses concern about information, received directly, of human rights violations and abuses against civilians in Panjshir, Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Takhar Provinces, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front. There are serious allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced displacement. The Special Rapporteur urges the parties to this

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

conflict to observe restraint and to fully respect international human rights law and applicable international humanitarian law. He calls on the authorities to permit human rights monitors access to these areas. The Special Rapporteur highlights the high number of reports since August 2021 of intimidation, harassment, attacks, arrests, and in some cases killing or disappearance of journalists, prosecutors, and judges for exercising their duties, as well as of civil society for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association. "I have received credible information about physical ill-treatment and mental harm inflicted on a range of actors, including human rights defenders, that previously made up a core part of the Afghan vibrant civil society", observed the Special Rapporteur."

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

"The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] noted that armed hostilities in many parts of the country had ceased and there was a consequent reduction in conflict-related casualties since the Taliban takeover. He said the recently established commission for the return of leading Afghan personalities may provide an opportunity for dialogue and potentially strengthen governance. While the granting of the general amnesty to officials of the former Government and members of the security forces could be a first step toward reconciliation, he remains alarmed about reports of ongoing extrajudicial and revenge killings of former members of the security forces and officials and door-to-door searches. [...] Bennett called for investigations into a series of attacks on places of worship and schools in Kabul, Kunduz, and Balkh provinces, instances of which have been claimed by the ISIS-K group. He said that such attacks specifically targeting members of the Hazara, Shia, and Sufi communities are becoming increasingly systematic in nature and reflect elements of an organizational policy, thus bearing hallmarks of crimes against humanity. He also expressed concern about allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced displacement in Panjshir and other northern provinces, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front."

Khaama, Taliban Rescued An Eight-Year-Old Child From Kidnappers in Paktika, 7 May 2022

"Taliban security authorities in Paktika province say they have rescued a minor girl from kidnappers in Sharana, the central district of province. The girl was kidnapped in Mutakhan district, according to the Bakhtar news agency, citing the security chief of the Taliban police headquarters in Paktika. According to him, the kidnappers clothed the girl in boys clothes and cut her hair short. The girl was rescued in Sharana, the provincial capital, according to a spokesman for the Taliban's Paktika police chief, but no arrests were made. The incidence of kidnappings has recently surged in the country's southeastern areas. The majority of kidnappings in these provinces are perpetrated for extortion and ransom."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Some kidnappers killed in raid to rescue Rauf: Mujahid, 24 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Two years ago, Rauf, 11, was kidnapped while he was on his way to school in -e-Sharif, the capital city of northern province. The child was rescued on Saturday and handed over to his family by Deputy Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Salam."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Abductions: The UN secretary-general's 2020 Children and Armed Conflict Report, released in June, cited

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

54 verified incidents of the Taliban abducting children. Of those, 42 children were released, four were killed, and the whereabouts of eight children remained unknown. [...] The Taliban announced anticorruption policies following their takeover, including creating commissions in Kabul and at the provincial level to identify corrupt or criminal officials and taking a hardline stance against bribery. The Taliban launched a commission through the “Ministry of Defense” to identify members who were flouting the movement’s directives. A ministry spokesman stated that 2,840 Taliban members were dismissed on charges of corruption and drug use. Reporting from multiple local businessmen revealed that cross-border trading had become much easier under Taliban stewardship with elimination of the “gifts” usually required for Customs officials. On December 8, Taliban officials in Herat announced that 100 Taliban security personnel were arrested and dismissed on charges of misconduct and illegal activity. They also reported a revenue of 100 million afghanis (\$1.3 million) collected over three months due to reduced corruption. Local Taliban leaders in Balkh began investigations into allegations of corruption involving disability benefits, and leaders in Nangarhar established special units to prevent the illegal occupation of land and deforestation.”

OHCHR, Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

“The first two months of this year have seen a number of disturbing cases of enforced disappearances and incommunicado detention of civil society activists and protestors.”

TOLO News, Young Man Killed by Unknown Attackers in Western Kabul, 26 February 2022

“Azizullah Wafa, 30, was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in the Barchi area in western Kabul city on Friday afternoon, relatives said.

The relative of Wafa called for the perpetrators to be held accountable.

[...]

Kabul's security department said it would investigate the murder.

“I contacted the PD 13 about four hours ago. The PD was not aware of the murder... I don’t have fresh information about it and when I get the information I will share it with the media,” said Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul department of security.

Wafa had a master’s degree in Persian Literature from Kabul university.

Wafa was on his way home from a religious ceremony on Friday afternoon when he came under the attack by the gunmen, according to relatives.

“Azizullah has no personal hostility with anyone. He was an educated youth and was a social and cultural person,” said a relative.

This comes as the residents of the capital city Kabul have repeatedly voiced concerns over a surge in criminal activity, saying that despite consecutive promises by the security officials, the level of criminal activities remains high.

Military veterans believe that the intelligence department of the Islamic Emirate should take professional steps to prevent such criminal acts.

“The surge in mysterious killings and armed robbing that has recently affected the residents of Kabul is not justifiable. The intelligence forces of the Islamic Emirate should act with professionalism to prevent such crimes,” said Sadiq Shinwari, a military veteran.”

Khaama Press, This is what Taliban confiscated during door-to-door sweep, 28 February 2022

“The chief spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Zabiullah Mujahid said that their massive house-to-house search that was also carried out by women police aimed at securing the Afghan capital

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Kabul and its neighboring provinces.

Briefing journalists in Kabul on Sunday, February 27, 2022, Zabiullah Mujahid said that four people—a male doctor, a man, and two teenage girls—who were kidnapped got released during the operations.

Mujahid further added that nine kidnappers, six ISIS-K affiliates, and 53 professional and high-level thieves were arrested.

“133 Kalashnikov, nine Krinkov, 5 Kalakov, 13 M16, 3 M4, 181 pistols, 44 rocket launchers, 2 Carbine, 85 RPGs, 7 Kalashnikov machine gun, 2 Draznov, 107 82 artillery, 20 grenades, 36 mines, 13 tons of gun powder, 89 grenades, 21 11-shot rifles, 2 drone cameras, 4 ranger vehicles, 44 other government-related vehicles, 13 government related armored vehicles, 3 Land Cruisers, one Hilux, 64 small radio, 12 big radios, 1 domineers, 57 goggles, 52 jammers, 60386 bullets,” Mujahid said.

Zabiullah Mujahid expressed hope that this will be their last sweep that will lead to full security both in the capital and neighboring provinces.

It is worth mentioning that, people have mixed reactions to the clean-up operations by the Taliban. Some are optimistic as it leads to security while others complain about their personal privacy being violated.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Kidnapped doctor recovered in Kabul, 27 February 2022

“KABUL (Pajhwok): A medical doctor kidnapped four days ago has been recovered from a ruined house in capital Kabul, an official said on Sunday.

Mawlavi Bashir Ahmad Mujahid, deputy head of 17th Police District, said Dr. Mir Hamza Meerzad was recovered from a ruined house on Saturday during a clearing operation launched in Kabul.

Dr. Hamza was kidnapped from the Khawaja Bughra area four days ago. After the launch of the clearing operation in Kabul, the kidnappers felt they were surrounded and shifted Dr. Hamza to a ruined house in 11th Police District.”

TOLO News, Islamic Emirate's Mujahid Comments on House-to-House Searches, 27 February 2022

“The Islamic Emirate called the recent house-to-house searches “constructive,” saying that many weapons and ammunition were captured. Also several Daesh fighters, robbers and kidnappers were captured in the so-called clearing operation.

Talking at a press conference in Kabul on Sunday, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said recent house clearings were intended to catch criminals, some of whom were released from prison during the change of government.

According to Mujahid, women were among the Islamic Emirate forces searching homes, and only “suspected areas” were searched.

“Nine kidnappers, six affiliated with Daesh, and 53 robbers were detained,” Mujahid said.

Some residents of Kabul said that their houses were raided by Islamic Emirate forces.

“They said that the family should remain inside the house—they looked everywhere except one room where women were,” said Ali Yasar, a resident of Kabul.

“Today around 10:30am, they (Islamic Emirate Forces) came. There was a woman among them, they entered the houses and conducted the searches in a good way,” said Mohammad Rafi, a resident of Kabul.

Residents of the capital earlier complained about the house-to-house searching by the Islamic Emirate.

Mujahid said that two girls who were chained up at a residence in Kabul were found during the operation. He said that an investigation is underway to find information about the situation.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Kabulis express different views about search operation, 27 February 2022

“KABUL (Pajhwok): Residents of capital Kabul on Sunday said the ongoing search operation was a good

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

step towards maintaining security and that they were satisfied with the behavior of security forces, while some others were unsatisfied and said only suspected houses should be checked.

Sunday was the third day of a search operation in some areas of Kabul and some other nearby provinces of the country.

A spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the operation was aimed at capturing and eliminating “all kinds of thieves, kidnappers, evil elements and other criminals” who have previously been identified and chased.

Pajhwok Afghan News spoke to people whose homes had been searched in different parts of Kabul.

People say some houses were searched superficially, but others searched thoroughly.

Azizullah, a resident of Nawikhwa Baghra area of Kabul’s 15th police district, said that female police officers accompanied security forces during the operation and local representatives were coordinated and present in the area.

However, he said that his house was searched last Friday but there were no policewomen with the security forces during the operation.”

Khaama Press, Taliban launches vast clean-up operation in Kabul, neighboring provinces, 26 February 2022

“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has launched its first-ever vast clean-up operations in the Afghan capital Kabul and its neighboring provinces aimed at tracing kidnappers, thieves, and offenders.

The Taliban affiliates are entering homes and searching the homes for weapons, cars, and any property belonging to the government.

Spokesperson of the Kabul police-Taliban security forces- Habib Zadrar said that the ongoing clean-up operations were launched at the behest of the residents of Kabul not against them.

Habib Zadrar said the operations are aimed at tracing criminals, kidnappers and at reducing the level of crimes and offenses in the city.

“No one is exempt from the operations, the operations have no exceptions and even my home was searched. The operations are not restricted to any ethnic group or specific area.” Khalid Zadrar said.

The spokesperson confirmed the achievement they had during the operations but did not unveil the exact amount of confiscation as the operation is not ended yet.

In the meantime, Khalid Zadrar said that they are accompanied by female police members and carry out the operations together.

Earlier, the IEA in a statement announced that the clean-up operations are aimed at securing the lives of residents so the people are asked to be fully cooperative with the Taliban forces.”

AVA Press, A Goldsmith Abducted in Takhar, 14 February 2022

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Unidentified gunmen a goldsmith from the provincial capital of Taloqan, according to local sources.

The sources told Hasht-e Subh that the jeweler is named and is a resident of district, who currently lives in the province.

According to the sources, the incident took place in the center of . So far, local officials have not yet provided details

Meanwhile, the residents of have already complained about the increase of theft, kidnapping, and targeted murders in this province.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

(UNOCHA), Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 February 2022

"Notwithstanding further efforts by the Government up to August 2021, illtreatment and torture continued to be prevalent, to different degrees in various institutions, with lack of respect for procedural safeguards being widespread. Lack of training on interviewing methods, and a focus on obtaining confessions from suspects, remained a serious issue. Overcrowding in the penitentiary system continued to be of concern, in particular since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Reuters, U.S. Faces Snags in Bid to Speed Up At-Risk Afghan Evacuations, 4 February 2022

"Human rights organizations and the United Nations say the Taliban has stepped up detentions, abductions and killings. Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Sayed Khosti has rejected the accusation of reprisal killings, saying no evidence had been presented. "People left behind are getting more and more desperate and we're going to start seeing more of the consequences of that, whether mass movement of refugees or meeting grim fates in Afghanistan," said a second senior U.S. official."

BBC, Meth and heroin fuel Afghanistan drugs boom, 12 December 2021

"Drugs are big business in Afghanistan, and under the Taliban, trade is booming. The country has long been linked with heroin, but in recent years, it has also emerged as a significant producer of crystal meth - another dangerously addictive drug.

One source involved in the trade says that about 3,000kg of crystal meth are now manufactured every day by more than 500 makeshift "factories" in a single remote drug-producing district in the south-west of the country."

AVA Press, Kunduz Residents Complain of Assassinations and Kidnappings Amid Rising Poverty, 5 December 2021

"After the Taliban took control of the country, crime in [sic] has increased. In recent days, this issue has raised concern to businessmen and residents of the province. In the last few weeks, kidnappers have abducted a doctor and a former member of national security, according to local sources. Sources say that about a week ago, the body of a former national security officer was found in the district of the province, but the fate of the is still unknown.

Some residents of Kunduz told Hasht-e Subh that unknown individuals had robbed several shops and killed several people recently. They state that they are worried about their lives and property. According to the residents, unknown individuals were robbing and kidnapping in broad daylight, but Taliban officials did nothing to prevent the incidents. They call on the authorities of the Taliban-led government to stop the kidnappings and targeted killings in the province and arrest the perpetrators.

[...] Armed robberies and kidnappings in Kunduz have prompted some businessmen and social figures to leave Kunduz for Kabul and neighboring Afghanistan. A civil activist in Kunduz province, who did not want to be named, said he had been threatened with death several times by unknown individuals and now had to leave the province with his family. According to this civil activist, if the situation continues like this, life will be difficult for all sections of the province and eventually, all the people will leave the province.

Meanwhile, Taliban intelligence and culture chief Matiullah emphasized their efforts to prevent kidnappings in the province. According to Rouhani, Taliban forces recently arrested two militants from the provincial capital.

With the Taliban taking control of the country, hopes were that crime would fall to a record low, yet, contrary to expectation, crime was on the rise in some provinces. Increasing poverty and unemployment

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in the country have been cited as the main reasons for the increase in criminal offenses.”

TOLO News, Kabul Residents Urge Govt to Tackle Crime, 26 November 2021

“Residents of Kabul expressed concerns over the surge in criminal activity in various parts of the city and urged the government to take the necessary steps to counter the criminal issues. The insecurity is on a high-level all over Kabul. I live in Darul Aman and I can’t leave home after 6:00pm because of insecurity,” said Mohammad Ameen, a resident.”

Arab News, Prominent Afghan doctor kidnapped, killed in northern city, 20 November 2021

“A prominent doctor was kidnapped and killed in northern Afghanistan, his family said Saturday [20 November].

Mohamed Nader Alemi was abducted two months ago in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif, and his kidnappers demanded a ransom for his release, his son Roheen Alemi said. The family eventually paid them \$350,000, after negotiating down their initial demand of more than twice that, he said.

Despite the payment, the kidnappers then killed Alemi, leaving his body in the street, his son said. They called the family and told them where to find it on Friday, he said.

“My father was badly tortured, there are signs of harm on his body,” Roheen Alemi said.

Alemi, a psychiatrist, worked for the government’s provincial hospital in Mazar-i-Sharif. He also owned a private clinic, said to be the city’s first private psychiatric clinic.

Under the previous, US-backed government, crime swelled, including frequent kidnappings for ransom, which prompted several businessmen to flee Afghanistan. The abductions have continued since the Taliban seized power on Aug. 15, though with lower frequency.

The Taliban Interior Ministry spokesman, Saeed Khosty, said Taliban forces arrested eight suspected kidnappers who were behind the abductions of three people, including Alemi, in Balkh Province, where Mazar-i-Sharif is located. He said two of those abducted were rescued but that Alemi was killed before the rescue. Police were searching for two associates of the eight arrested men who were believed to have killed the doctor.”

The Guardian, Abducted Afghan psychiatrist found dead weeks after disappearance, 19 November 2021

“One of Afghanistan’s most prominent psychiatrists, who was abducted by armed men in September, has been found dead, his family has confirmed.

Dr Nader Alemi’s daughter, Manizheh Abreen, said that her father had been tortured before he died. [...] He had received threatening calls and messages in the months before his abduction.

The kidnappers originally demanded a ransom of \$800,000 (£600,000).”

AVA Press, A Doctor Kidnapped in Kunduz Province, 17 November 2021

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_ Sources in Kunduz city say that Dr. Hoshang Rastagi, a dermatologist, was abducted last night (Tuesday) from the center of Kunduz.

The armed kidnappers abducted him from his home.

According to the source, a weapon of the is left in the doctor’s home.

Taliban officials haven’t said anything about the incident to the media yet.

Meanwhile, the residents of had earlier complained about the increase of and theft cases in this province.”

QANTARA, Can the Taliban avert a food crisis without foreign aid?, 15 November 2021

“Those with money are at risk

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The security situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban has deteriorated along with the economy. There are ever more reports of kidnapping and hostage-taking of businessmen and others with money. Kabul-based economic expert Khanjan Alokozay revealed that in the last two months, more than 40 shopkeepers and businessmen have been kidnapped in different parts of the country, and that some of them had also been killed."

Foreign Policy, [Afghan Crime Wave Adds to Taliban Dystopia](#), 29 October 2021

"Kabul residents said gangs roam the streets, stopping, searching, and robbing people at random. They say armed men routinely stop cars and rob the occupants. [...]

Officials of the former government, intelligence service, and military have been snatched from their homes after applying for passports and providing biometric and other identification information, he said. The Taliban are also using lists of former officials and civil activists to pinpoint their children. "They took four such sons from a prominent school in Kabul. When the police station was asked, they said, 'We don't know who entered the school,'" the source said. "Life is broken."

Another Kabul resident said the father of an associate was kidnapped and a ransom of \$3 million demanded for his release. "But no one has that sort of money; they couldn't pay, and he was killed," he said. Cars are being stolen almost daily from homes in previously safe neighborhoods, he added.

Local media have reported more than 40 kidnappings of businessmen in the two months since the Taliban took control. Other sources have said the number is much higher, though the lack of a functioning bureaucracy means there are paltry official statistics. The bulk of the kidnappings occurred in Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Herat, and Balk provinces, the deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries told TOLO News."

Coercion / forced recruitment to join Taliban

What instances of forced recruitment and use of children/young men are there under the Taliban?

UN News, [Thousands of children endure 'horrific conditions' in conflict zones: UN report](#), 11 July 2022

"The report highlights almost 24,000 verified grave violations against children, an average of some 65 violations every day. The killing and maiming of children was the most verified grave violation followed by the recruitment and use of children and the denial of humanitarian access.

The places where most children were affected by grave violations in 2021 were Afghanistan, [...]"

US DOS, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#), 12 April 2022

"Nonstate and armed groups, primarily the Taliban and ISIS-K, accounted for most child recruitment and used children younger than 12 during the year. Insurgent groups, including the Taliban, used children as suicide bombers. The Children and Armed Conflict Report verified the recruitment and use of 196 boys, of whom 172 were attributed to the Taliban and the remainder to pre-August 15 government or progovernment forces. Children were used in combat, including attacks with IEDs. Nine boys were killed or injured in combat. Insurgent groups, including the Taliban and ISIS-K, used children in direct hostilities, to plant and detonate IEDs, carry weapons, surveil, and guard bases. The Taliban recruited child soldiers from madrassas in the country and Pakistan that provide military training and religious indoctrination, and it sometimes provided families cash payments or protection in exchange for sending their children to these schools. UNAMA verified the recruitment of 40 boys by the Taliban, the ANP, and progovernment

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

militias half in the first half of the year. In some cases the Taliban and other antigovernment elements used children as suicide bombers, human shields, and to place IEDs, particularly in southern provinces. Media, NGOs, and UN agencies reported the Taliban tricked children, promised them money, used false religious pretexts, or forced them to become suicide bombers. UNAMA reported the ANDSF and progovernment militias recruited and used 11 children during the first nine months of the year, all for combat purposes. Media reported that local progovernment commanders recruited children younger than age 16. NGOs reported security forces used child soldiers in the practice of bacha bazi.”

Byline Times, ‘[The Taliban Protection Racket](#)’, 10 January 2022

“My whole reason for coming here was because the Taliban wanted to recruit me,” Azlan (not his real name) told *Byline Times*. “They come to your house, and the first time, they ask nicely. But if you don’t agree, then they use force.”

Azlan, who originally comes from a province in northern Afghanistan, told this newspaper that he was beaten three times by the Taliban. He eventually came to the UK via a circuitous route in 2015, leaving shortly after the Taliban kidnapped him in a bid to forcibly recruit him.

“I was there for two days and I told them, I don’t believe in your fight,” he said. “No matter what colour or religion you are, you are human.”

The Taliban beat him so hard that they thought he was dead. Fearing that the next beating would be fatal, his family sent him to Pakistan, Iran, and he then travelled across Europe to the UK.

He told *Byline Times* that the Taliban took his younger brother, who then disappeared in 2016. Rumours circulated that he had died in a bomb blast. His sister also died in a blast. His father died in 2019, leaving just his mother and his youngest brother, who is now 14.

“This is the age when they recruit and I will do anything to save him,” Azlan said. “It’s not that I am afraid he will die, but I don’t believe in this fight.”

The Taliban suggested a solution – that the family pay to avoid him being taken. Azlan now works long hours to send his mother money for what is effectively a protection racket – £300 a month. That money, however, raised hopes in the local community, many members of which are near destitute.

A few days ago, the family was raided as local people had heard that they had money. The house was looted and precious family belongings, such as a watch belonging to Azlan’s father, as well as his mother’s jewellery, was taken. His brother was beaten.”

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Leaving and ‘defecting’ from Taliban

What may be reasons for leaving?

What legal prosecution is there for defectors?

How are defectors treated by the Taliban?

How are they treated by society?

TOLO News, Reform Commission Expels Around 4,500 Members of Security Forces, 23 February 2022

“Latifullah Hakimi, head of a commission charged with bringing reform to the Islamic Emirate security forces, said Monday that the commission has expelled around 4,500 members. After a six-month effort to bring reforms, the commission is expected to merge with a security commission comprised of officials from the Ministry of Defense, Interior and the Intelligence department. At least 135 persons of the expelled forces were underaged. “We expelled all those who had criminal cases in the past. After this, the security commission will work on this section,” Hakimi told at conference.””

Justice, law and order in Taliban-controlled territory

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

The Khaama Press News Agency, Taliban conduct extensive house-to-house searches in Northern Afghanistan, 25 August 2022

“House-to-house searches have reportedly been resumed by the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh in northern Afghanistan, according to local sources. These searches are being conducted to find suspected criminals, combat ISIS, and collect state and illegal weapons. According to sources, this round of house-to-house efforts began on Thursday morning, August 25, in Mazar-e-Sharif’s police district 3.

The Taliban’s 209th Al-Fath Corps and the Intelligence Directorate are working together to conduct house-to-house searches in Mazar-e-Sharif, according to Asif Waziri, the spokesman for the Taliban office of the chief of police in Balkh province.

According to the Taliban official, Asif Waziri, the Taliban forces are conducting door-to-door searches in an effort to combat ISIS, obtain state weapons and collect undocumented guns, as well as track down suspected criminals.”

[...] “The resumption of searches comes at a time when a powerful explosion on Wednesday in Mazar-e-Sharif injured at least 3 civilians, according to Taliban officials.”

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Symposium: Was withdrawing from Afghanistan the right thing to do?, 25 August 2022

Masuda Sultan, women’s rights activist and co-founder of Unfreeze Afghanistan.

“After 20 years, the end of the U.S. war in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of troops was long overdue. The U.S. was spending \$50 billion per year and there was no winning. In the initial years it was thought the Taliban were defeated but in the last few years of the war they had steadily been making gains. Poverty was increasing, and the war economy which had been driving much of the gains in income was

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

slowing down. By the time the U.S. signed the Doha agreement, 50 percent of Afghan territory was in the hands of the Taliban according to SIGAR. The Afghan Presidential election was fraught with fraud and both President Ghani and his chief executive Abdullah Abdullah claimed victory, holding competing inaugurations on the same day.

The overwhelming majority of Afghans wanted a peace deal and Americans were also not in favor of continuing the war. However, while the U.S. had come to agreement with the Taliban, the Afghan government had not. Although the intra-Afghan dialogue had begun, it was unclear if the sides could come to an agreement. On August 15th, President Ghani fled the country along with most of his cabinet, and the Taliban took control of the country. While the legacy of the withdrawal will always be tainted by the chaotic events of those days, it was for Afghans an end to the fiasco that was the war itself.”

Khaama Press, Running Away from Home: Taliban Arrests Three Girls in Western Afghanistan, 23 August 22

“Three young girls have reportedly been arrested by Herat policewomen for the crime of home escape, according to local Taliban authorities in the western Afghan province of Herat. These three girls were reportedly taken into custody from the 6th district of Herat city, the provincial capital, according to the Taliban government’s office of the chief of police in Herat. The case concerning the three young girls has reportedly been brought before the appropriate judicial agencies and authorities in Herat for consideration. The Herat police chief’s office, however, provided no further information regarding the reasons why the three girls left their homes. A boy and a girl from the fifth district of Kunduz province in northern Afghanistan were earlier arrested by Taliban security officers on grounds of running away from home. Afghan women have been subjected to forced marriages and domestic violence, and Human Rights Watch reports that up to 70% of cases of “running away” from home are related to fleeing forced marriage or domestic violence.”

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), The Taliban in Afghanistan, 17 August 2022

“Since regaining control, the Taliban have taken actions reminiscent of their brutal rule in the late 1990s. [...] The Taliban also reestablished their Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which under previous Taliban rule enforced prohibitions on behavior deemed un-Islamic.”

The Guardian, ‘I daren’t go far’ Taliban rules trap women with no male guardian, 15 August 2022

“Those without a male relative to act as a mahram are in legal limbo and unable to travel long distances. Hasina* cannot send her two daughters to school, because they are teenagers and high school is banned for girls in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

But she cannot take them out of the country to finish their education because she is a divorced single mother, and women are barred from long-distance travel without a male “guardian” to escort them.

Wazhma* lies awake worrying what she will do if her sick, elderly mother needs emergency medical help at night. Her father is dead, she is unmarried and her teenage sister is disabled.

She is terrified that as women out alone at night, even on their way to a hospital, they would be stopped and harassed by the Taliban.

Most Afghan women have had to learn to endure new restrictions and controls over the last year, but there is one group whose lives have been particularly curtailed.

Women who live in households without a close male relative, whether through tragedy, circumstance or choice, now exist in a legal limbo, because they do not have a close male relative to act as a mahram, or “guardian”.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

In the Taliban's extremist reimagining of Afghanistan, women are not fully autonomous citizens of their own country. Instead a man is deemed responsible for their presence in public, including how they dress and where they travel.

Officially, any woman travelling more than 75km (46 miles) or leaving the country needs a mahram. If a woman is found to have broken the Taliban's dress codes, their male relatives face punishment.

The rules have been enforced sporadically, with some officials turning a blind eye to solo travel. Raihana* was barred from boarding a plane earlier this year for a work trip but says women have since been allowed back in the air alone.

"It was in March, they had just circulated the new notice that no woman can travel to another city without a mahram. I wasn't allowed to board the plane, and had to wait in the airport for two to three hours, with 20 or 30 other women," she said. "This went on for a few weeks then they abolished [the rule]. Now we can travel again."

But many others across Afghanistan have reported restrictions on women's movements that go far beyond the official regulations. They told the Guardian that Taliban fighters have barred them from even short journeys, including commuting to work, sometimes using indirect tactics such as threatening drivers who take solo female passengers.

Health workers said they had personal experience of women being barred from accessing medical help without a mahram in at least two districts, one in central Afghanistan's Bamiyan province and one in southern Helmand.

[...]

The mahram rule has also contributed to an economic catastrophe for families without adult men, amid a broader economic collapse. The regulations make it harder or more frightening for women to find jobs, or commute to work."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"In December 2021, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue issued guidance indicating that women must be accompanied by a mahram, or male chaperone, for journeys longer than 72km. Taliban official Zabiullah Mujahid said in a previous interview that the Taliban's mahram requirements would not apply for daily activities such as traveling to work or school. However, this statement was undermined by a decree issued on 7 May 2022 by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue that required women to cover their faces in public and stipulated that they should not leave their homes unless necessary. The Taliban have also instructed airlines to prevent women from flying domestically and internationally without a mahram and they have ordered driving instructors in Herat to cease giving driving lessons and licenses to women."

"Taliban restrictions on movement also have the potential to pressure women and girls to enter into marriage, whether by their own choice or as a result of pressure or coercion from their family members. One woman who was arbitrarily arrested for being in public with a man who was not her mahram, explained: "If you want to go outside, you have to have a father, brother or husband with you... A father can't always go out with the daughter, a brother might be busy... This will pressure girls and women to marry, just so that they always have a mahram.""

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Taliban's First Year in Office "Tumultuous" and Their Accomplishments 'Negative' Says ex-President Karzai, 14 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Hamid Karzai has stressed that the collapse of the last Afghan government was a disaster and that the country’s economy is currently in a very precarious position exacerbated by the widespread exodus of educated people... Several Afghan journalists who fled to Pakistan after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan referred to the anniversary of the country’s fall as the day of the death of freedom of expression and lit candles to commemorate “one year in silence.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), UN Special Rapporteur Condemns Violent Suppression of Afghan Women’s ‘Peaceful’ Protest, 14 August 2022

“In response to the Taliban forces’ suppression of women’s protest on Saturday, August 13, UN official, Bennett, tweeted that the Taliban’s excessive use of force and mistreatment against women’s “peaceful” demonstration in Kabul is a breach of their right to freedom of assembly and association. He publicly condemned the Taliban’s actions and stated that they had disrupted peaceful assembly by firing rifle bullets, inducing “intimidation, harassment,” and other methods. The Taliban reportedly arrested some journalists and protesting women while suppressing the women’s march in Kabul that shouted the slogans “bread, work, and freedom.”...According to the UN experts, there have been stringent restrictions on access to information, which has hampered journalistic freedom. In order to avoid being recognized, journalists, civil rights activists, and human rights activists have either left the country or stopped all of their activities.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Afghanistan’s Future ‘Bleak’ If Nothing Done to Reverse Deteriorating Human Rights: UN Experts, 13 August 2022

““Arbitrary detention, summary executions, internal displacement, unlawful restrictions, extra-judicial killings, disappearances, torture, heightened risks of exploitation faced by women and girls” are among the human egregious human rights violations of the Taliban, according to the statement of the UN experts. Expressing concern over the rule of law under the Taliban, according to the statement, the administration of justice has been undermined due to the replacement of judges and other judicial officials, which has a negative impact on women in particular. With regards to freedom of press, access to information has been restricted, which has stifled press freedom, said the UN experts. Journalists, human rights activists, and civil rights advocates have either left the country or completely ceased their activities in order to remain unnoticed.”

The Guardian, Female protesters beaten by Taliban fighters during rare Kabul rally, 13 August 2022
Shots fired into air and rifle butts used to attack dozens of women protesting outside Afghan education ministry
Taliban fighters beat female protesters and fired into the air on Saturday as they violently dispersed a rare rally in the Afghan capital, days before the first anniversary of the hardline Islamists’ return to power.
[...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

About 40 women – chanting “bread, work and freedom” – marched in front of the education ministry building in Kabul, before the fighters dispersed them by firing their guns into the air, an AFP correspondent reported.

Some female protesters who took refuge in nearby shops were chased and beaten by Taliban fighters with their rifle butts.

[...]

While the Taliban authorities have allowed and promoted some rallies against the US, they have declined permission for any women’s rally since they returned to power.”

The National, [Taliban use violence to break up rare women’s protest](#), 13 August 2022

“The Taliban beat women protesters and fired into the air as they violently dispersed a rare rally in Afghanistan’s capital Kabul on Saturday, days before the first anniversary of the hardliners’ return to power.

[...]

About 40 women chanting “Bread, work and freedom” marched in front of the education ministry building in Kabul, before Taliban members dispersed them by firing their guns into the air.

Some of the women who took refuge in nearby shops were chased and beaten with rifle butts.”

Deutsche Welle, [Fact check: Have the Taliban kept their promises?](#), 11 August 2022

“Women must cover themselves from head to toe in public. If a woman doesn’t cover her face outside the home, her father or closest male relative could be imprisoned or fired from government jobs. Women can’t board planes without a male guardian, who has to be her husband or a close male relative past puberty. Entry to public parks in Afghanistan is limited by gender. Three days are reserved for women, four for men. However, according to a decree, it is strongly recommended that women leave home only when necessary... The Taliban have also restricted access to work in certain sectors, as outlined in a report by Amnesty International. “Most female government employees have been told to stay at home, with the exception of those working in certain sectors such as health and education,” the report said. “The Taliban’s policy appears to be that they will only allow women who cannot be replaced by men to keep working.” Many women in high-level positions, even in the private sector, have been dismissed... Women who have protested against the Taliban’s restrictions and policies have been harassed, threatened, arrested and even tortured, said Amnesty International.” “the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has recorded at least 160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary arrests, 23 incommunicado arrests and 56 cases of torture of former government and security officials committed by the Taliban authorities between August 15, 2021 and June 15, 2022... These figures do not include dozens of extrajudicial killings, ill treatment and arbitrary arrests of alleged members of the “Islamic State - Khorasan Province” and the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF).” “Rights organizations say they have no concrete evidence that journalists have been killed by the Taliban. However, there is little doubt that press freedom has deteriorated ever since the Taliban conquered Kabul. Of the over 10,000 people working in Afghan newsrooms in July 2021, only 4,360 were still working in December, according to a report by RSF published at the end of last year. Moreover, it said 231 media outlets out of 543 operating in the summer of 2021 disappeared during the first three months of the Taliban’s rule. A survey conducted by the Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

journalists' union and the IJF found that 318 national media outlets have been shut down since the Taliban took over. In January, a Taliban spokesman told DW that the regime had not shut down any media stations in the country. Yet, some had stopped working after running out of funding, he said. In the same interview, he admitted that media coverage in Afghanistan had to follow rules that might be perceived as very restrictive in Western countries. In March, the Taliban blocked several international media from broadcasting in Afghanistan, including the BBC, Voice of America and DW. A month later, at least a dozen journalists were arrested in Afghanistan, prompting the UN to call on the Taliban to stop arbitrary detentions of journalists. According to the survey by the journalists' union, lack of access to information, self-censorship, fear of reprisals and the economic crisis were the main drivers of what the report calls an "unprecedented collapse of the Afghan media."

TOLO News, Accused Men, Women Publically Whipped in Zabul, 7 August 2022

"Information and Culture department head Rahmatullah Hamad said that in Zabul two women and one man were publically whipped for committing adultery and another two men were whipped for robbery. Earlier, the leader of the Islamic Emirate, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, said that all previous laws will be considered null, and Sharia law will be implemented in the country. Dozens of locals gathered to watch the public punishment."

The Khaama Press News Agency, No Tolerance for Premarital Relationships; Taliban Flogs Three People Accused of Adultery, 1 August 2022

"According to Taliban local officials in Nangarhar province, in eastern Afghanistan, three people—two men and one woman—were reportedly flogged publicly for committing adultery."

"The newsletter of the Taliban governor's office in Nangarhar province states that these three individuals, who shared a residence, were tried and sentenced after being detained on suspicion of having an illegal sexual relationship. Each of these three people reportedly received 39 lashes in public, according to the publication. The newsletter about the implementation of this sentence states that "they were flogged in front of people in public so that it would serve as a lesson to others."

"As for flogging, the Taliban has previously flogged people accused of adultery, fornication and theft in the southern province of Kandahar."

"Nearly a month ago, three individuals in the province of Kandahar were subjected to 39 flogs for allegedly committing adultery and theft."

"Public executions and public floggings, in the opinion of an Afghan legal scholar, are inevitable as a result of the Taliban's reforms to Afghanistan's justice system, which are based on their strict interpretation of Islamic law, particularly when it comes to "crimes against God.""

"Human Rights Watch, on the other hand, sees the Taliban's Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice as a "notorious symbol of abuse", especially for Afghan women and girls."

SIGAR, July 30, 2022 Quarterly Report to Congress, 30 July 2022

"Taliban Repress Women"

The Taliban announced additional restrictions on women, requiring them to cover themselves fully in public, including their faces. Violations will now result in jail time for male heads of household. The policy was later expanded to include women newscasters. The restrictions sparked national protest and international condemnation.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution on the situation of human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, seeking the reversal of Taliban policies that restrict women's rights, roles, and responsibilities in society."

Khaama Press, Taliban Foreign Minister Says 1,800 ISIS Prisoners Were Released From Prisons When Kabul Fell, 27 July 2022

"American officials even said the Taliban's release of extremist Islamist ISIS prisoners from the prisons of Pul-e-Charkhi and Bagram had strengthened the group.

After taking control of every province last year, the Taliban pardoned all the prisoners with all the detention centers and prisons in Afghanistan were emptied when this group took Kabul.

Even though the Taliban have underlined time and time again that ISIS does not physically exist in Afghanistan and does not pose a threat, since the Taliban's gaining control, ISIS has claimed responsibility for deadly attacks on mosques, schools, and cars."

UNAMA, UN releases report on human rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover, 22 July 2022

"The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) today released a report (Human rights in Afghanistan: 15 August 2021 – 15 June 2022) outlining the human rights situation in Afghanistan over the 10 months since the Taliban takeover. The report summarises UNAMA's findings with regards to the protection of civilians, extrajudicial killings, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests and detentions, the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, fundamental freedoms and the situation in places of detention. The report also contains recommendations to both the de facto authorities and the international community. [...] While the de facto authorities have taken some steps seemingly aimed at the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the amnesty for former government officials and security force members, the 3 December decree on women's rights and a code of conduct relating to prisoners, they also bear responsibility for a broad range of human rights violations."

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), Arbitrary Power and a Loss of Fundamental Freedom, 20 July 2022

"UNAMA has published its first major report on human rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban came to power on 15 August 2021. It covers a multitude of issues, including detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings, the rights of women and girls and civilian casualties. One recurring theme is the arbitrary way the new administration often works and the unpredictability of its laws, punishments and procedures [...]"

Tolo News, US Includes Afghanistan on Human Trafficking List, 20 July 2022

"After August 15, the Taliban did not investigate, prosecute, or convict any traffickers, nor did it identify or protect any trafficking victims or make any efforts to prevent trafficking. The Taliban shut down shelters and protective services for victims of crime, including trafficking victims— leaving vulnerable populations without support," the report reads. But the Islamic Emirate denies claims made in the report, saying that Afghanistan is a secure place for all Afghans. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has prevented all illegal actions such as human trafficking and it has taken decisive measures against it," said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate."

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"Afghan women are rapidly facing the worst-case scenario many feared. While Afghanistan has ratified a number of international treaties including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the de facto authorities remain far from complying with those international obligations,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in both policy and practice, to respect and protect the rights of women and girls. [...] During my visit, I recognised the significance of the general amnesty granted to the former officials of the former Government and members of the security forces, as an important step towards reconciliation after so many decades of war. I am however concerned that the Human Rights Service of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to receive credible reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, ill-treatment and extra-judicial killings – particularly of persons associated with the former government and its institutions. [...] UNAMA also continues to record the impact of attacks on civilians. In April alone, a spate of improvised explosive devices attacks resulted in civilians being killed and injured at schools, places of worship, markets and while on public transportation. Ethnic and religious minorities have also been directly attacked. I remind the de facto authorities of their responsibility to protect all Afghans subject to their control. I also remain concerned about the information received of alleged human rights violations and abuses against civilians in the northern provinces, including Panjshir, which have recently seen clashes between the de facto security forces and fighters affiliated with the National Resistance Front. There are serious allegations, which require verification, that civilians have been exposed to violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and torture. I call upon both parties to this conflict to observe restraint and to fully respect international human rights law and applicable international humanitarian law. [...] Civil society actors, including women's rights activists and human rights defenders have been subjected to killings, enforced disappearances, incommunicado detention, attacks, harassment, threats and arrests. While some have been released, others remain deprived of their liberty, separated from their loved ones and deprived of their right to speak out"

UN News, [Afghanistan: Report highlights multiple human rights violations and abuses under Taliban](#), 20 July 2022

"The de facto authorities have limited dissent by cracking down on protests and curbing media freedoms according to the report. The report condemns arbitrary arrests of journalists, protestors, and civil society activists."

"Women and girls have seen their rights to access education, the workplace and participate in public life, restricted. Not allowing girls to go to secondary school means that a generation of girls will not complete their full 12 years of basic education, UNAMA highlighted."

"While the report acknowledges steps taken by Taliban authorities to reduce violence, UNAMA still recorded 2,106 civilian casualties, with 700 killed, and 1,406 wounded. Those casualties are mainly attributed to targeted attacks by the terrorist group which identifies itself as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province, against ethnic and religious minority communities."

"According to the report, those worst affected, were those linked to the former government and its security forces, with 160 extrajudicial killings confirmed, as well as 178 arbitrary arrests and detentions, and 56 instances of torture. The human rights situation has been exacerbated by a nationwide economic, financial and humanitarian crisis of unprecedented scale. At least 59 per cent of the population is now in need of humanitarian assistance – an increase of six million people compared with the beginning of 2021."

AAN, [Policing Public Morality: Debates on promoting virtue and preventing vice in the Taleban's second Emirate](#), 15 June 2022

"The Taleban's 'religious police' are back in force, leaving many Afghans fearing a return to the notorious brutalities of the Taleban's 1990s Amr bil-Maruf ministry. Yet, two decades on, argues guest author Sabawoon Samim* (with input from Roxanna Shapour), Taleban views on the promotion of virtue and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

prevention of vice have evolved, as has Afghan society. While the Taleban still believe it is an Islamic state's duty to actively police public morality, he also traces the emergence of a new generation of Taleban leaders, some of whom are less conservative, and asks whether they may take a softer approach to policing public morality than their predecessors. [...] Drawing on 45 interviews with Taleban officials, fighters, tribal elders, teachers and others in five provinces, plus the capital, Kabul, conducted before and after the Taleban captured power [1] this report looks at Amr bil-Maruf in the two Taleban administrations twenty years apart. It considers the religious injunction that Muslims should hold each other accountable by promoting virtue and discouraging vice. We take a look at what was problematic about Amr bil-Maruf in the Taleban's first Emirate and how it changed during the insurgency. We relay ideas generally among the Taleban about what policing public morality should involve and at the re-established Amr bil-Maruf ministry – at how and why it has differed, so far, from the 1990s. In particular, the author looks at what sets at least some members of the new generation of Taleban leaders apart from their predecessors, and at how this might influence the Taleban's approach to policy and practice when it comes to policing public morality."

Gandhara, HRW Says Taliban Detaining, Torturing Civilians In Northern Afghanistan, 10 June 2022

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) says Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have been detaining and torturing civilians that they accuse of supporting an armed opposition group in the northern Panjshir Province."

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir, 10 June 2022

"Taliban security forces in northern Afghanistan's Panjshir province have unlawfully detained and tortured residents accused of association with an opposition armed group, Human Rights Watch said today. Since mid-May 2022, fighting has escalated in the province as National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have attacked Taliban units and checkpoints. The Taliban have responded by deploying to the province thousands of fighters, who have carried out search operations targeting communities they allege are supporting the NRF. During search operations in other provinces, Taliban forces have committed summary executions and enforced disappearances of captured fighters and other detainees, which are war crimes. "Taliban forces in Panjshir province have quickly resorted to beating civilians in their response to fighting against the opposition National Resistance Front," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The Taliban's longstanding failure to punish those responsible for serious abuses in their ranks puts more civilians at risk." A human rights advocate who has interviewed several former detainees and a source with direct information about Taliban detentions spoke to Human Rights Watch about the Panjshir situation. Former detainees in early June reported that Taliban security forces detained about 80 residents in Panjshir's Khenj district and beat them to compel them to provide information about the NRF. After several days, the Taliban released 70, but have continued to hold 10 people whose relatives they accuse of being members of the group, a form of collective punishment. Former detainees said the district jail held nearly 100 others who have alleged links to the NRF. None had access to their families or lawyers. Others have been held in informal detention facilities."

Gandhara, Watchdog Urges Harsher International Measures Against Taliban For Rights Violations, 9 June 2022

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) has called on the international community to impose tougher restrictions on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers in response to what the watchdog called a "grave human rights crisis" that has been especially affecting women and girls after the group's return to power in August."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, Women Protest In Afghan Capital Against Taliban Rights Restrictions, 29 May 2022

"Chanting "Bread, work, freedom," some two dozen women took to the streets of the Afghan capital of Kabul on May 29 to protest against the Taliban's harsh restrictions on their rights. [...] Demonstrators marched for a few hundred meters before ending the rally as authorities deployed Taliban fighters in plainclothes, an AFP correspondent reported. "We wanted to read out a declaration, but the Taliban didn't allow it," said protester Zholia Parsi. [...] "They took the mobile phones off some girls and also prevented us from taking photos or videos of our protest," she told the French news agency."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"He acknowledges the de facto authorities' assurances that they will respect the international human rights treaties ratified by Afghanistan, albeit as far as consistent with Sharia law. [...] The absence of any clarity on the process of rule of law, the wholesale changes in the judicial sector with the effective replacement of judges and lawyers in several provinces, and the lack of any formal mechanisms for justice in line with international standards for survivors, including for children, remain a serious concern. Information shared by victims of human rights violations indicates that informal dispute resolution mechanisms are being used, especially in cases related to gender-based violence, and that there is no possibility for appeal of decisions."

Gandhara, Taliban's Burqa Decree Exposes Afghan Women To Increasing Domestic Abuse, 26 May 2022

"The Taliban ordered all women to cover their faces when in public earlier this month, urging women not to leave their homes altogether if possible. The militant group said punishments, including arrest or even jail time, would be imposed not on women but their male family members instead."

Dawn, Blasts cut power to millions in Afghanistan, 1 May 2022

"KABUL: Millions of people across 11 provinces in Afghanistan faced blackouts on Saturday after two power transmission towers were blown up just west of the capital, authorities said. [...] Police said two suspects have been arrested over the explosions."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"In addition to their own imprisoned fighters, the Taliban released thousands more from prisons like Parwan and Pul-e-Charkhi, including members of ISIS-K and al-Qa'ida.

The ISIS-K suicide bomber who carried out an attack at Kabul airport in late August killing dozens of local citizens (and 13 U.S. service members) was among the thousands of prisoners released by the Taliban from Parwan Prison at Bagram Air Base just 11 days before the bombing. [...] "After the Taliban takeover, the UN Security Council unanimously agreed on September 17 to renew the UNAMA mandate for another six months in an effort to continue its in-country activities, including strengthening capacity in the protection and promotion of human rights such as the protection of children affected by armed conflict and prevention of child soldier recruitment. [...] Reports in October described Taliban-defined "law enforcement" as lacking in due-process protections, with citizens detained on flimsy accusations and treated harshly while in detention. [...] According to HRW, the Taliban established its own courts in areas under its control prior to August 15 that relied on religious scholars to adjudicate cases or at times referred

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

cases to traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Taliban courts prior to August 15 included district-level courts, provincial-level courts, and a tamiz, or appeals court, located in a neighboring country. According to HRW, the Taliban “justice system” was focused on punishment, and convictions often resulted from forced confessions in which the accused was abused or tortured. At times the Taliban imposed corporal punishment for serious offenses, or hudud crimes, under an interpretation of sharia. [...] In October the Taliban appointed a new “chief justice” but largely retained members of the pre-August 15 government’s judicial bureaucracy and appeared to maintain many related processes. The “chief justice” was quoted in October as stating that the Taliban would follow the country’s 1964 constitution with modifications for Islamic principles. The Taliban have not subsequently elaborated on this statement, and it remained unclear the degree to which prior elements of the legal system and constitution remain in effect. Reports described the Taliban’s approach to law enforcement as lacking procedural protections, and many Taliban fighters were undisciplined and frequently detained on criminal charges. At least 60 Taliban militants were reportedly held in a section of Pul-e-Charkhi Prison after August 15 for crimes such as raiding homes at night and robbery, according to one news report. On November 22, the Taliban issued a decree declaring that the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association would come under control of the Ministry of Justice. On November 23, more than 50 armed Taliban gunmen forcibly took over the organization’s headquarters and ordered staff to stop their work. Taliban Acting “Justice Minister” Abdul Hakim declared that only Taliban-approved lawyers could work in their Islamic courts, effectively revoking the licenses of approximately 2,500 lawyers.”

Gandhara, Scared Straight: Taliban Treats Drug Addicts With A Heavy Dose Of Prison, 4 April 2022

“One of the Taliban's first moves upon seizing power in Afghanistan was to take extreme measures to tackle the country's drug epidemic. To that end, thousands of addicts have been rounded up, beaten, and marched off to prison, where they have been forced to go cold turkey among hardened criminals for months. Dawood, who was rounded up along with hundreds of other addicts in the southwestern province of Farah, says the harsh methods employed by the prison were ineffective. Within weeks of his release two months ago, he was using again. "I have been suffering from this disease for 10 years. I was sent to prison by the Taliban's government, but the treatment didn't work," he told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "I want to go to a rehabilitation center, because they provide better treatment." Afghanistan is home to an estimated 3.5 million addicts, a number that accounts for nearly 10 percent of the population. While there were some 100 drug-treatment centers operating in the country before the hard-line Islamist group returned to power in August, many that depended on foreign funding are closed or struggling to remain open. Government facilities, meanwhile, are overwhelmed with the new forced arrivals. The leading drugs of choice in Afghanistan are opioids that derive from the opium poppy that flourishes in the country despite years of eradication efforts and attempts to sow alternative crops. But aside from heroin and morphine, an increasing number of Afghans are now hooked on crystal meth, which drug traders have learned to produce from ephedra plants that grow wild in the central highlands. [...] Today, Afghanistan is well-entrenched as the world's leading producer of opium, generating up to \$2.7 billion in income in 2021. [...] In his first press conference in August, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid vowed that the group would again ban opium poppy cultivation and trafficking. Months later Mujahid backtracked, saying a ban would deny Afghans a major source of income. However, on April 3, Mujahid announced a new decree by Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada that banned opium-poppy cultivation and drug manufacturing. The decree also ordered the destruction of opium crops and prohibited the trade and transport of a range of drugs. [...]"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatch: formerly independent bar association merged with Taliban MoJ now subject to new regulations, 22 March 2022

"[...] After the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in August last year, they started merging some independent government agencies into other governmental bodies. In one of these mergers, the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association was merged into the Ministry of Justice. The former Kabul premises of the independent AIBA, seized in late November, were recently emptied by Taliban officials. Although some lawyers worked hard to try and prevent the merger, the Taliban went ahead with it. As soon as the Bar Association was merged into the Ministry of Justice, it became one of the ministry's directorate generals.

The new leadership of AIBA appointed by the Taliban have prepared and enforced a Procedure establishing how the bar association's major activities are regulated. The Procedure mainly regulates affairs related to licensing, daily activities of the bar association, and, importantly, the implementation of the Advocates Law in the country.

The new Procedure adopted by the Taliban has two made big changes in the daily activities of the bar association. Firstly, new applicants to receive a bar license should go through two types of tests which are 1) a written test, and 2) an oral test. In the written test, the applicant shall respond to both Islamic and sharia questions. In the oral test, the applicant should response to some Islamic questions. According to a colleague who recently took the new bar license, these questions require reciting verses of Quran as requested and responding to questions related to how to practice five times a day prayers, Hadiths and as well as meaning and interpretation of selected verses of Quran. In the oral test the board considers the responses fail or pass. If failed, the applicant may come back after a while to take the oral test again.

Since August last year no women have been provided with a new license by the bar association. Currently, there are also no known female applicants to the bar association after the Taliban came to power."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Hundreds Of Fired Afghan Judges Demand Jobs, Pay From Taliban-Led Government, 20 March 2022

"Hundreds of former Afghan government judges from 34 provinces who had been removed and replaced by the Taliban have filed suit to regain their jobs. In a March 20 news conference, the former judges demanded that the Taliban government return them to their positions and provide them with six months of salary. The judges claimed that some 2,000 former magistrates were involved in the suit against the government. [...] In response to previous judicial protests, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Radio Azadi that some judges had been dismissed for their alleged involvement in injustices and corruption in the previous pro-Western government.

Taliban government officials did not respond to Radio Azadi requests for comment on the latest protest and lawsuit. Many of the former judges had sentenced Taliban and Islamic State extremist members, kidnappers, drug traffickers, and other criminals to prison over the past two decades. "

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"While Afghans were previously represented by a parliament, no popularly elected body functions under Taliban rule.
[...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The parliament that was effectively dissolved in 2021 was elected in 2018. Half of all registered voters participated, though the elections were affected by fears of violence, technical issues, and long lines at polling stations.

[...]

While the Taliban did not immediately rule elections out, it abolished both electoral bodies in December 2021.

In late September 2021, the Taliban announced that they would enforce parts of the 1964 constitution that did not contradict their interpretation of Sharia, rejecting the 2004 constitution used by the republic.

[...]

Political parties do not compete for power under Taliban rule. Parties that were active effectively ceased operations after the elected government fell.

[...]

Those who oppose the Taliban do not have the opportunity to gain power peacefully. No opposition or nonaligned individuals were included in the cabinet announced in September 2021.

[...]

Some Taliban officials, including at the local and provincial levels, are reportedly open to lobbying and some level of consultation. Afghans who are not Taliban members can sometimes informally petition Taliban using kinship or tribal links. However, no formal method of political participation exists. Political decision-making is opaquely made by Taliban officials.

[...]

Women are unable to seek political rights or electoral opportunities under the Taliban. The Taliban included no women in its cabinet in September 2021.

Most Taliban members are ethnic Pashtuns, who are believed to represent 42 percent of the Afghan population. However, members of other ethnic groups also support it. Ethnic Pashtuns dominated the government announced in September 2021, though a deputy prime minister, Abdul Salam Hanafi, is an ethnic Uzbek. Some Taliban members who are not part of the Pashtun ethnic group reportedly hold civil and military posts.

LGBT+ interests are not considered by the Taliban, who declared they would not respect LGBT+ rights in an October 2021 statement.

[...]

C Functioning of Government

The Taliban appointed an unelected government in September 2021. The elected executive and legislative branches of the republic ceased functioning after its August collapse.

[...]

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 1 / 4

Corruption was endemic under the republic, despite the 2016 creation of the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre. Law enforcement agencies and the judiciary were compromised by graft and political pressure. In November 2021, the Taliban created a commission under the Defense Ministry responsible for removing members “of bad character.” In late December, a Taliban spokesman reported that the commission had removed nearly 1,900 Taliban supporters over their conduct, including provincial officials.

[...]

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 0 / 4

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Taliban are not transparent in their decision-making. Official spokesmen selectively release information about government proceedings. The Taliban have initially retained the procurement structure established in 2014 but have not indicated what transparency standards they intend to apply. Score Change: The score declined from 1 to 0 because the Taliban do not offer transparency in their decision-making processes.

[...]

Is there an independent judiciary? 0 / 4

The Taliban installed a judiciary in the areas they controlled during their insurgency. After deposing the elected government in August 2021, the Taliban took complete control of the country's judicial system, appointing judges to civil and military courts. Judges who served under the republic, especially female judges, are unemployed; a significant number went into hiding.

[...]

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 0 / 4

The Taliban judiciary does not recognize international due process norms. Their judges are supposed to operate under Hanafi jurisprudence. Due process in prosecutions has been further weakened by the abolition of the republic's police force and its criminal investigation organs, which have been replaced by Taliban fighters. Judges and prosecutors rely on confessions and uncorroborated witness testimony.

[...]

Afghans face the death penalty under the Taliban. In September 2021, Nooruddin Turabi, a founding member, said that the Taliban would carry out executions as well as amputations."

Khaama Press, Afghanistan will initially have a-110,000-member army: acting Defense Minister, 15 February 2022

"Acting Defense Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob Mujahid said that Afghanistan will initially have a-110,000-member army and will then increase if needed. Speaking in an interview with Afghanistan state TV-RTA, Mujahid said that they have trained 10,000 people for the army since the Taliban takeover and 80,000 more have enrolled for the army. Mujahid also said that they have reactivated 4,000 choppers and planes of the ministry along with tens of vehicles. About the officers of the former Afghan government, the acting Defense Ministry said that up to 90 percent of the employees of the ministry are former officers and that those who are busy training abroad are contacted with and have been assured to come back to the country and do their jobs."

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity, 18 January 2022

"Much of the state bureaucracy is no longer functioning because many workers from the previous Afghan government have fled the country, or are afraid of returning to work, and the Taliban authority lacks funds to pay workers. Some humanitarian aid and other assistance provided by UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations has gradually restarted but remains severely curtailed due to Taliban restrictions, logistical difficulties including barriers to transferring money into the country, security concerns, staff evacuations, closures, and legal uncertainties including fear of violating sanctions. [...]

Taliban authorities have also used intimidation to extract money, food, and services. "When the Taliban visit a village, they force the households to feed them and collect food items from people," a woman from a village said. "The Taliban and their fighters call us in the middle of the night to cure and give special treatment to their patients and families," a health worker said. "They enter the hospital with their guns, it's difficult for the doctors and nurses to manage."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Interviewees said the Taliban extorted money. They sometimes said they were demanding “taxes,” but the demands were made without standard rates or transparency and in a context in which communities have lost many government services. One woman said the Taliban had dramatically increased taxes on her farming community to a level that families simply could not afford. [...]

After the Taliban takeover, the national police, which had functioned as a counterinsurgency force, largely disintegrated. Fighting has mostly ended in the country, but people expressed fear of violence and arbitrary arrests by the Taliban and lack of rule of law, and reported increased crime in some areas. “Since the Taliban started their government, the security situation in [a district of Ghazni] hasn’t gotten any better – in fact, it has been getting worse,” a student said. “Previously, women could go outside and commute freely to the town, but now even men don’t feel safe walking outside. There are increasing cases of robbery and theft in the district...And there’s no [organized] police to protect the area or to monitor the situation.”

“We kept hearing from some people that with Islamic Emirate there will be more security, no explosions and theft, but we see that they still happen,” a teacher said. [...]

Women also felt more insecure because the Taliban dismantled systems that assisted women facing gender-based violence.”

Khaama Press, Nearly 3,000 Taliban affiliates dismissed so far: officials, 16 January 2022

“Head of Purification Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Latifullah Hakimi said that they have so far dissociated 2,840 Taliban members accused of abusive practices across Afghanistan.

The commission that was launched after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan regained power last year in August, is responsible for vetting the Taliban affiliates.

The commission mostly works on the complaints of people, videos on social media, and reports of common people about misdemeanors of the Taliban members, violation of law, and their abusive practices.

Speaking with AFP on Saturday, January 15, 2022, Hakimi said that the people were giving a bad name to the IEA and were removed in this vetting process so that they build a clean army and police force in the future.

“They were involved in corruption, drugs and were intruding in people’s private lives. Some also had links with Daesh [ISIS],” Hakimi said.

Hakimi further added that those dissociated were from 14 provinces and the process of filtering out will continue in other provinces.

In the meantime, the Taliban affiliates are also accused of extrajudicial killings of former security forces which is an act against the general amnesty announced by supreme leader of the IEA Mullah Hebtullah Akhundzada.”

OCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan (2022), 11 January 2022

“Following the takeover of the Government by the de facto authorities, the status of the legal system more broadly is in flux with a range of new policies being proposed, and the status of previous legal frameworks in doubt.

The lack of government-issued identification documents continues to be a limiting factor for many of people in Afghanistan, blocking access to government services and increasing risk of statelessness. According to the 2021 Whole of Afghanistan assessment data, only 35 per cent of households (HH) reported that all HH members had a tazkira (identification card), while 31 per cent of households reported

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

that no women had a tazkira, 63 per cent of displaced households reported that some HH members were missing a tazkira, while 3 per cent of displaced households said that nobody in the household has a tazkira. Similarly, land rights and tenure are a challenging issue. 40 per cent of the displaced households surveyed in the 2021 Whole of Afghanistan Assessment reported insecure tenure in their current shelter: verbal rental agreement, a Safayee notebook, or no rental agreement. This is a particularly serious challenge for those living in informal settlements where people lack land tenure, reducing their access to essential services and placing them at constant threat of eviction and negative coping mechanisms.

For issues around gender-based violence (GBV), despite the creation of the elimination of violence against women (EVAW) law, the judicial system still places an enormous burden on individual women to make the justice system work for them, rather than the system working on their behalf.

Lack of progress in passing proposed legislation on asylum continues to leave refugees and asylum seekers in Afghanistan without the necessary legal framework to enable them to obtain necessary documentation to move freely throughout the country, work in the formal sector, pursue higher education, or enter into contracts, leaving them dependent on humanitarian assistance and remittances to meet basic needs.”

Jurist, Taliban proceed with plans to strip independence of Afghanistan lawyers, 3 January 2021

“Afghanistan’s Justice Ministry reiterated Monday that the country’s independent lawyers will need to re-certify under a new qualification process set by the Ministry, signaling the intent of the Taliban authorities to plough ahead with plans to strip the country’s legal profession of its independence. “According to the statement, the country’s lawyers will be authorized to continue practicing with their previous licenses until the new certification process has been finalized. “This was the latest step in a series of efforts by the new regime to crack down on the activities of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), an organization established in 2008 to oversee the licensing of new lawyers, and to champion the rule of law and social justice.”

AP News, Taliban-run government dissolves Afghan election commissions, 27 December 2021

The Taliban dissolved Afghanistan’s two election commissions as well as the state ministries for peace and parliamentary affairs, an official said Sunday. Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman for Afghanistan’s Taliban-run government, said the country’s Independent Election Commission and Electoral Complaint Commission have been dissolved. He called them “unnecessary institutes for the current situation in Afghanistan.” He said if there is a need for the commissions in the future, the Taliban government can revive them. The international community is waiting before extending formal recognition to Afghanistan’s new rulers. They are wary the Taliban could impose a similarly harsh regime as when they were in power 20 years ago — despite their assurances to the contrary. Both elections commissions were mandated to administer and supervise all types of elections in the country, including presidential, parliamentary and provincial council elections. Karimi said the Taliban also dissolved the Ministry for Peace and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. He said they were unnecessary ministries in the government’s current structure. The Taliban had previously shut down the former Women’s Affairs Ministry.

Gandhara, “Judge, Jury, And Executioner: Taliban Brings Afghanistan’s Justice System Under Its Thumb”, 1 December 2021

“In a decree issued a day earlier on November 22, the Taliban put the AIBA under the control of its Justice Ministry, stripping the organization of its independence.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban Justice Minister Mullah Abdul Hakim also declared that only Taliban-approved lawyers can work in their Islamic courts, effectively revoking the licenses of some 2,500 lawyers in Afghanistan. His order has raised deep concerns about the impartiality and fairness of criminal trials under the Taliban, which seized control of the country in August after toppling the internationally recognized government. Those fears have been exacerbated by the Taliban's brutal form of justice. Under their tribal interpretation of Shari'a law, Taliban judges have routinely ordered public executions and amputations for convicted criminals."

Gandhara, Afghans Complain Of Beatings, Harassment As Taliban Inspects Smartphones, 29 November 2021

Afghans across the country have complained that Taliban fighters are prying into the personal photos and videos, contacts, and social media accounts on their smartphones. The presence of music or videos that the Taliban deems to be violating its strict moral code has often led to harassment and violence, residents said. In many cases, Taliban fighters have confiscated, broken, or erased data from smartphones.

AVA Press, Interim cabinet expanded; corps commanders named, 23 November 2021

"spokesman for the interim government, said the appointments had been made in compliance with orders from Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada."

"The residents of Balkh province welcomed security forces' efforts in maintaining security in their city. Security officials of Balkh province said that at least 200 suspected people who are accused of murder and kidnapping were arrested during the past three months in Mazar-e-Sharif city and districts of Balkh province.

The head of the security department, Abdul Hai Abed, further said that the level of criminal cases has significantly declined in Balkh province.

"During the last three months when the Islamic Emirate took power we have arrested 200 accused of murder, kidnapping and robbery, and they are waiting for the courts," said Abdul Hai Abed. "Forty of them were arrested during the two weeks," he said.

Meanwhile, Abdul Hai Abed added that the Islamic Emirate has begun the process of purging the ranks and reforming in the province. [...]

At the same time, residents of Mazar-e-Sharif confirmed that the level of crimes has decreased, but some mysterious killings are often reported in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif."

AVA Press, IEA to establish 'strong, orderly and educated' army, 17 November 2021

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Qari Fasihuddin, chief of staff of the IEA, said during a visit to a military camp in Kabul, that the IEA is committed to establishing an army.

"Mujahidin of Islamic Emirate are not simple people, for which the world shows contempt, but they are the people that defeated the biggest power in the world with their equipment," said .

"The Islamic Emirate will be united to establish an army in Afghanistan Inshallah. The army will have some characteristics and will be united, strong and will be an educated army in military and religious sections," added Fasihuddin.

The high ranking official called on his forces to stand ready to defend Afghanistan and to fight its enemies.

"As we see, the world has disciplined armies and modern equipment. It is compulsory for us (Muslims) to have an equipped, developed, and orderly army to defend the country," he said.

The exact number of forces is not clear. However, Amir Khan , the IEA's foreign minister said recently that Afghanistan will establish a much smaller army than the one under the previous government."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, Taliban bans arbitrary operations and courts, 13 November 2021

"The Purification Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan ordered a ban on arbitrary military operations and courts and warned that those accountable will be brought to justice or dissolved. [...]

The Purification Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan emphasized good behavior of the Taliban fighters as vital and added that tens of those who ill-treated people were either punished or dissolved.

The members also warned that those who impersonate the Taliban affiliates and annoy people will be identified and punished.

The commission also banned arbitrary courts around the country and ordered the Taliban affiliates to take action against those who do.

The Commission is aimed at purifying the Taliban formation and identifying and dissolving those who mistreat people and do not abide by rules.

The Taliban are willing to create five sub-commissions that will soon be activated in all provinces of Afghanistan.

The members warned that no one is allowed to abuse or beat the former security personnel and that the culprits will be brought to justice."

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE, Winter is coming in Afghanistan. Are the Taliban ready?, 11 November 2021

The Taliban announced the composition of its caretaker government in early September, which consisted almost entirely of members of its senior leadership. There are no women, no prominent non-Taliban politicians and 30 of the 33 figures are ethnic Pashtuns. "I think one of the reasons they didn't move for inclusive government was they were too busy trying to sort out their own internal differences," said Brooking.

Members of the group's brutal Haqqani Network wing hold key positions such as the Interior Ministry. "The Haqqanis are way more powerful than the rest," said Lotfullah Najafizada, the director of TOLO News, Afghanistan's top news network. "And it does not necessarily send good signals about a more moderate Taliban governance in the future."

The tension between conservative and reform wings of the movement has yet to be reconciled. Chief among the issues dividing the group is women and girls' rights and roles in society. "Taliban foot soldiers would question their leaders," if they were willing to give women and girls the rights and freedoms they had over the last two decades, said Farid, who also served of Afghanistan's House Standing Committee for Human Rights, Civil Society and Women Affairs. "What was the reason we fought for 20 years?"

This could push Taliban fighters to form splinter groups or even join the Islamic State Khorasan, which has already perpetrated numerous deadly attacks since the Taliban takeover. "I think the Taliban are very concerned about that split in the movement and therefore ... have been cautious in their decisions," said Brooking.

Reuters, Taliban says failure to recognise their government could have global effects, 30 October 2021

"The Taliban called on the United States and other countries on Saturday to recognise their government in Afghanistan, saying that a failure to do so and the continued freezing of Afghan funds abroad would lead to problems not only for the country but for the world.

No country has formally recognised the Taliban government since the insurgents took over the country in August, while billions of dollars in Afghan assets and funds abroad have also been frozen, even as the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

country faces severe economic and humanitarian crises. "Our message to America is, if unrecognition continues, Afghan problems continue, it is the problem of the region and could turn into a problem for the world," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told journalists at a news conference on [30 October]."

Ariana News, MoD to form a new, independent national army, 24 October 2021

"Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials said Saturday that they will establish a new army that is independent in order to defend Afghanistan's territory and airspace.

Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, acting minister of defense and son of Mullah Mohammad Omar, founder of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), said in a voice clip on Sunday that efforts are being made to safeguard Afghanistan's territory and airspace. [...]

The caretaker minister did not however provide further details about how the IEA will finance the army or whether it will include soldiers from the former government."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: 'maybe the international community's pressure on the Taliban concerning human rights and women rights is producing results', 21 October 2021

"Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Here, a lawyer in Kabul offers his personal observations and perspective on an apparent Taliban reversal of their decision to suspend the Ministry of Women Affairs in Afghanistan. [...]

In a press conference, one of the top leaders of the Taliban has announced that they did not actually remove the Ministry of Women Affairs and they are looking into options to resume its operations based on Islamic rules and under the supervision of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, Taliban pledge to step up security as Shi'ite victims buried in Afghanistan, 16 October 2021

"Taliban authorities pledged to step up security at Shi'ite mosques as hundreds of people gathered on Saturday to bury the victims of the second Islamic State suicide attack on worshippers in a week."

Al Jazeera, UN to appoint special rapporteur to monitor rights in Afghanistan, 7 October 2021

"The UN has voted to create a new special rapporteur on Afghanistan to probe violations carried out by the Taliban and other parties to the conflict, amid growing concerns for the erosion of civil rights as the country transitions to an "Islamic emirate".

The UN Human Rights Council on Thursday passed a resolution brought by the European Union to have a special rapporteur working on the ground in March 2022, supported by UN experts in legal analysis, forensics and women's rights."

TOLO News, Officials: 200 Arrested in Balkh in Past 3 Months, 17 November 2021

"Security officials of Balkh province said that at least 200 suspected people who are accused of murder and kidnapping were arrested during the past three months in Mazar-e-Sharif city and districts of Balkh province.

The head of the security department, Abdul Hai Abed, further said that the level of criminal cases has significantly declined in Balkh province.

"During the last three months when the Islamic Emirate took power we have arrested 200 accused of murder, kidnapping and robbery, and they are waiting for the courts," said Abdul Hai Abed. "Forty of them

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

were arrested during the two weeks,” he said.”

Al Jazeera, Taliban: From Afghanistan’s rugged mountains to policing streets, 5 October 2021
“One fighter after another, the Taliban is trading in their characteristic long flowing garb for stiff military uniforms.

It is a symbol of the moment of transition its fighters find themselves in: Once warriors embedded in Afghanistan’s rugged mountains, now they are an urban police force. [...] By winning the country – after two decades of war – with the August 15 seizure of Kabul, the Taliban also inherited a city marked by lawlessness. Immediately, it set to work, making its presence known in daily street patrols. Some fighters have done away with the typical AK-47 rifles replacing them with US-made M16s left behind by Afghan forces. They halt street fights, summon suspected criminals to police stations and chase those who do not heed their call.”

In Kabul’s Police District 8, there is a long queue leading to two rooms. In one, there are criminal cases. In another, civilian disputes.

Victims of stabbings, robbery and other misdeeds sit in the same room as alleged perpetrators, staring into the distance until it is their turn to plead their case. For lesser crimes, Taliban police offer the accused three days to show up at the station. After that, they go after them.

The court system is a work in progress, officials said. Meetings are still under way between Taliban officials – used to tribal justice prevalent in rural Afghanistan – to work out the process in a sprawling city with an active judiciary. Even those who fear them in the embattled city welcome the peace their arrival has brought.

The Taliban has empowered local elders to pass judgement based on their interpretation of Islamic law for minor criminal cases.

In the Sheikh Zayed City residential area of Kabul, a committee of elders ordered the father of a man accused of stabbing a neighbour to pay 35,000 Afghanis, about \$400. The father counts the banknotes in a rapid shuffle and hands it to the imam, who offers it to the family of the victim. They embrace. Justice served.”

Long War Journal, Testimony: The Biden Administration’s Policy on Afghanistan, 30 September 2021

“The Taliban’s new regime is, in many ways, just its old regime. Many of the Taliban’s cabinet ministers are veterans of the Taliban’s first Islamic Emirate from 1996 through 2001.⁸ More than one dozen of them have already been sanctioned by the United Nations, including for their ties to terrorism. All five of the former Guantanamo detainees who were exchanged for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl in 2014 now serve the Taliban in senior leadership roles. Four of the five are Taliban cabinet ministers, while the fifth is the governor of Khost province.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Taliban to temporarily adopt Zahir Shah era constitution, 28 September 2021

“KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Justice on Tuesday said the caretaker government would adopt the constitution of King Mohammad Zahir Shah era without the parts which are in conflict with Islamic Sharia. The ministry in a statement said that justice minister Abdul Hakim Shar’ee during a meeting with Chinese ambassador, Wang Yu, said that Taliban would temporarily enforce the constitution of Zahir Shah era without the parts which are in violation to Islamic Sharia.

He said that any international documents which were not in conflict with Sharia and Emirate rules, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban respected them.

The source said that the Taliban wanted good relations with all countries and assures the world that the soil of Afghanistan would not be used against them.”

United States Institute of Peace, Taliban Seek Recognition, But Offer Few Concessions to International Concerns, 28 September 2021

“Much of the Taliban’s overtures to seek or establish international recognition seem to be driven by the group’s pressing economic needs, their desire to see funds unfrozen and various forms of assistance delivered.

As part of their announcement of senior figures to formal government posts, the Taliban nominated Suhail Shaheen, a longtime member of and former spokesperson for the group’s political office in Qatar, to serve as ambassador to the United Nations. In press statements, they have repeatedly encouraged foreign embassies to return to Kabul, including the United States and European states. And the group has maintained a steady tempo of high-level diplomacy with neighboring and regional states, including Russia, China and even India.

However, the Taliban have repeatedly revealed a clear prioritization of maintaining their own internal cohesion and demonstrating their authority domestically. The current caretaker government is made up entirely of their own leadership, excluding women and other political stakeholders while including a number of internationally sanctioned figures. The group has renamed the Afghan government the Islamic Emirate, in spite of a joint diplomatic statement by the United States, Russia, China and Pakistan lobbying against a revival of the title. The group’s rank and file have suppressed demonstrations across the country; protestors and journalists are being detained and beaten. Taliban leadership have effectively banned girls’ education, discouraged women from returning to work in a number of sectors and disbanded the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (replacing it with its historically notorious Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice). At least some elements of the group have begun enforcing brutal law enforcement policies, including public execution.”

AP News, Taliban official: Strict punishment, executions will return, 23 September, 2021

“One of the founders of the Taliban and the chief enforcer of its harsh interpretation of Islamic law when they last ruled Afghanistan said the hard-line movement will once again carry out executions and amputations of hands, though perhaps not in public.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi dismissed outrage over the Taliban’s executions in the past, which sometimes took place in front of crowds at a stadium, and he warned the world against interfering with Afghanistan’s new rulers.”

“On at least two occasions in the last week, Kabul men have been packed into the back of a pickup truck, their hands tied, and were paraded around to humiliate them. In one case, their faces were painted to identify them as thieves. In the other, stale bread was hung from their necks or stuffed in their mouth. It wasn’t immediately clear what their crimes were.”

“He said now the Taliban would allow television, mobile phones, photos and video “because this is the necessity of the people, and we are serious about it.” He suggested that the Taliban saw the media as a way to spread their message. “Now we know instead of reaching just hundreds, we can reach millions,” he said. He added that if punishments are made public, then people may be allowed to video or take photos to spread the deterrent effect.”

AP News, Taliban name deputy ministers, double down on all-male team, 21 September 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

Al Jazeera, Rights groups accuse Taliban of rolling back civil liberties, 20 September 2021
“Rights groups have accused the Taliban of “steadily dismantling” human rights in Afghanistan since the group captured power last month. In a briefing released on Tuesday, Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) accused the Taliban of a number of rights violations including limits on the freedom of the press, restrictions on women and targeted killing of civilians and former government officials.”

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

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

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

Afghanistan Analysts Network, The Focus of the Taleban’s New Government: Internal cohesion, external dominance, 12 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

TOLO News, Uniformed Police to be Stationed in Kabul, 12 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

The militants also abolished the Women's Affairs Ministry and reestablished the feared Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. In the 1990s, that ministry was responsible for enforcing the Taliban's morality laws, including its strict dress code and gender segregation in society. The ministry's dreaded police were notorious for publicly beating offenders, including women.

United States Institute of Peace, Five Questions on the Taliban's Caretaker Government, 9 September 2021

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

International Crisis Group, Who Will Run the Taliban Government?, 9 September 2021

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

FDD's Long War Journal, Taliban's government includes designated terrorists, ex-Guantanamo detainees, 8 September 2021

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

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

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

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

The Guardian, Taliban name all-male Afghan cabinet including minister wanted by FBI, 7 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

How is the media regulated under the Taliban?

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban intelligence agents detain American filmmaker Ivor Shearer, Afghan producer Faizullah Faizbakhsh in Kabul, 19 August 2022

"On August 17, Shearer and Faizbakhsh were filming in the Sherpur area of District 10 in Kabul—where a U.S. drone strike killed Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri earlier in August—when several security guards stopped them, according to a report by U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster Voice of America-Dari and two journalists familiar with the case, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban's reprisal. The guards questioned them about their activities and checked their work permits, ID cards, and passports; they then confiscated the journalists' cellphones, detained them for a couple of hours, and repeatedly called them "American spies," according to the journalists familiar with the case... "The Taliban's increasing pressure and escalating numbers of detentions of journalists and media workers, including the detention of American filmmaker Ivor Shearer and his Afghan colleague Faizullah Faizbakhsh, show the group's utter lack of commitment to the principle of freedom of the press in Afghanistan," said CPJ Program Director Carlos Martinez de la Serna."

Qantara, One year of Taliban Rule: How life has changed for Afghans, 17 August 2022

"According to Reporters Without Borders, 43% of Afghan media outlets have been shut down in the past three months. 'Out of the 10,780 people working in Afghan newsrooms (8,290 men and 2,490 women) at the beginning of August 2021, only 4,360 were working in December (3,950 men and 410 women), or four out of ten journalists,' according to the watchdog." "Reporters Without Borders says that women journalists have suffered more since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. 'The Taliban tried to arrest me on many occasions. They visited our house several times. When they gave a warning to my family, I had no choice but to leave Afghanistan,' explained Saleha Ainy, an Afghan journalist who fled to Iran."

Qantara.de, One year of Taliban rule, how life has changed for afghans, 17 August 2022

"The Taliban have not fulfilled most of their promises under the 2020 Doha agreement. They have been reluctant to form an inclusive government in the country, while girls above grade 6 are not allowed to go to school. Also, women are not permitted to work in most sectors and they can only visit public parks on specific days." "Millions of Afghans are jobless and their bank accounts are frozen. Many people are selling their possessions to buy food, with urban communities facing food insecurity on levels similar to rural areas for the first time." "A large number of women working in different positions in previous administrations – from the ministerial level to office clerks – were sent home by the Taliban in the first months of their rule. Many Afghan women took to the streets to protest the Taliban's oppressive decisions. The hardline group used force to crush the protests, arresting many women's rights activists. "Less than one year after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, their draconian policies are depriving millions of women and girls of their right to lead safe, free, and fulfilling lives," Agnes Callamard, the secretary-general of Amnesty International, a global human rights watchdog, said in July. Despite pressure from the Islamist rulers, many Afghan women are still trying to make their voices heard. Several women protesters have left the country, but at least five women's rights groups are still active there. Some of them are raising their voice on social media against the Taliban's crackdown, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, not to mention physical and psychological torture. Zholia Parsi, a women's rights advocate, said she chose to continue her protest to safeguard her children's future." "Independent media is seen as an enemy by the Taliban. The sector progressed in leaps and bounds between 2001 and 2020, but now thousands of Afghan journalists are either in exile or have lost their jobs. According to Reporters Without Borders, 43% of Afghan media outlets have been shut down in the past three months. "Out of the 10,780 people working in Afghan newsrooms (8,290 men and 2,490 women) at the beginning of August 2021, only 4,360 were working in December (3,950 men and 410 women), or four out of ten journalists," according to the watchdog. Mohammad Zia Bumia, head of the South Asian Free Media Association for Afghanistan, said that after the collapse of Ashraf Ghani's government, many Afghan media outlets closed their operations, which rendered hundreds of Afghan journalists jobless. The Taliban crackdown and the worsening economic situation are also the reasons behind a deteriorating media landscape, he said: "The Taliban have imposed strict censorship on media – on news as well as

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

entertainment." Reporters Without Borders says that women journalists have suffered more since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. "The Taliban tried to arrest me on many occasions. They visited our house several times. When they gave a warning to my family, I had no choice but to leave Afghanistan," explained Saleha Ainy, an Afghan journalist who fled to Iran."

Deutsche Welle, How life has changed for Afghans since the Taliban takeover, 15 August 2022

"According to Reporters Without Borders, 43% of Afghan media outlets have been shut down in the past three months. "Out of the 10,780 people working in Afghan newsrooms (8,290 men and 2,490 women) at the beginning of August 2021, only 4,360 were working in December (3,950 men and 410 women), or four out of ten journalists," according to the watchdog. Mohammad Zia Bumia, head of the South Asian Free Media Association for Afghanistan, told DW that after the collapse of Ashraf Ghani's government, many Afghan media outlets closed their operations, which rendered hundreds of Afghan journalists jobless... Reporters Without Borders says that women journalists have suffered more since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan."

The National News, How the Taliban has rolled back civil rights after a year in control of Afghanistan, 10 August 2022

"Following the group's takeover of the country, more than 200 media outlets were shut down — leaving room for little to no freedom of expression."

Khaama Press, Over 200 Media Outlets Shut Sown Since Taliban Takeover, 6 August 2022

"At least 7,000 media practitioners have lost their jobs since the Taliban seized power in August last year, according to sources, as over 200 media outlets have ceased operations across Afghanistan. [...] ever-increasing restrictions continue to grow under the Taliban leadership, who is pushing for the formal recognition since in power. 'In the last year, out of 544 media outlets, 218 of them were closed, and out of 1200 media workers, 7000 of them lost their jobs,' said Hujatullah Mujaddidi, the Head of the Free Association of Afghan Journalists said, as The Print quoted. Several officials from the media said that they are unable to pay their employees' salaries due to the poor economy. [...] According to AFJM, more than 2,800 women were employed in the Afghan media before the Islamic Emirate came to power; more than 2,100 of them have lost their jobs."

The Khaama Press News Agency, US Launches Consultative Mechanism Enabling Engagement with Afghan Women & Civil Society, 3 August 2022

"The Atlantic Council, Sisterhood is Global Institute, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security, United States Institute of Peace, and the US Department of State collaborated to establish the US-Afghan Consultative Mechanism (USACM)."

"The mechanism will bring together a range of members from various women's coalitions, as well as civil society activists, journalists, intellectuals, legal experts, religious actors, and scholars from both inside and outside Afghanistan."

"The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan has deteriorated the situation for women's rights and for human rights as women are denied their fundamental rights, and press freedom is violated."

Gandhara, 'Open Fear': Taliban Cracks Down On Afghan Media By Decree, 27 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"In its latest report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) repeated its concerns about the Taliban's mistreatment of the media. "In the 10 months since they took control of Afghanistan, the de facto authorities have made clear their position on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and freedom of opinion," the report issued on July 20 said. "They have limited dissent by cracking down on protests and curbing media freedoms, including by arbitrarily arresting journalists, protestors, and civil society activists and issuing restrictions on media outlets.""

"UNAMA directly attributed 163 human-rights violations against journalists and rights workers to the Taliban, including arbitrary arrests and detention, threats, and intimidation. The UN agency also cited the killing of six journalists by the rival Islamic State (IS) militant group"

"Media watchdogs such as the International Federation of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the South Asian Journalists Association, among others, have consistently called on the Taliban to stop the rising number of assaults against media workers in Afghanistan."

"In the most recent incident involving a local journalist, Salgai Hess was beaten and shot at on July 22 while reporting in Jalalabad, the capital of Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar Province."

The National News "Female journalists in Afghanistan face new reality under Taliban rule" 25 July 2022

"Almost a year since the US withdrawal, women reporters and presenters have been made to wear face coverings on screen, with some fearing further restrictions"

Khaama Press, Taliban Intelligence Arrests a Salam Watandar Radio Correspondent in Northern Afghanistan, 25 July 2022

"According to Salam Watandar, Talha, the Taliban's deputy intelligence officer in Faryab province, arrested Alauddin Erkin, one of the local journalists for this outlet.

Salam Watandar reported that the intelligence forces made no mention of the cause or intent behind the detention of Alauddin Erkin.

Selagi Ehsaas, a female host of Dost Radio in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar, was beaten almost days ago until she passed out at the time.

In reaction to this, the AFJC voiced concern and condemned the intensification of violence and pressure on journalists.

On July 20, as Ehsaas was returning from work in Moi Mubarak village of Surkh Rod district, Nangarhar province, unidentified gunmen stopped her and pistol-whipped her.

Almost 6,000 journalists have lost their jobs and 287 media outlets closed since the Taliban seized power, according to a recent report from the Association of Free Journalists of Afghanistan that was published at the beginning of May."

Human Rights Watch, UN Reports on Taliban Repression, Abuse in Afghanistan, 20 July 2022

"A new report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) makes for very grim reading, confirming many of the concerns Afghan human rights advocates have raised since last August,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. UNAMA catalogues serious human rights abuses that Taliban forces have committed, including summary executions and enforced disappearances of former members of the Afghan National Security Forces, which have continued months after the Taliban takeover. It chronicles the series of Taliban decrees on the rights of women and girls that have given rise to “severe restrictions on their human rights, resulting in their exclusion from most aspects of everyday and public life.” And UNAMA describes how “arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists, human rights defenders, [and] protesters have had a chilling effect on freedom of the media and civic activism.” The response from the Taliban authorities was predictable. They ignored the many cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances UNAMA documented, and they denied the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice had “ever beaten anyone, harmed or forced anyone to do anything ... or said anything to women about dress code.” Much of their response was limited to the situation of prisoners, including the peculiar and false assertion that inmates “are satisfied” with prison food. As UNAMA describes, prisoners have been routinely denied food and water as punishment. Taliban officials, who for years denounced torture by the former government and US forces, did not respond to allegations that they have also tortured prisoners, including by using electric shock. UNAMA also notes that while civilian casualties have declined as the armed conflict has largely ended (with at least 118,443 civilians dead and wounded since UNAMA started counting in December 2008), attacks by Islamic State-linked armed groups continue to take a terrible toll, killing more than 700 civilians and wounding more than 1400 since August. Eleven months after Afghanistan’s abrupt transition to Taliban rule, the UNAMA report demonstrates the crucial importance of continued monitoring and documentation of the steady erosion of rights in Afghanistan, and acts as an important reminder of the heavy price Afghans are paying.”

AVA, Eid message issues by supreme leader of Afghanistan, 6 July 2022

"[...] Akhundzada touched on media and freedom of expression and said: “The Islamic Emirate is committed to freedom of expression in the light of Islamic and Sharia principles and within the framework of the country’s national interests. Journalists will continue their activities by keeping these two important points in mind and observing the principles of journalism.”

Meanwhile, Akhundzada asked the security forces to pay special attention to their intentions and sincerity in their service, by showing obedience to officials and treating the people well."

AIHRC, An analysis of the meeting of the Taliban, which was held under the name of "The Great Gathering of Afghan Religious Scholars" in Kabul, 3 July 2022

"A meeting was launched by the de facto Taliban government on June 30, 2022, under the name "Great Gathering of Afghan *Ulama*" in Kabul and continued for three days." [...] "The agenda of this meeting was formed without the participation of other political, social, cultural, and economic groups.." [...]

"...journalists and representatives of free media institutions did not have the opportunity to participate in this program and publish and distribute the necessary information about this meeting to the citizens." [...]

"The sources and amount of expenses of this meeting were kept hidden from public view."

The meeting "even stated with a determination that if anyone makes the slightest move against our Islamic system and government, they should be beheaded and destroyed."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"In this meeting, rigorous literature was used against the role of the world community and defined international mechanisms."

HRW, Afghanistan's Taliban Crack Down on Vloggers, 14 June 2022

"On June 7, Afghan vlogger Ajmal Haqiqi – well known for his YouTube channel and modeling shows – appeared in a very different kind of broadcast. Taliban officials arrested Haqiqi and his three colleagues and released a video showing the men, with bruised faces and clearly under duress, apologizing for encouraging "prostitution" and "insulting verses of the Quran." On May 28, the four had posted a YouTube video in which they recited Quranic verses in Arabic in a comical tone. Within a week, the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) had detained them. "We have been promoting Western culture and values, and for this I apologize," Haqiqi said in his evidently scripted "confession." As of mid-June, the men remained in custody. No charges have been filed against them, and no lawyers or family members have been able to see them. These arrests are among the latest in the Taliban's crackdown on free expression. On May 24, Taliban authorities detained Mirza Hassani, director of Radio Sedai Aftab, at a checkpoint in Herat city, accusing him of supporting opposition groups. On May 10, GDI officials detained Khan Mohamad Sayal, a TV journalist, in Urzugan, without explanation. By mid-June, neither man had been released. A Kandahar journalist who had been detained for four days in April for broadcasting music told me he had been accused of working with foreigners. His "confession" was also forced: "They were beating and telling me that I had to admit it," he said. The Taliban have used various measures to silence media in Afghanistan, ranging from establishing restrictive guidelines to sending intelligence officials to meet with media staff. Forcing media workers to confess to dubious crimes sends a message to others to adhere to the Taliban's rules – a tactic also used against women protesters who were detained and compelled to confess. A media worker in Herat recently told me, "Freedom of speech has died in Afghanistan." For journalists, social media activists, and others publicly resisting the Taliban's onerous restrictions, his words seem all too true."

CPJ, Taliban forces beat journalist Reza Shahir, charge 3 others over corruption reporting, 9 June 2022

"The Taliban must investigate the beating of journalist Reza Shahir, and immediately drop all charges against journalists Firoz Ghafori, Basira Mosamem, and Olugh Beig Ghafori, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Thursday. At about midnight on June 3, Taliban forces stopped Shahir while he was on his way to his home in Kabul's District 18, searched him, and then punched him in the head and beat him on the shoulder with an AK-47, knocking him unconscious, according to media reports and the journalist, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview."

Gandhara, Video 'Confession' Of Popular Afghan YouTuber Prompts Outrage, 9 June 2022

"Afghan social media influencer Ajmal Haqiqi gained popularity for his entertaining videos on YouTube. On June 7, the fashion model appeared on another widely viewed video. But this time, he was handcuffed, wearing a prison uniform, and sporting bruises on his face as he addressed the camera. In the 2-minute video issued by the Taliban, Haqiqi apologized to Afghanistan's new rulers for "insulting" the Koran, Islam's holy book, in one of his recent YouTube clips. "We are ready to accept any punishment," said Haqiqi, standing next to three of his colleagues. He added that his popular YouTube channel promotes "moral corruption" and is supported by the ousted Western-backed Afghan government. The video uploaded by the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence was accompanied by a tweet saying: "No one is allowed to insult Koranic verses or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The Taliban must immediately release YouTuber Ajmal Haqiqi and his colleagues, 8 June 2022

“Responding to the arbitrary arrest of YouTuber Ajmal Haqiqi and his colleagues yesterday on charges of “insulting Islamic sacred values” after they posted a video in which they allegedly used Quranic verses in a humorous manner, Samira Hamidi, Amnesty International’s South Asia Campaigner, said: “Arbitrarily detaining YouTuber Haqiqi and his colleagues and coercing them into apologizing because the Taliban de-facto authorities were offended by the video is a blatant attack on the right to freedom of expression. The Taliban must immediately and unconditionally release the YouTubers and end their continued censorship of those who wish to freely express their ideas.” “Restrictions to the right to freedom of expression must be clearly provided by law and be strictly necessary and proportionate to a legitimate aim. International human rights law does not permit restrictions of freedom of expression simply on the grounds it has the potential to offend or insult nor for the protection of religious beliefs or the religious sensibilities of their adherents. This incident is a classic example of how the Taliban is creating a climate of fear in Afghanistan by using arbitrary arrests and coercion to force people into silence.” “Since assuming power, the Taliban have been using intimidation, harassment, and violence on anyone who has expressed support for human rights or modern values, especially human rights defenders, women activists, journalists, and members of academia among others. As the de facto authority, the Taliban must abide by international human rights law and respect everyone’s right to freedom of expression without discrimination.” Background Ajmal Haqiqi is a model and social media influencer based in Kabul, Afghanistan. Last week, a video was posted on Haqiqi’s YouTube channel in which he along with three other colleagues allegedly used Quranic verses in a humorous manner. On 5 June 2022, Haqiqi posted another video apologizing for the previous video. On 7 June 2022, the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence arrested Ajmal Haqiqi and three of his colleagues on charges of “insulting Islamic sacred values”. Later in the day, a video ‘confession’ of Haqiqi was released where he again apologized.”

AVA Press, The Islamic Emirate Arrests Afghan YouTuber in Charges of Blasphemy, 8 June 2022

“The Islamic Emirate’s General Directorate of Intelligence has arrested Ajmal Haqiqi, a YouTuber from Afghanistan, and three of his colleagues on charges of “insulting Islamic sacred values.” Four of the young activists are handcuffed in a video released on the Islamic Emirate’s intelligence agency’s Twitter handle, with Ajmal Haqiqi confessing to “promoting indecency and lewdness, and insulting Quran verses.” One of Haqiqi’s colleagues, Gholam Sakhi, who was once addicted to drugs and claimed to have a “mental condition,” recited verses from the Qur’an in a humorous voice in a video posted by Haqiqi’s YouTube channel, where Sakhi sings and dances. Haqiqi laughs in that widely shared video as Sakhi mimics recitations in a humorous voice. Sakhi’s conversational style is noted for being funny and amusing... No one is allowed to insult or ridicule the verses of the Qur’an, the Prophet’s hadiths, or Islamic sanctities under the rule of the Islamic system,” the Islamic Emirate intelligence agency wrote on Twitter. Those who have recently insulted and disrespected the Qur’an’s holy verses; “They are arrested.””

Tolo News, Afghan Journalists Criticize Media Watchdogs, 1 June 2022

“Journalists held a gathering in Kabul where they said that they would not recognize any media watchdogs as they are being negligent toward the Afghan media community. They held a gathering under the heading of “justice for journalists” in Kabul on Wednesday. They claimed that media watchdogs have failed to address the challenges ahead of the Afghan journalists. “These organizations have not been supportive of journalists, and so the journalists called on the Islamic Emirate and relevant organizations to not recognize these organization as media watchdogs,” said Mohammad Raqib Fayaz, a participant. “These

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

organizations misused the title of journalist. There are lobbies in the foreign organizations,” said Mubeen Ahmad Muwahid, another participant. Meanwhile, media watchdogs have various opinions about their activities as the media watchdogs. “Whenever a journalist has any problem regarding the Afghanistan Independent Journalists' Association (AIJA), they can refer to the AIJA,” said Hujatullah Mujadidi, head of the AIJA. “The individuals who has no legitimate position, they don’t have the authority to dissolve the media organization,” said Sayed Ali Azghar Akbarzada, a member of AIJA. The participants in the gathering called on the Islamic Emirate to restart activities of the Commission of Media Violation. There are more than 20 media watchdog organizations in Afghanistan.”

Committee to Project Journalists, Afghan journalist Ali Akbar Khairkhah disappears in Kabul, Taliban cracks down on women reporters, 27 May 2022

“On Tuesday, May 24, Khairkhah, a photojournalist and reporter with the local Subhe Kabul newspaper, disappeared from the Kote Sangi area of District 5 in the capital of Kabul, according to his nephew Mohammad Abbasi, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview, and media reports. Khairkhah told his family that he was going to the area to report and would attend his evening university classes, his nephew said, adding that his uncle did not attend the classes and they could not find any information about him in the hospitals, police districts, or the Kabul police command.

In a separate incident, on May 19, Naimulhaq Haqqani, the Taliban’s director of information and culture in western Herat province, told his personal assistant to expel Marjan Wafa, a reporter with the independent local Radio Killid station, from his press conference, according to a journalist with knowledge of the incident who talked to CPJ on condition of anonymity, fearing the Taliban’s reprisal, and media reports. Wafa, the only female journalist at the press conference, reportedly was complying with the Taliban’s dress code by wearing a face covering that exposed only her eyes. Haqqani’s personal assistant did not give her any reason for the order to leave.

Wafa’s expulsion came amid a broader crackdown on women reporters, with Taliban ministries ordering female TV journalists to wear masks while on air. [...] Khairkhah works as a journalist and is also an undergraduate journalism student in Kabul. He has recently conducted interviews with Afghan politicians for Subhe Kabul, which covers Afghan news and current affairs. CPJ contacted Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesperson, for comment via messaging app but did not receive any response. CPJ was unable to find contact information for Herat province’s director of information and culture. CPJ has documented the increasingly prominent role of the General Directorate of Intelligence in controlling news media and intimidating journalists in Afghanistan.”

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

“The press is grappling with censorship and threats, dramatically reducing citizens’ access to information. In international media freedom ratings, Afghanistan has plunged since August 2021. Access to information has become very challenging, impacting negatively on the dissemination of information including at the provincial level. The expert noted “The enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly are essential ingredients for a healthy and functioning society. Further, the de facto authorities should introduce strict and clear safeguards to prevent interference in public freedoms, especially the freedoms of opinion, expression, and assembly”. For individual journalists, the impact has been worse for women media professionals with 80% of them having lost their jobs and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

increasing restrictions on their activities including by being required to wear a face-covering on screen.”

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

“The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] The high number of reports of intimidation, harassment, attacks, arrests, and in some cases killing or disappearance, of journalists, prosecutors, and judges for undertaking their duties, as well as of civil society for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association is of serious concern, Bennett said. Civil society space and media freedom is critical for a peaceful society in which rights are respected, he said.”

UNAMA, PRESS STATEMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 24 May 2022

“The members of the Security Council further expressed deep concern regarding the announcements by the Taliban that all women must cover their faces in public spaces and in media broadcasts, only leave home in cases of necessity, and that violations of this directive will lead to the punishment of their male relatives. They also expressed concern regarding the decision by the Taliban to dissolve several key national institutions.”

Al Jazeera, Afghan female journalists defiant as Taliban restrictions grow, 24 May 2022

“Mahira* has become a familiar face on Afghan television, as viewers tune in every night to watch her present the news. Even during the most turbulent recent events, the 27-year-old journalist remained calm and composed as she reported on the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan. On Saturday, Mahira appeared on screen, but her face was covered with a black mask following a Taliban decree ordering female news anchors to cover their faces while on air.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghans Call to #FreeHerFace, 23 May 2022

“A new social media campaign, #FreeHerFace, has Afghan male journalists and others posting selfies with their faces covered, in solidarity with the Afghan women journalists facing a harmful new Taliban decree. On May 9, the Taliban ordered women and older girls to cover their faces when in public and avoid being outside at all if possible. Punishments for violating the decree would be inflicted on their male family members. Taliban leaders have responded to public outcry by insisting the decree is not mandatory, but their own enforcement efforts contradict those statements. On May 21, the Taliban’s Ministry of Vice and Virtue ordered all women television presenters to cover their faces, stating “the decision was final and that there was no room for discussion.” The rule blatantly violates women’s rights to freedom of expression, as well as personal autonomy and religious belief. It will also prevent access to information for people who are deaf or hard of hearing who lip read or rely on visual speech cues to help them understand people speaking. In response to the order, male presenters at several major news channels in Afghanistan have worn masks on air in solidarity with their female colleagues – an act that prompted the #FreeHerFace campaign on social media. As one women’s rights activist wrote, “Afghan men showing up for Afghan women is not just a gesture. It’s a turn in the story that will change everything. Brave brothers.” This latest order is part of steady flow of Taliban actions that have blocked girls’ secondary education, pushed women out of most employment, curtailed women’s freedom of movement, obstructed women’s access to health care, and abolished the system designed to protect women and girls from violence.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Committee to Project Journalists, Taliban intelligence agents detain, pressure Afghan journalist Jebran Lawrand to stop critical reporting, 23 May 2022

Taliban authorities must investigate the arbitrary detention, questioning, and intimidation of Afghan journalist Jebran Lawrand and allow local press members to work freely, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Monday. On April 25, Lawrand, a political programs manager and presenter at the independent Kabul News TV station, was summoned to the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), where he was detained, cursed at, and questioned for over two hours, according to the journalist, who posted about the incident on Facebook and talked to CPJ by phone, two activists with knowledge of the case who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity for fear of Taliban reprisal, news reports, and tweets by a former government official. The activists told CPJ that the Taliban intelligence agents warned Lawrand that his TV shows shouldn't criticize the Taliban and that he must not invite critical analysts to appear. The agents also reportedly warned that no one should know about the journalist's detention and questioning or he would face graver consequences and called him an infidel, evil, atheist, and pig before releasing him. "Taliban authorities must tell its General Directorate of Intelligence to stop detaining and using intimidation tactics against journalists like Jebran Lawrand," said Steven Butler, CPJ's Asia program coordinator, in Washington, D.C. "The Taliban needs to return to their original commitment to tolerate an independent media and must learn to accept criticism without taking retaliatory action." Lawrand was summoned and detained a day after a Facebook post about his April 24, 2022 show, during which he disagreed with a Taliban supporter. The journalist and the activists told CPJ that on April 25, while Lawrand was on his way home, several Taliban intelligence operatives from the counter-terrorism directorate told him that he wouldn't face any further detention because of the April 24 show but could face future arrest or imprisonment if he continued to report the way he did. On April 27, Lawrand resigned from his job after 15 years as a journalist and has been in hiding since his detention, according to the activists. The activists said he continues to receive anonymous threats from unknown telephone numbers. CPJ contacted Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesperson, for comment via messaging app but did not receive any response. CPJ has documented the increasingly prominent role of the GDI in controlling news media and intimidating journalists in Afghanistan. CPJ is also investigating the alleged expulsion of Marjan Wafa, the only female journalist in Herat city, from a press conference by local Taliban officials on May 20, 2022."

Khaama, 287 Media Outlets Dismantled After the Taliban Took Power, Leaving 6,000 Journalists Unemployed<https://www.khaama.com/287-media-outlets-dismantled-after-the-taliban-took-power-leaving-6000-journalists-unemployed86235/>, 10 May 2022

"According to a recent report released on 9th May by the Association of Free Journalists of Afghanistan, 287 media outlets have been closed and almost 6,000 journalists have been laid off since the Taliban took control."

Khaama, The Taliban Harshly Suppressed the Second Day of the Women's Protest in Kabul, 10 May 2022

"A handful of women in Kabul have staged demonstrations in response to the Taliban's decision to "make hijab mandatory," with Taliban militants allegedly dispersing protesters and detaining journalists."

"The demonstration began at the Ansari square of Shahr-e-Naw and continued just outside of the Ministry of Interior, where the Taliban surrounded them and detained journalists, according to Zhulia Parsi, one of the protesting girls. The journalists have been detained, according to Zhulia Parsi, and she has no idea where they are being held. "The Taliban snatched the girls' smartphones and took them away," she claimed. Taliban forces reportedly ripped down the banners and dispersed the protesters, according to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Zhulia. The Taliban wanted to take the women inside the ministry and force them to confess, Zhulia Parsi told the reporters."

Committee to Protect Journalists, Afghan journalist Khalid Qaderi sentenced to 1 year in prison, 6 May 2022

"A Taliban military court in the western city of Herat sentenced Qaderi to one year in prison for allegedly spreading anti-regime propaganda and committing espionage for foreign media outlets, according to news reports, a tweet by the journalist's sister Homaira Qaderi, and a local journalist familiar with the case, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of reprisal from the Taliban. Qaderi did not have access to a defense lawyer, and Taliban authorities forced him to sign a document agreeing not to appeal the verdict, that journalist said. His case is CPJ's first documented instance of a journalist being tried, convicted, and sentenced for their work since the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan in August 2021. The ruling was issued in mid-April and the journalist was notified 10 days after his appearance in court, according to those sources, which did not provide exact dates for the proceedings. Qaderi is a reporter and producer of cultural programs for Radio Nawruz, an independent broadcaster in Herat province, and also publishes poetry, according to those sources."

Amnesty International, Bitter Memories and Unknown Future: What will happen to the Free Press in Afghanistan?, 4 May 2022

"The fall of the government and the subsequent rule of Taliban were full of important events, events which should have been covered and reported by journalists around the country. Unfortunately, a number of media outlets stopped their operations and were closed. Many journalists lost their jobs and access to information in different cities and provinces was quite difficult. The rule of the Taliban, who had committed many attacks against the right to freedom of expression for decades, including direct attacks against many Afghan journalists, made us more concerned and terrified than ever before."

"The protests were held in different parts of Kabul. My colleague Nemat Naqdi and I went to PD-3 (Police District-3) of Kabul to cover the protest. We started filming when women gathered and started the protest, but the Taliban tried to stop us and simply told us not to film. We asked about their reason but received no answer. After that, one of them took me to the PD. Before entering the PD, I thought they had brought me to talk and negotiate but I soon realized what awaited me: I was tortured until I fainted. They kept me in one of the rooms of the PD for four hours."

"Lack of support of the international community and media supporting organizations, the closure of many local media outlets, journalists' unemployment and having seen many of my colleagues fleeing to different countries, coupled with the imposition of severe restrictions on the media by the Taliban, repeated torture of journalists, failure to achieve our wishes for our country, losing the values that we have fought for years to achieve and the daily painful events which happen to the people of my country completely destroy me."

Khaama, AFJC Calls on Taliban to Revive Access to Information Laws, 4 May 2022

"Honoring the World Media Freedom Day on Tuesday, Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC) expressed "deep concern" over the increasing number of media practitioners being arrested throughout the country, said AFJC in a written statement to Khaama Press. The center underscored the sudden collapse of the media outlets since the Taliban takeover last August, warning of the "consequences" such a process could bring in the country."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Pajhwok, Afghan journalists seek easy access to information, 3 May 2022

"Some Afghan journalists and media officials Tuesday called on the government to respect media freedom and provide easy access to information [...]"

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, Statement by friend of Afghan Women Ambassadors' Group on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2022

"We deplore the erosion of rights for journalists and media institutions under the Taliban. We particularly note the obstacles faced by female journalists working in Afghanistan. Media freedom is critical for all societies. Freedoms for journalists and the media helps ensure transparency and accountability. An inclusive society with free media is crucial for Afghanistan to achieve its full potential. It is vital that Afghan journalists and media organisations can do their jobs without intimidation, violence or the risk of arbitrary detention. We commend the brave Afghan journalists who continue to share news from within Afghanistan with the Afghan people and the rest of the world, despite the threats they face."

BBC News, Afghanistan: Taliban orders TikTok, PUBG ban for 'misleading' youths, 22 April 2022

"The Taliban has ordered a ban on video-sharing app TikTok and online multi-player game PUBG, insisting they were leading Afghan youths "astray"."

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, Afghan journalists join UN in marking World Press Freedom Day, 2 May 2022

"KABUL – Afghan journalists and media advocates joined UNAMA and UNESCO this week in marking World Press Freedom Day in Kabul, offering a platform to exchange views on the shrinking and restrictive media space in the country and the way forward. Noting that the Afghan media sector is going through precarious and, arguably, one of the most challenging times in more than two decades, UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and UNAMA deputy head, Mette Knudsen, paid tribute to hard-working journalists for their tenacity and resilience. "Free media is under attack. News outlets have been shut down. Journalists have lost jobs. Scores have left the country, but many remain, facing an uncertain future," said Ms. Knudsen. "Those still working with firm commitment and dedication are living under constant fear and intimidation. Women journalists are bearing the most severe burden." She assured the Afghan media sector that UNAMA is firmly on the side of free and independent media in Afghanistan. "Let me assure you that UNAMA and the broader UN family in Afghanistan stand firmly in solidarity with your clarion call for safety, professional independence and a free press," she said. "I would like to call on the authorities in charge to ensure a conducive environment for journalists to operate and ensure their safety. Special attention and action are required to protect female media workers." Ms. Knudsen also called on the international community to expand support to the independent Afghan media. In a statement read out on the occasion, UNESCO Afghanistan said it is concerned about detention of journalists and increasing restrictions on media freedom, urging all to uphold press freedom and the right of journalists to do their job without fear of arrest or intimidation. Speaking on behalf of Afghan media community, Tolo News Director Khpalwak Sapai called for urgent support of the UN and wider international community. He also called on the de facto authorities to initiate dialogue with the media community. "We are suggesting for a new media law because different regulations issued by the de facto authorities can't solve media issues," he said. "We want the Ministry of Information and Culture to address these issues." In a joint video message to the 30 April event, independent UN special rapporteurs Richard Bennett (on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan) and Irene Khan (on freedom of opinion and expression) called on the authorities to recognize and respect

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

a free, pluralistic and independent media, and to comply with Afghan obligations under international human rights instruments relevant to freedom of opinion and expression. “While the press in general is grappling with the new challenges, the impact has been far worse for women media professionals,” said the UN special rapporteurs, while paying tribute to Afghan journalists for their “bravery, tenacity, and their determination” to continue reporting despite increasing challenges and risks including to their lives and livelihoods.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban forces beat and detain journalist Reza Shahir in Kabul, 19 April 2022

“On Tuesday, April 19, armed Taliban members stopped Shahir, a reporter for the independent TV station Rahe Farda, while he was covering a suicide attack at a school in western Kabul, and proceeded to beat and detain him, according to news reports and the journalist, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban intelligence forces detain, beat journalist Mohib Jalili in Kabul, 18 April 2022

“On Saturday, April 16, more than seven armed men from the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) arrested Jalili, who was on his way home and works as a presenter with the independent 1TV station, in District 15 of the capital Kabul, according to the journalist, who spoke to CPJ by phone, a tweet by a local press freedom advocate, and the Afghanistan Journalists Center, a media watchdog group.

While Jalili was detained at a GDI office, Taliban intelligence agents beat him with a gun, resulting in a large welt on his left arm; called him names, such as the “devil journalist who ruins the Taliban’s reputation”; and held him for about three hours before releasing him without any charges, the journalist said. Upon release, an agent threatened Jalili and told him not to talk about the detention to any journalist or media outlets.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Afghan Journalists Face Ever-Increasing Restrictions, 18 April 2022

“In one of the latest’s, a TV host and presenter Moheb Jalili, has been abducted and tortured by the Taliban members in district 15 of the Kabul city at around 8 Saturday night, according to sources. In an interview with Hasht-e-Subh, Jalili confirmed his detention, saying he is not sure of the crime for which the Taliban government has detained and tortured him for. The current government, however, did not immediately comment.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“Following August 15, the Taliban used force against protesters and journalists and suppressed political discussion and dissent. Journalists reported a chilling effect on free speech and press in the country as a result of the Taliban’s policies, particularly following media reports of torture of two local journalists covering women’s protests after the Taliban takeover. The Taliban announced restrictive media regulations in September and additional guidelines in November, in line with the Taliban’s strict interpretation of sharia. [...] On September 16, Reporters Without Borders said that 103 journalists signed a joint statement asking the international community to take urgent action to help protect press freedom in the country. The journalists pled for international action to guarantee the protection of female journalists who sought to continue their work, resources for local media outlets to remain open, and material assistance for those who have fled abroad. Reporters Without Borders and the Afghan Independent Journalists Association reported that approximately 200 media outlets have shut down,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

leaving almost 60 percent of journalists unemployed. Various factors, including financial constraints, fear, and departure of staff, also contributed to closures. [...] On September 19, the Taliban issued a set of 11 media directives including a requirement that media outlets prepare detailed reports in coordination with the new “governmental regulatory body.” The directives prohibit media from publishing reports that are “contrary to Islam,” “insult national figures,” or “distort news content.” The directives also included prohibitions on “matters that could have a negative impact on the public’s attitude or affect morale should be handled carefully when being broadcast or published.” Journalists in Kabul reported being turned away from covering events of interest and being told to obtain individual permits from local police stations with jurisdiction over the area of reporting activity. Tolo TV, a commercial television station broadcasting programming through major cities across the country, scaled back programming in September in an act of self-censorship with the Tolo TV CEO, saying, “we had to sacrifice music for survival,” with the process of self-censorship entailing the elimination of Turkish soap operas, adding programming featuring women scarved, and replacing musical programming with religious chants. Journalists called the restriction and censorship of information by the Taliban the primary obstacle to reporting and said many media organizations stopped their activities in an act of self-censorship after the collapse of the pre-August 15 government. The Taliban’s Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice announced eight restrictive “religious guidelines” on November 21, including one recommending that women should not appear in television dramas or entertainment programs and another indicating that female journalists should wear head coverings. As of December the guidelines were not being enforced consistently. [...] There were many reports of Taliban attempts to restrict access to information. During its offensive on Panjshir in August and September, the Taliban shut down the internet in the province to restrict the transmission of information regarding fighting and communication between residents and the outside world. Reports indicated that, with limited exceptions in the days before the Taliban seized control in Kabul, access to the internet remained available throughout the country, including access to social media and messaging apps such as Twitter and WhatsApp. On September 9, the Taliban reportedly turned off internet service in parts of Kabul following a series of large anti-Taliban and anti-Pakistan street demonstrations.”

Ariana News, UN envoy raises concerns over media restrictions, 10 April 2022

“Deborah Lyons, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) in Afghanistan said in a meeting with acting minister of culture and information Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa that she was concerned over restrictions against the local media [...] “Concerned by threats & restrictions against media”, she said adding that govnrment [sic] should engage with “in a constructive dialogue.” The UN envoy also called for urgent steps to reopen all girls’ schools. “The UN envoy urged urgent steps for all girls to return to school,” UNAMA stated.”

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), Danish Siddiqui: Family of slain journalist takes Taliban to ICC, 23 March 2022

“The family of Danish Siddiqui, a Reuters photojournalist who was killed in Afghanistan last year, has filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) against the Taliban, lawyer Avi Singh, representing Siddiqui’s family, said. “... We have just filed before the International Criminal Court a communication addressing the war crimes and crimes against humanity in context to what happened to Danish Siddiqui,” Singh said, adding that “there is sufficient independent evidence that he was tortured, murdered and his body was mutilated”. Siddiqui, who won 2018 the Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Rohingya refugee

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

crisis, was killed last July while reporting in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan. Several reports and investigations, including by this reporter, have corroborated disturbing details of the illegal detention, torture and murder of Siddiqui and the mutilation of his body. An Afghan commando, Sediq Karzai, was also killed alongside the journalist. [...]

The complaint identifies seven people accused, including unnamed local commanders, as the perpetrators of the murder, as well as the Taliban's leadership. Mullah Haibatullah Akhunzada, the Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy prime minister, and Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, minister of defence, have all been accused in the complaint. [...] "The Taliban did not respond to Al Jazeera's request for comment on the ICC complaint or on allegations made by Siddiqui's family until this article was published [...]"

ToloNews, TOLONews Presenter Freed After Night in Detention, 18 March 2022

"TOLONews presenter Bahram Aman, who was arrested by the Islamic Emirate on Thursday evening, was freed this evening at 6 pm. Khpulwak Sapai, director of TOLONews, and Nafi Khaleeq, legal manager of Moby Group, were also arrested along with Aman after TOLONews shared news regarding the prohibition of airing foreign drama series. The order prohibiting the broadcast of foreign drama series was made by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue. Sapai and Khaleeq were freed on Thursday evening after being interrogated, but Aman was freed this evening. TOLONews director Sapai said that as a media outlet TOLONews does not want to disobey the government, but wants to spread news to the people. "As a media outlet, our activities never have disobeyed the government, but have acted as a bridge between the government and the people. Our job is to communicate the information to the people. As such, our suggestion has always been that any issue related to media or TOLONews should be shared with us via the Ministry of Information and Culture," he said. The arrest of the employees of TOLONews sparked reactions inside and outside the country. [...] The Afghan watchdog groups said the detention of TOLONews employees was in violation of media law and also in clear contradiction of the Islamic Emirate's stated commitment to media. "This situation not only creates concerns and worries for the Afghan media, but also reflects a very bad situation of Afghanistan outside the country," said Hujatullah Mujadedi, a member of the Organization of Media and Journalists of Afghanistan. The intelligence department of the Islamic Emirate, referring to the arrest of Moby Group employees, said on Twitter: "Some media outlets were broadcasting content that damages our society's religious sentiments and threatens our national security. The Islamic Emirate is committed to freedom of expression, but will not let anyone to step on Islam's sacred values under different names and threaten the people's psychological comfort or our country's national security." Previously, different international organizations raised concerns regarding the detention of reporters in Afghanistan."

Ariana News, Violence against journalists increases in Afghanistan: report, 16 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Violence against journalists has increased slightly in Afghanistan in the past year, and almost 6,000 media workers have lost their jobs in this time, according to a report released on Wednesday. As many 117 cases of violence against journalists and media workers were registered in Afghanistan within one year since March 2021, according to the joint report by Afghanistan Journalists Center and Afghan Independent Journalists Association. Four journalists were killed during the period, the report said. In the preceding year period, Afghan Journalists Center had registered 11 deaths and 103 other cases of violence against media workers in the country. Farhad Behroz, deputy head of Afghan Independent Journalists Association, said that 5,928 people who were working in the media sector had lost their jobs during the past year.”

The Khaama Press, Over 180 media outlets inactive in Afghanistan: media survey, 16 March 2022

“On January 19, the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) publicly called on Afghan media to refrain from publishing and broadcasting what it termed “false news and baseless rumors.” The warning amounted to the first public acknowledgement of something that Afghan journalists already knew: a tough new cop was on the beat. The emergence of the GDI – an intelligence agency formerly known as the National Directorate of Security (NDS) – comes against the backdrop of a reported internal power struggle between the Taliban’s southern and Haqqani network factions for control of the six-month-old regime. For Afghan reporters, it has brought an increasingly hard edge to the Taliban’s treatment of the media, suggesting it could be entering a chilling new phase in its clamp down on the strikingly robust media scene that emerged in the two decades after the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. When the Taliban took Kabul last August, media policy initially was managed by civilian institutions: the Ministry of Information and Culture and later, the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. These ministries were hardly bastions of liberalism. Even as Taliban leaders indicated tolerance for the continued operation of independent media, they issued vague guidelines that seemed to compromise these positions, such as their two-pillar media strategy, projecting a “press-friendly image” internationally while actually ratcheting up pressure on reporters and their outlets. [...] the GDI’s January move into the spotlight did not come out of the blue. It followed media reports on the agency’s night raids and arrests of women protesters in Kabul and cases documented by CPJ of GDI’s involvement in extralegal detention and harsh interrogation of journalists and media owners. (CPJ has not been able to locate contact information for the GDI, but officials have previously dismissed these reports as “false news and baseless rumors.”) [...] The Taliban’s GDI has shifted its main focus to domestic affairs, including actively suppressing media and civil society activists and the detention, torture and even killing of former Afghan government military and civilian officials, according to three former government intelligence operatives who spoke to CPJ on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation. The GDI’s leader is Abdul Haq Wasiq, a former Guantanamo Bay detainee, the Taliban’s deputy minister of intelligence from 1996-2001, and a supporter of acting deputy prime minister Abdul Ghani Baradar, a prominent member of the southern faction of the Taliban. [...] current and former intelligence operatives told CPJ that supporters of the rival Haqqani network, led by acting interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, now dominate the GDI. [...] Haqqani himself is designated a “global terrorist” and wanted by the FBI for questioning about attacks that include the 2008 bombing of Kabul’s Serena hotel. [...] The Taliban has now imposed an unwritten, unannounced security regime on journalists operating across Afghanistan, according to several journalists and media executives, who spoke with CPJ on condition of anonymity because they feared reprisal from the group. These sources said that all Afghan and foreign reporters are required to have an accreditation

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

letter from the office of the Taliban's spokesperson, who, according to the journalists, takes his orders from the GDI. [...] The letter names the reporter and the agency or media organization they work for and states that they have permission to visit different parts of the city for reporting purposes. The letter provides a Taliban phone number for additional confirmation of the journalist's identity. [...] On February 1, GDI operatives ordered Abdul Qayum Zahid Samadzai, a reporter with the independent Pakistan-based 92News Media Group, to stop reporting without such a letter. Earlier, agents had beaten and interrogated him during a 36-hour detention, accusing him of spying for foreign governments. Having accreditation doesn't necessarily guarantee protection for journalists. Three reporters told CPJ that they had faced arrest, physical abuse, and interrogation despite having obtained the letters. [...] At the prison, Taliban interrogators beat the journalists several times and immersed one of the journalist's head in a bucket of water. The journalists were questioned about Ariana news programs, the station's programming guidelines, and which countries or groups were behind their shows. The interrogators called the shows anti-Taliban regime propaganda, the journalists and media executives said. In another case, senior media executives told CPJ on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation against their Kabul staff that they regularly receive messages from Taliban intelligence operatives who threaten to revoke the organization's operating license and arrest their reporters for criticizing the Taliban. Another journalist detained by the GDI for seven days told CPJ that journalists are under daily surveillance by intelligence operatives. The journalists said they are told to continue their work, but only to report issues that portray the Taliban in a positive light. Media executives said the GDI also used other methods to try to control reporters. Several told CPJ that Jawad Sargar, the deputy director of the GDI's directorate of media and publication, contacted them regularly and called or visited their Kabul offices to tell journalists what they should be programming. One journalist told CPJ that Sargar has tried to hire reporters to criticize certain journalists and activists on TV. Sargar did not reply to CPJ's request for comment sent via a messaging app. A number of other Afghan journalists who have been arrested, threatened, or beaten by members of the GDI or other Taliban agencies refused to talk to CPJ, even off the record, fearing the GDI digital surveillance and telephone-tapping capabilities. A recent survey by the Afghanistan Journalists Federation, reviewed by CPJ, found that before the fall of Kabul around 4,090 Afghan male journalists and 979 female journalists were active in Afghanistan. Six months later, an estimated 2,091 male journalists and 243 female journalists are still working in the country. In every respect, Afghanistan's once thriving media ecosystem is declining rapidly under Taliban rule."

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"Are there free and independent media? 1 / 4

While Afghanistan had a vibrant media sector during the republic, media freedoms are severely restricted under the Taliban.

Journalists were subjected to violence while the republic was in power in 2021. In March, three Enikass Radio and TV employees were killed by unidentified gunmen. In June, Ariana News anchor Mina Khairi died in a car bomb explosion along with her mother and two other passengers in Kabul. The Taliban have also used force against journalists since taking control of Afghanistan, with journalists being detained and attacked by Taliban for covering demonstrations. The Taliban detained at least 32 journalists since deposing the elected government.

The Taliban instituted restrictions on artistic and media activity since taking power. In October 2021, the MVV reportedly banned live music in some public places. In November, it banned broadcasts of programs featuring female actors, while ordering female news presenters to wear "Islamic hijab," a term they did

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

not specifically define. The MVV also imposed other guidelines, including a ban on broadcasts showing images of the prophet Muhammad.

The media sector has severely contracted since the collapse of the republic. In late December 2021, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Afghan Independent Journalists Association reported that 231 media outlets closed since the Taliban took power, while 84 percent of female journalists have lost their jobs. Nearly all independent outlets operating outside Kabul have shuttered. Tolo News, an independent outlet, has continued to function and employs female presenters, however.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because journalists face reporting restrictions, harassment, and physical violence under the Taliban, and media outlets have closed since the group assumed power."

ToloNews, Concerns Mount Over Media's Economic Challenges, 23 February 2022

"The Afghanistan Journalists and Media Organizations Federation (AJMOF) voiced its concerns on economic challenges facing the media, saying if immediate attention is not paid to the media's financial problems, no media outlet will remain active in the next six months in the country."

Gandhara News, Six Months And An Eternity: Afghans Lose Hope Under Taliban Rule, 15 February 2022

"Afghanistan's once-vibrant media is rapidly declining since the Taliban takeover. Reporters Without Borders, a global media watchdog, estimates that more than 8,000 Afghan media workers have lost their jobs in the past six months. Hundreds of journalists have fled the country, and those who remained have faced intimidation, threats, and beatings.

Mina Habib, a freelance journalist in Kabul, says she was harassed and beaten while covering a women's anti-Taliban protest in September. "Several Taliban fighters hit me and threw me on the ground," she recalled. "They grabbed my camera and threw it on the ground to break it into pieces. They told me to go home and even questioned why a woman was reporting."

Khaleda Tahsin, 51, another Afghan journalist, is giving up on journalism after 22 years spent chasing her country's evolving story nonstop. She braved suicide attacks, threats, and intimidation from both the government and the insurgents.

But the sole breadwinner for the family is calling an end to her career. She resigned from her job as the editor in chief at Radio Killid, a private station, this month because the conditions for women's work had so rapidly deteriorated under the Taliban.

"Conditions for work, particularly for women, have become tough," she told RFE/RL. "I don't have any peace of mind because of all the security threats."

Tahsin says that while women journalists can still work in theory, they have no protections. "Our major challenge is that we do not have access to information while the authorities remain unaccountable," she said.

Survival is clearly on the minds of most Afghans.

Qasim, a taxi driver in Kabul, says he used to earn \$10 a day. But some days now, he has no income.

"[The Taliban militants] promised that they will improve the lives of the people," he said. "But they have not fulfilled any of their promises."

The Guardian, The Taliban forced Afghan TV workers into hiding. Now they're asking Hollywood for help, 14 February 2022

"Television industry employees once used their programs to address progressive ideas. Many are now out of work and fearful to leave their homes.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Now, nearly six months after the Taliban seized control, many Afghan television and film workers are jobless and in hiding. Some feel abandoned by TV and entertainment industry workers in other countries. A handful of former international colleagues have been fighting to get them to safety, and they say they desperately need more support.

Rahima, a screenwriter, said she was in the middle of teaching a university class when she learned that the Taliban had entered Kabul. She and a female colleague ran out to buy burkas, only to find the shops already closed. She went home and locked herself inside. She has stayed in hiding for the past five and a half months, she said.

"In our neighborhood, everyone recognizes me as a woman activist, the university teacher and TV employee," Rahima said through a translator.

Other former media workers described rushing to scrub their Facebook profiles and concealing or throwing out anything in their house that would link them to the entertainment industry.

Abdul, who worked for a decade as an assistant director and producer, now runs a small food stand to support his family, including his 10-month-old baby. Based in a city full of Taliban checkpoints, he is still afraid that someone will recognize him from his work in TV. Fearful of the risk, he sometimes sends his younger brother to run the food stall instead.

[...]

"We are looking for help but there's nobody to help us," he said.

[...]

In the first 100 days of Taliban rule, more than 70% of journalists lost their jobs, and at least 250 news outlets closed their doors, according to a report from an Afghan press watchdog this fall. By September, fewer than 100 of Kabul's 700 female journalists were still working, according to a report from Reporters Without Borders.

The widespread job losses and shutdowns come from both political and economic pressures. A wide variety of programming, such as music shows and game shows, have been taken off the air, former Afghan TV workers said. Cooking shows need to have male presenters. The Taliban has announced new dress requirements for women onscreen. Approved programming is "simple", one producer said: "one man, one mullah, sits in the corner, and talks about Islam and talks about traditions". Comedians are afraid to appear on air, uncertain of which attempted jokes might bring the Taliban to their doors. Radio stations have reported decreases in their number of listeners, as some Afghans fear punishment if they are caught playing music on the radio. At least three people were killed after gunmen opened fire at a wedding in October to stop music from being played.

While larger TV stations are still reporting the news, and a few women still appear as correspondents on larger networks, many of the faces are new, as older reporters have fled or gone into hiding, former TV workers said. Violence against journalists, including the vicious beating of two journalists covering a women's rights protest, has undermined the Taliban's pledge that it would allow independent media outlets to continue operating. At least 50 journalists and media workers have been detained or arrested over the past six months, according to Reporters Without Borders.

[...]"

Tolo News, [Many Afghan Radio Stations Closed in Past 6 Months: Watchdog](#), 13 February 2022

"At least 86 radio stations have halted operations over the past six months, media watchdog organizations reported, saying financial and political issues are the main reasons for the collapse of the Afghan media."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Taliban free detained journalists held in Kabul while working for UNHCR, 12 February 2022

"Two foreign journalists and Afghans working with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) have been released after news broke about their detentions on Friday.

The Taliban-appointed deputy minister of culture and communications, Zabihullah Mujahid, wrote on Twitter that they were detained because they did not have documents that properly identified them as UNHCR. He said they were freed after their identities were confirmed.

The UNHCR said they were "grateful to all who expressed concern and offered help."

One of the journalists kidnapped was Andrew North, a former BBC correspondent who has covered Afghanistan for about two decades.

He has regularly traveled to the war-ravaged country to report on its deteriorating humanitarian crisis.

Taliban crackdown on journalists

Earlier the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) called for the immediate release of the journalists.

"The Taliban's detention of two journalists on assignment with the UN refugee agency is a sad reflection of the overall decline of press freedom and increasing attacks on journalists under Taliban rule," Steven Butler, CPJ's Asia program coordinator, said.

The Taliban defeated NATO-backed Afghan forces in August last year and has forcefully cracked down on journalists.

Earlier this month, Reporters Without Borders reported that at least 50 Afghan media workers have been arrested or detained by the police or the Taliban intelligence agency.

It said that the arrests, often accompanied by violence, have lasted from several hours to nearly a week."

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Taliban free detained journalists held in Kabul while working for UNHCR, 12 February 2022

"Two foreign journalists and Afghans working with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) have been released after news broke about their detentions on Friday.

The Taliban-appointed deputy minister of culture and communications, Zabihullah Mujahid, wrote on Twitter that they were detained because they did not have documents that properly identified them as UNHCR. He said they were freed after their identities were confirmed.

The UNHCR said they were "grateful to all who expressed concern and offered help."

One of the journalists kidnapped was Andrew North, a former BBC correspondent who has covered Afghanistan for about two decades.

He has regularly traveled to the war-ravaged country to report on its deteriorating humanitarian crisis.

Taliban crackdown on journalists

Earlier the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) called for the immediate release of the journalists.

"The Taliban's detention of two journalists on assignment with the UN refugee agency is a sad reflection of the overall decline of press freedom and increasing attacks on journalists under Taliban rule," Steven Butler, CPJ's Asia program coordinator, said.

The Taliban defeated NATO-backed Afghan forces in August last year and has forcefully cracked down on journalists.

Earlier this month, Reporters Without Borders reported that at least 50 Afghan media workers have been arrested or detained by the police or the Taliban intelligence agency.

It said that the arrests, often accompanied by violence, have lasted from several hours to nearly a week."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA Press, Afghan journalists facing harassment under Taliban regime: RSF, 7 February 2022

"Journalists without Borders (RSF) on Friday, February 4 in a statement said that media workers and journalists have repeatedly been harassed in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime.

[...]

"Since the Taliban takeover on August 15, 50 Afghan journalists have been detained for short time or arrested by the police of GDI. These arrests which are also accompanied by violence have also lasted for a week." reads the statement of RSF."

Khaama Press, Taliban systematically censoring Afghan media, journalists lost independency: statement, 18 January 2022

"Home of Freedom of Speech in Afghanistan has expressed concern about the situation of media, Afghan journalists, freedom of speech, and freedom of media after the Taliban takeover.

The foundation on Monday, January 17, 2022, in a statement said that media and journalists in Afghanistan have lost their independence and they have systematically been censored by de facto authorities in Kabul.

The statement reads that censorship has different roots and that most of the roots belong to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

"Afghan media and journalists have been pressurized by the intelligence of the IEA unprecedentedly and they want to turn the media into their propaganda platforms. The intelligence has succeeded to do so to a certain extent because they are using different methods as a threat, force, and pressures." Reads the statement.

The Home of Freedom of Speech has claimed that the Taliban go to the Newsrooms of media and tell the journalists to cover stories in their favor as they live under their rule.

It adds that most of the prominent journalists have left jobs because they did not want to be used for propaganda for the Taliban.

The foundation has asked the IEA to stop censoring media and putting pressure on Afghan journalists and also asked international media advocates so that the lives of journalists are protected and the gain of past two decades be preserved."

Khaama Press, Lack of access to information may lead to closure of media in Afghanistan: survey, 17 January 2022

"National Union of Afghanistan's Journalists said that they do not have a legal document and guideline for media coverage by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan that has put media and Afghan journalists in great trouble.

The union said that during the past twenty years there was a legal document for the activities of media in Afghanistan that had facilitated media coverage and access to information.

Members of the union said that lack of the document and guidelines has led to a lack of access to information that will definitely lead to the collapse of the Afghan media outlets.

They said that after the Taliban takeover, the life of Afghan journalists is getting worse day by day and more restrictions are being imposed on access to information.

Head of the union Msroor Lutfi said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has promised not to cause troubles for male and female journalists and the situation is also getting better in Kabul but provinces still have the problem of access to information.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Absence of a legal document and guideline is a serious problem that has made people cover stories by themselves and based on their interests. We cannot address incidents happen to journalists until we have a guideline by IEA.” Said Masroor.

It comes as more than 70% of Afghan media have close due to economic woes after the Taliban takeover on August 15 last year.”

Khaama Press, 95% Afghan journalists cannot cover stories independently: polling, 16 January 2022

“National Union of Afghanistan’s Journalists said that 95 percent of Afghan journalists have the problem of access to information and they cannot cover stories independently.

The union has cited its polling that was conducted in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan during which 500 Afghan journalists were questioned.

Statistics of the polling were released in Kabul on Sunday, January 16, 2022, in a press conference.

As per the numbers, 90% of the attendants are facing serious problems in collecting information as there is no specific law of access to the information after the Taliban regained power.

“We asked attendants if the media are censored, 90% said yes and only 10% said no, 90% attendants said yes to the question of access to information while the same percentage said they they have been censored by de facto authorities.” Said Masroor Lutfi head of the Union.

The polling has also found that 30% of Afghan journalists found it difficult to interview Taliban authorities while 50% said that they have problems in interviewing common people.

It comes as journalists have been accusing the Taliban of censoring, beating, intimidating, and threatening them while covering stories especially outdoor ones.”

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: How press freedom has crumbled since the Taliban takeover, 11 January 2022

“Thousands of journalists have lost their jobs in Afghanistan over the past few months, with many media outlets ceasing operations due to increasing security and financial challenges. Selma (name changed) was a journalist and activist living and working in Panjshir province in northeastern Afghanistan. She, like many others, lost her job following the Taliban takeover of the war-ravaged country in August. After being threatened, she left the region and is now in hiding, selling bolani, a local flat bread, on the streets to survive “I worked as a journalist and human rights activist,” said Selma, who asked DW not to reveal her true identity for fear of reprisals. “As you know, women’s rights are strongly related to religious ideologies, so we were always in dispute with extremists. This put us in danger.” Selma is one of the thousands of journalists and media workers who have lost their jobs in Afghanistan since August. According to a report published in December by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 40% of media outlets have closed over the past five months with an estimated 6,400 journalists losing their jobs. Hundreds have fled the country. The report added that over 80% of female journalists are now out of work. According to a report published in December by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 40% of media outlets have closed over the past five months with an estimated 6,400 journalists losing their jobs. Hundreds have fled the country. The report added that over 80% of female journalists are now out of work.”[...]

RUSI, The Taliban’s Homemade Counterinsurgency, 4 January 2022

“The Taliban have also shut down media reporting about counterinsurgency activities. The media are told to describe strikes against insurgents and terrorist cells as raids against kidnappers and other criminals. The Taliban seem to be trying to prevent IS-K and other opposition groups from using media reporting as a tool in their propaganda/recruitment strategy, even if they cannot prevent reports of attacks and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

counterstrikes from circulating on social media. While this move could be seen as ‘brutal’ in terms of media freedom, it may well be effective, at least to some degree.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Afghan TV station owner Aref Noori detained by Taliban-affiliated militia, December 27, 2021

“Yesterday, dozens of armed men who identified themselves as members of a militia affiliated with the Taliban-controlled Police District 4 in Kabul stormed and searched Noori’s house in the Karte Parwan area of the capital and detained him,”

[...]

“Noori, owner of the independent broadcaster Noorin Television, has not been seen by his family or a lawyer following his detention, according to his son, who said his whereabouts are unknown.”

[...]

“Noorin TV often covers security issues in Afghanistan, and frequently airs programming supportive of the opposition Jamiat-e-Islami party. Kashef Noori said that the broadcaster had operated for the last decade but paused programming this week due to technical issues.”

Al Jazeera, Almost half of Afghan media closed since Taliban takeover: Survey, 24 December 2021

“Afghanistan’s media outlets are on the brink of a meltdown as they face a shortage of funding following the takeover by the Taliban in August this year. A survey released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) indicates that about 43 percent of Afghan media outlets have shut down their operations, leaving almost 60 percent of journalists unemployed.”

Reporters Without Borders, Since the Taliban takeover, 40% of Afghan media have closed, 80% of women journalists have lost their jobs, December 20, 2021 - Updated on December 21, 2021

“A survey by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) shows a radical change in the Afghan media landscape since the Taliban took power. A total of 231 media outlets have had to close and more than 6,400 journalists have lost their jobs since 15 August. Women journalists have been hit hardest, with four out of five no longer working.”

“The environment for journalists in the capital and the rest of the country has become extremely fraught since the Taliban takeover. Media must now comply with the “11 Journalism Rules” issued by the information and culture ministry and with Taliban interpretation of Islamic doctrine on “Enjoining good and forbidding wrong.” The dangerous “Journalism Rules” open the way to censorship and persecution, and deprive journalists of their independence, forcing them to tell information and culture ministry officials what they would like to cover, get their permission to go ahead and finally inform them about the results of their reporting in order to be able to publish.

In some provinces, the obligation to replace news and music programmes with programmes whose content is solely religious in nature has also driven some local radio stations to cease broadcasting.”

“Recognising the disappearance of many media outlets, Mujahid noted that many media “executives and managers had fled the country.” This had contributed to “collapse” of their media outlets, he said. Hundreds of journalists have left Afghanistan since August for fear of reprisals or because of the impossibility of continuing to practice their profession.

IAJA executive-director Hojatollah Mujadadi said: “Beyond the numbers, the closure of nearly half of the country’s media and the loss of more than 6,000 jobs are a disaster for press freedom. If international institutions do not help journalists and media in Afghanistan and if the government does not take urgent

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

action, the other half of the media and journalists, who are still working in really difficult conditions, will suffer the same fate.””

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban official and bodyguards beat, detain journalist Sayed Rashed Kashefi, 14 December 2021
“The Taliban must immediately and thoroughly investigate the beating and detention of journalist Sayed Rashed Kashefi and ensure that members of the press can operate freely and safely, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.”

Al Jazeera, Afghan women speak up against new Taliban media guidelines, 25 November 2021
“Afghan journalists and activists have expressed concern over a new “religious guideline” issued by Taliban rulers, saying the move is yet another form of control over women.
The Taliban, which took over Afghanistan roughly 100 days ago, on Sunday urged female journalists to follow a dress code and called on TV stations to stop showing soap operas featuring women, sparking fears over women’s rights and media freedom.
Akif Muhajir, spokesman for the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, said “these are not rules but a religious guideline”.
However, activists fear it could be misused to harass female journalists, many of whom have already fled the country in the wake of the Taliban’s takeover on August 15. (...)
Sonia Ahmadyar, a journalist who lost her job in August, said the Taliban has been moving to slowly “muzzle the media”.”

TOLO News, 257 Media Outlets Closed in 100 Days Since Takeover, 23 November 2021
“We urge that the Law on Access to Information, and Media Law, which are not being used now, be amended based on the current situation and in consultation with the media,” said Masroor Lutfi, media officer at Afghanistan National Journalists’ Union.
NAI, an organization supporting media in Afghanistan, said that since the Islamic Emirate rule, over 257 media outlets have ceased operating in the country due to financial challenges as well as restrictions. This includes print, radio and TV stations. According to NAI, over 70 percent of media workers have become jobless or left the country.
Reports show that during these 100 days, six reporters have lost their lives in various incidents including attacks by unknown armed men, explosions, committing suicide and traffic incidents.

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Crackdown on Media Worsens, 22 November 2021
“Taliban intelligence officials have made death threats against journalists who have criticized Taliban officials and have required journalists to submit all reports for approval before publication. New guidelines from the Vice and Virtue Ministry dictate the dress of female journalists on television and prohibit soap operas and entertainment programs featuring female actors. [...]
Several journalists said that they have been summoned by local officials immediately after publishing reports on Taliban abuses. One journalist who had reported complaints about Taliban searching houses and beating people said that the deputy governor called him into his office and told him that if he broadcast anything like that again, “He would hang me in the town square.”
Other media staff have reported that heavily armed Taliban intelligence officials visited their offices and warned journalists not to use the word “Taliban” in their reporting but to refer to the “Islamic Emirate” in all publications. In one province, intelligence officials ordered local media to replace the word for suicide

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

bomber with the word for martyr after a published report mentioned that Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani had honored the families of suicide bombers. [...]

The Taliban have also pressed the media, especially in the provinces, to publish the reports they want and have ordered journalists in some instances to interview them. One journalist said: "After they threatened us with death, we published what they said. Now we broadcast Quranic verses at the beginning of the programs and naat [Islamic songs] because we fear for our safety." [...]

Many media outlets have closed their offices out of fear and are publishing only online. The chief editor for a women-led media office said that her staff use pseudonyms to hide their identities because the Taliban accuse them "of promoting Western values." [...]

The atmosphere of fear has left people afraid to share information on incidents, such as forced evictions or violent attacks by the Taliban. Journalists said that the Taliban authorities routinely ignore their requests for information, or simply deny reported incidents."

Al Jazeera, Afghan journalists lament 'bleak' future for media under Taliban, 22 October 2021
"Ahmadi, who was then deputy head of news at TOLO, met the network's top management and immediately came to two decisions.

"The first thing we did was send all the female staff home," Ahmadi told Al Jazeera over the phone from Europe.

The other decision they made was controversial but necessary, he said. They immediately stopped broadcasting music and entertainment programmes. The Turkish serials, game shows, singing competitions, talk shows and sketch comedy shows that millions of people tuned into every evening came to a sudden end.

Though the Taliban had made no official declarations on programming at the time, Ahmadi said the decision was a preemptive one.

"If you understood the fear that night, you would see why we came to such a decision," he told Al Jazeera. Ahmadi said he now regrets that decision, but that at the time, it seemed like a necessary one. "We wanted to be the ones to cut them off, not the Taliban," he said. [...]

Other journalists Al Jazeera spoke to agreed with Khenjani's assessment, saying they have faced pushback while trying to report on several issues over the last two months.

Journalists who were beaten and tortured for reporting on protests in Kabul last month told Al Jazeera they have been warned by Taliban officials not to cover such events.

Likewise, journalists also recalled being stopped by the Taliban from reporting from the northern province of Panjshir where an armed resistance against the group started after it took over Kabul.

Abdul Farid Ahmad, the former deputy director for operations at TOLO News, references all of these events when speaking about his efforts to continue working in a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. "They have beaten journalists many times. They didn't let journalists cover the women's protests. They didn't let journalists go to Panjshir when it was not under their control. We have so many examples that the Taliban didn't and still don't want journalists to work freely," he told Al Jazeera."

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Restrict Media, 1 October 2021

"Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have imposed wide-ranging restrictions on media and free speech that are already stifling criticism and dissent, Human Rights Watch said today.

During a late September meeting with journalists in Kabul, the Taliban Ministry of Information and Culture distributed media regulations whose provisions are so broad and vague as to prohibit virtually any critical

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

reporting about the Taliban.

“Despite the Taliban’s promises to allow media that ‘respected Islamic values’ to function, the new rules are suffocating media freedom in the country,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “The Taliban regulations are so sweeping that journalists are self-censoring and fear ending up in prison.”

A copy of the regulations seen by Human Rights Watch says that media are prohibited from printing or broadcasting reports that “are contrary to Islam,” “insult national figures,” or “distort news content.” Journalists are required to “ensure that their reporting is balanced” and not report on “matters that have not been confirmed by officials” or issues that “could have a negative impact on the public’s attitude.” Media outlets are required to “prepare detailed reports” with the new governmental regulatory body before publication.

[...]

An editor of a media outlet led by women said that, after the Taliban takeover, they had continued to publish online but stopped after the new regulations were announced. “We have lost the space for free media with the Taliban taking over the country,” she said. “We do not have free media in Afghanistan anymore.”

A journalist in Kabul said that the regulations were “very worrying,” as they would “restrict most of the media’s activities. Those who are still operating no longer publish anything critical. They mostly interview Taliban officials. Previously, they were active in criticizing the government ... but with these regulations, censorship is the immediate result.”

A Kabul-based editor said that the prohibition on “insulting national figures” could be interpreted very broadly and curtail any reporting on corruption or other abuses.”

How is Sharia law interpreted and applied?

Human Rights Watch, Testimony to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 24 August 2022

“[...] Religious freedom does not exist in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Taliban authorities, citing an order from their leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, have stated that the laws of the previous government are no longer in effect and that only Sharia, or Islamic law, is applicable in Afghanistan.

The Taliban’s interpretations of Sharia, however, and the new rules and policies they have announced since taking over, cannot be found in any other country with Islamic populations. Almost all of their rules severely restrict Afghans’ basic human rights, and in particular the rights of women and girls. Under the Taliban’s extremist interpretations of Sharia, Taliban officials have imposed a de facto ban on girls’ secondary education, mandated women’s bodies and faces be completely covered when they are outside their homes, and prohibit women from traveling or working without a male relative as a chaperone.

There is no other country in the world where women face such sweeping violations of their basic human rights.

The Taliban have also banned various other activities by men and women, citing Sharia, including prohibiting unrelated men and women from appearing in public together or going to parks and restaurants.

These restrictions also violate the rights of Afghans to live according to their own conceptions of their religious faiths.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

But there are further abuses. The Taliban are failing to protect Afghanistan's religious minorities from violence, and are subjecting some groups to persecution.

The Taliban follow an ultraconservative Sunni interpretation of Islam. Yet approximately 10 to 15 percent of Afghans are Shia, and there are a significant number of Sufi, small numbers of Ahmadis, and some Hindus and Sikhs in urban areas. The Taliban have not stated that Shia or Sufi practices are forbidden. And the authorities have also promised protection to Hindus and Sikhs, although members of both communities have continued to leave Afghanistan, and only a little over 100 of either remain.

The Taliban does not consider Ahmadis to be Muslims and they have persecuted some of their leaders in the past as blasphemers. Most of Afghanistan's miniscule population of non-Muslims also continue to live under threat of persecution, in particular Bahai, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and Christians, who practice secretly or have gone into hiding. An unknown number of Afghans consider themselves agnostic or atheist or otherwise do not practice Islam or any other religion. Taliban authorities view anyone who has left Islam to have committed apostasy, a crime they believe should be punished by death.

Serious problems for Shia, Sufi, and non-Muslims in Afghanistan today come from the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), the Islamic State's (ISIS) affiliate in Afghanistan, an armed extremist group. The ISKP has repeatedly carried out suicide bombings and other armed attacks against Shia communities, in particular ethnic Hazara. The Hazara, a predominantly Shia ethnic group, have faced discrimination and abuse by successive Afghan governments for over a century. Since the Taliban takeover, the ISKP has claimed responsibility for 13 attacks against members of the Hazara community and are implicated in at least three more. These attacks have killed at least 700 people.

We cannot overstate how horrendous these attacks have been. An ISKP suicide bombing on April 19 at a high school in Dashte-e Barchi in west Kabul—a predominantly Hazara and Shia area—killed and injured more than 20 students and education staff. (This neighborhood previously suffered several devastating attacks before the Taliban took power: a May 2021 attack by ISKP on a girls' high school that killed almost 50 students, mostly girls, and injured over 100 more, and the May 2020 attack on the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-supported maternity wing of the Dasht-e Barchi hospital.) On April 21, the ISKP then carried out a suicide bombing of the Seh Dokan Mosque in Mazar-e Sharif, one of Afghanistan's largest Shia mosques, killing 31 people and wounding 87 others.

In addition to these attacks, on April 27 suspected ISKP members killed five Hazara men on their way to the Dare-Suf coal mine in Samangan province. The next day, a bomb explosion killed 9 people and wounded 13 others in a public vehicle carrying Hazara passengers in Mazar-e Sharif.

The Taliban have condemned ISKP attacks and provided some families of victims with minor financial payments. Authorities have also vowed to protect vulnerable groups from attacks in the future. But there are few signs authorities are taking active or significant steps to do so.

This is the situation that Afghans are enduring today under Taliban rule. The entire population is being forced to live according to ultraconservative interpretations of one branch of a single religion. Over half of the population—women and girls—are subjected to sweeping and severe violations of their basic human rights. Afghan men and boys also suffer abuses under Taliban edicts. And the Taliban is doing little as an Islamic State offshoot hunts for opportunities to murder Afghanistan's vulnerable religious minorities. Afghanistan is a nightmare for religious freedom -- and other basic human rights.

Taliban leaders need to recognize that their vision for Afghanistan's future is built on oppression, and that to address the concerns of all Afghans, they need to take a rights-respecting approach to religion and other fundamental freedoms. This will mean engaging with the international community in a more cooperative manner and adopting international standards on human rights—for instance, by reversing policies violating the rights of women and girls to education, employment, and free movement and fully

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

cooperating with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and UN Human Rights Council mechanisms. Greater Taliban respect for human rights can also contribute to better international cooperation in addressing the threat posed by ISKP, especially to religious minorities in Afghanistan. [...]"

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"According to sharia, the man is the breadwinner of the family, while the woman is responsible for the daily operation of the home arena. Before the takeover it was not formal obstacles to women being able to work. Still had less than one of five women paid work (Desai & Li 2018, p. 34). After the takeover, the economy has stopped and many have lost their jobs. Women are particularly hard hit. With the exception of those who have work that can not be performed by men, government-employed women were told not to show up for work. In 2019 36 percent of the country's teachers were women. The suspension of schooling for girls over 12 years has meant that many female teachers are out of work (Kumar & Noori 2022).

In order for women to be able to return to work, it is an absolute requirement gender segregation in the workplace (Human Rights Watch 2022). It has to be separate entrances, living rooms and dining rooms (Pakistani Analyst, 2022). Even hospitals in Kabul report that they have been asked to introduce total segregation of female employees and patients (Kumar & Noori 2022).

Limited freedom of movement and low occupational participation are two sides of the same coin. Working women must get to and from work. The Taliban has instructed local taxi drivers about not giving women access unless she wears the burka or has a male companion (mahram) (Ahad & Kumar 2022)."

Tolo News, Jirga in Kabul From Tribal Areas for Talks With TTP: Report, 1 June 2022

"A grand Jirga of 50 people arrived in Kabul on Wednesday morning to attend the ongoing negotiations between the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the government of Pakistan, a Pakistan news agency reported. According to the report, the Prime Minister Mullah Hassan Akhund also met with the two sides. "The tribal elder of Pakistan and other important figures are in Kabul. The Jirga will assist in talks going on between the Pakistan government institutions and TTP," said Tahir Khan, a Pakistani government official. The talks are said to be focusing on the extension of a ceasefire, the implementation of Shariah law, release of TTP prisoners and the return of the tribal areas to their previous state. "Pakistan had good relations with the Afghan Taliban before and now as well. The Pakistani Taliban has relations with the Afghan Taliban," said Shir Hassan Hassan, a political analyst. "Now, there is this drama of negotiations under the title of peace, they (Pakistan) want to show the world that the Afghan Taliban has relations with the Pakistani Taliban," said Azizi Marij, a military analyst. The Islamic Emirate has yet to comment on this."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"He acknowledges the de facto authorities' assurances that they will respect the international human rights treaties ratified by Afghanistan, albeit as far as consistent with Sharia law. [...] The authorities acknowledged that, from their perspective, the vast majority of international human rights norms are compatible with their understanding of Sharia. While there are some contentious issues where further dialogue is needed, they are urged to fully implement the human rights standards which Afghanistan has freely accepted, including respecting the rights of girls and women to education, employment, and participation in public life."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Girls' Schools not Aligned with Sharia Law: IEA Reasoned behind Schools Closure, 20 April 2022

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan disclosed the core reason behind girls' schools' closure adding that the secondary schools' girls were not aligned with the Sharia law. Deputy chief of the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) of the IEA Moulayee Rahmatullah Najib said that girls' schools in Afghanistan have problems with Sharia law, the curriculum is in opposition to Sharia law and jurisprudence, and that the way Afghan girls would go to schools was in opposition with Sharia and Afghan culture/tradition."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Taliban Resurrects Gender Segregation In Public Offices, Transport In Afghanistan, 16th March 2022

"The Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice earlier this month sent a letter to the Health Ministry ordering it to segregate male and female employees. "The offices for men and women should be separate," said the letter, a copy of which was obtained by RFE/RL's Radio Azadi." The ministry, which is the enforcer of the Taliban's radical interpretation of Islamic law, also warned that health care should be denied to female patients who do not observe the Islamic hijab. Several employees of the Health Ministry, who talked to Radio Azadi on condition of anonymity, confirmed the authenticity of the letter. The Taliban did not respond to messages from Radio Azadi seeking comment. The Taliban initially ordered women not to return to work. But it later called female health workers back to clinics and hospitals, although many were too scared to resume their work. Rights groups say gender segregation has created barriers to women and girls accessing health care. At many facilities, patients are only treated by a health professional of the same sex."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"On November 23, the Taliban's so-called prime minister Akhund instructed the Taliban to respect and protect the rights of detained persons under sharia, including by limiting the duration of detention. Still, UNAMA continued to receive reports of detainees not being brought before courts or dispute resolutions following this announcement. [...] In areas they controlled throughout the year, the Taliban enforced a judicial system devoid of due process and based on a strict interpretation of sharia. Punishments included execution and mutilation. [...] According to HRW, the Taliban established its own courts in areas under its control prior to August 15 that relied on religious scholars to adjudicate cases or at times referred cases to traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Taliban courts prior to August 15 included district-level courts, provincial-level courts, and a tamiz, or appeals court, located in a neighboring country. According to HRW, the Taliban "justice system" was focused on punishment, and convictions often resulted from forced confessions in which the accused was abused or tortured. At times the Taliban imposed corporal punishment for serious offenses, or hudud crimes, under an interpretation of sharia."

Gandhara, Regional Taliban Officials Ban Beard Trimming, Impose Turbans For Male Employees, 17 January 2022

"Taliban officials in Afghanistan's southern Uruzgan Province have ordered male employees to stop trimming their beards and wear a turban at work. [...]"

Mulawi Taib, a senior Taliban official in Uruzgan, told a gathering on January 16 that the hard-line Islamist group wanted people to obey Islamic Shari'a law.

"All employees...should understand that the policy of the Islamic Emirate [of Afghanistan] is based on Shari'a law. All employees are forbidden to shorten their beards and must come to work wearing turbans,"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Mulawi Taib said.

In November, the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice issued a set of "religious guidelines" that imposed new restrictions on life under the Taliban.

Uruzgan is one of the provinces where the group has imposed strict rules after returning to power.

According to reports, Taliban officials have appointed people at mosques to monitor the observance of prayers and religious orders. An attendance book was introduced in mosques, resulting in punishments for those who do not attend prayers.

Such punishments are meted out mainly by employees appointed by the ministry, reports said.

The Ministry of Vice and Virtue, which replaced the Western-backed government's Women's Affairs Ministry and took over its building after the militant group seized Kabul, was notorious for its abuses, particularly against women and girls, during the previous Taliban rule, from 1996 to 2001."

Gandhara, [Afghans Fear for Their Rights As Taliban Resurrects Religious Policing](#), 6 January 2022

When the Taliban seized power in August, the militant group vowed it would not resurrect the violent religious policing it enforced during its first stint in power. The hard-liners claimed they would limit themselves to preaching Islamic values of modesty and dignity. But nearly five months after regaining power, the Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has reclaimed its role as the enforcer of the group's radical interpretation of Islamic law. In a spate of decrees issued in recent weeks, the ministry has imposed restrictions on the behavior, movement, and appearances of residents, particularly those of women and girls.

AVA Press, [The Taliban Issued New Instructions to the Residents of Logar](#), 12 December 2021

"The Taliban-led government has asked businessmen and shopkeepers in Pul-e-Alam, Logar, to offer their daily prayers in congregations and mosques. The Department of Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil has also instructed the barbershops in the city of -e-Alam that taking money and shaving the beard is forbidden and should be avoided." [...]

"He pointed out that these are not their orders, but a religious matter and a divine command." [...]

Meanwhile, Taliban officials are assuring the people of the province that they will not be mistreated in any way. According to them, their duty is not to punish and mistreat people, but social awareness and the implementation of Islamic culture in society.

AVA Press, [Taliban Forces Confiscated 800 Liters of Wine in Parwan](#), 6 December 2021

"Local Taliban officials in province say they have seized more than 800 liters of alcohol from the province.

"The consignment was discovered and confiscated on Monday, December 6, in the seventh security district of , the provincial capital," said Shamsulhaq Mobashir, governor spokesman of Taliban in Parwan. According to him, 10 sellers of have also been arrested by Taliban forces.

"Meanwhile, an alcoholic beverage factory belonging to the 17th district of was seized by Taliban forces," said Malang Jan, the commander of Parwan's 7th security district.

According to local Taliban officials in the province, the detainees have pleaded guilty and their cases are under investigation."

AVA Press, [Handle the Prisoners' Cases Based on Sharia Law, Says Taliban Cabinet](#), 23 November 2021

"The Taliban interim government has ordered that the cases of all prisoners and detainees be handled and their fate must be determined in accordance with Islamic law.

The cabinet of the Taliban on Tuesday, November 23, told all relevant sections not to detain prisoners for

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

more than a certain period of time.

The prisoners' cases should be referred to the judiciary, the cabinet stressed.

The cabinet meeting of the acting Taliban government said that the needs of the prisoners should be solved and their rights should be fully respected."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatches: Taliban Minister of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice insists that separating men and women is a fundamental Islamic value, 16 November 2021

"JURIST EXCLUSIVE – Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a Staff Correspondent for JURIST in Kabul offers his observations on recent activities of the Taliban Ministry for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. [...]

The Minister for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice said in a statement Tuesday that the Taliban are not against girls' education, but men and women sitting together at a table is in contradiction to Islamic values. He further added that if the international community puts pressure on the Taliban for this reason, they will not leave their beliefs. [...]

In provinces like Nangarhar, Takhar, Kapisa, Nuristan, and Kandahar the ministry's officials have sent letters to barbers and public baths stating that no barber is allowed to shave anyone's beard. If caught, the barber will be punished.

There is no official report if they have punished anyone but according to my understanding, they are using most of their time to educate and inform the public of these policies.

The recent statements by the minister indicates one thing on the future education and higher education system in the country, and that is that there may be separate classes for girls and boys. Boys and girls were already separated in schools, but in the universities they attended the same class. This may be one reason behind the closure of public universities in the country."

NPR via The Associated Press, The Taliban Order Barbers Not To Shave Beards In Afghan Province Of Helmand, 27 September 2021

"The Taliban on Monday banned barbershops in a southern Afghanistan province from shaving or trimming beards, claiming their edict is in line with Shariah, or Islamic, law.

The order in Helmand province was issued by the provincial Taliban government's vice and virtue department to barbers in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital.[...]

During their previous rule of Afghanistan, the Taliban adhered to a harsh interpretation of Islam. Since overrunning Kabul on Aug. 15 and again taking control of the country, the world has been watching to see whether they will re-create their strict governance of the late 1990s.

Some indication came on Saturday, when Taliban fighters killed four alleged kidnappers and later hung their bodies in the public squares of the western city of Herat."

Financial Times, Afghanistan's young Talibs: 'No compromise with the enemy of our martyrs', 18 September 2021

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

The Guardian, Taliban ban girls from secondary education in Afghanistan, 17 September 2021

"In a further sign that the recently announced Taliban government is tightening restrictions on women, the former ministry of women's affairs building in Kabul has been handed over to the newly re-established

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

ministry for the prevention of vice and promotion of virtue.

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

TOLO News, Afghan Education Ministry to Modify Curriculum, 13 September 2021

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

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

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

He said changes will be based on Islamic Sharia.

[...]

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

TOLO News, Private Universities Reopen, Students Separated by Gender, 7 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

The Guardian, Taliban name all-male Afghan cabinet including minister wanted by FBI, 7 September 2021

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

"In his first statement since the Taliban seized power last month, [supreme leader] Akhundzada said Afghanistan's new rulers were committed to all international laws, treaties and commitments not in conflict with Islamic law.

"In the future, all matters of governance and life in Afghanistan will be regulated by the laws of the holy Sharia," he said."

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, Caught in Committing Adultery: Taliban Publicly Flogs Two Women and One Man in Southern Afghanistan, 7 August 2022

“According to the ruling of Zabul province’s appellate court, two women and one man were publicly flogged and shamed for the crime of adultery in southern Afghanistan, said local Taliban officials.”

TOLO News, Accused Men, Women Publically Whipped in Zabul, 7 August 2022

“Information and Culture department head Rahmatullah Hamad said that in Zabul two women and one man were publically whipped for committing adultery and another two men were whipped for robbery. Earlier, the leader of the Islamic Emirate, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, said that all previous laws will be considered null, and Sharia law will be implemented in the country. Dozens of locals gathered to watch the public punishment.”

Finish Immigration Service (published by European Union Agency for Asylum), Afghanistan / The situation of former Fatemiyoun fighters under the de facto Taliban regime, 4 August 2022

“Iran Wire -uutissivuston tekemän selvityksen mukaan Taliban-liike on pidättänyt, vanginnut ja kiduttanut entisiä Afganistanin turvallisuusjoukkojen sotilaita syytettynä Fatemiyoun-joukkojen jäsenyydestä. Iran Wire tulkitsee toimien olevan laajemmin osa Talibanin hazaraväestönosaan kohdistamaa väkivaltaa.”

Google Translate: “According to an investigation by the Iran Wire news website, the Taliban movement has arrested, imprisoned and tortured former soldiers of the Afghan security forces accused of being members of the Fatemiyoun forces. Iran Wire interprets the actions as part of a wider violence directed at the Hazara population by the Taliban.”

“Independent Persian -uutissivuston mukaan Taliban-liike on keväällä 2022 alkanut aiempaa aktiivisemmin pidättämään Afganistaniin palanneita entisiä Fatemiyoun-joukkojen taistelijoita. Independent Persian -uutissivuston mukaan Taliban-liike esimerkiksi pidätti keväällä 2022 Heratissa Fatemiyoun-joukkojen entisen jäsenen Ramazan Mohammadin. Samassa yhteydessä pidätettiin muitakin Iraniin sidoksissa olevia henkilöitä. Uutissivuston mukaan heitä on kidutettu vankeuden aikana.”

Google Translate: “According to the Independent Persian news site, in the spring of 2022, the Taliban movement has begun to arrest former fighters of the Fatemiyoun forces who have returned to Afghanistan more actively than before. According to the Independent Persian news website, for example, in the spring of 2022, the Taliban arrested Ramazan Mohammad, a former member of the Fatemiyoun forces, in Herat. In the same connection, other persons connected to Iran were also arrested. According to the news website, they have been tortured during their imprisonment.”

“Afganistanissa toimiva ISIS-järjestön haara ISKP on Taliban-liikkeen valtaannousun jälkeen jatkanut shioja ja hazaroita vastaan kohdistettuja terrori-iskuja. Iskuja on suunnattu yleisesti hazaroiden ja shiojen suosimiin kokoontumispaikkoihin.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Google Translate: "ISKP, a branch of the ISIS organization operating in Afghanistan, has continued terrorist attacks against Shiites and Hazaras after the Taliban movement came to power. The attacks have generally been aimed at popular gathering places of Hazaras and Shiites."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"According to four individuals who worked in Taliban-run detention centres for women and girls, the Taliban have arbitrarily arrested and, in at least two detention centres in Afghanistan, arbitrarily detained women and girls for infringements of the Taliban's discriminatory policies. Those arrested have usually been charged with the vague and ambiguous "crime" of "moral corruption". The prison staff members and the former detainees said that these women and girls detained on "moral corruption" charges or for fleeing abuse have been denied access to a lawyer and subjected to torture and other ill-treatment as well as inhuman conditions in detention."

"Another prison staff member shared similar observations: "We don't have cases like murder or kidnapping as much anymore. Now it's much more 'moral corruption'... There are those who went out without a mahram, to a restaurant or a café... They are being arrested randomly, when the Taliban are patrolling... There is a big difference from before. The number [of these cases] has increased."

"Prison staff members said that women are being subjected to beating and other forms of torture, most commonly during their interrogations or soon after they arrive at a detention centre. One prison staff member explained:

They beat them at the police station... After they beat them, they usually keep them [at the police station] for two or three weeks. In this time, the wounds heal, and only the bruises remain... The women say they were beaten to force them to accept that they did something, and to put their fingerprints on the paper. They say, 'Even if we didn't do it, we are forced to accept we did zina.'

Another prison staff member confirmed this pattern: "[The investigators] would use punching and kicking as well as cable and chains... [The] women were saying, 'We didn't do this, and we didn't want to confess... by force we accepted it'... They would hide them at first, after they were beaten. [The women] would come... with bruises.'"

"All four prison staff members said some of the detainees were subjected to solitary confinement, usually just after they arrived at the detention centre. A prison staff member described this practice:

They lock them in a dark... and cold room without any window... They give them some water or bread, so they don't die. They punish them for some time, and after that they can be with other prisoners... A few nights ago, they brought a woman in barefoot with her seven-month-old baby. Her punishment was to keep her away from the baby. She was locked in the dark room, and the baby was put with the other prisoners. They were both crying, but they couldn't be together. She was not allowed to breastfeed her own baby.

All the prison staff members interviewed said that women and girls in detention were subjected to inhuman conditions including overcrowding; lack of heating in the winter; inadequate quantity and quality of food; inadequate access to showers and a lack of hygiene products such as sanitary pads, shampoo and soap; and a lack of beds and blankets. Due to the poor conditions, many detained women and girls are affected by scabies and lice."

"Amnesty International documented two cases in which Taliban members forced survivors of gender based violence to marry members of the Taliban, in order to be released from the detention centre. A

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

prison staff member said, about the situation of these two women: "They came from the shelters and their families were not accepting them back. They thought they didn't have any other options, so they were forced to marry. Now there are 10 to 12 women [in the detention centre] in the same situation... I am worried they will be married to the Taliban as well."

"Peaceful Protestors "On 30 May 2022, Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mutaqqi said in a media interview, "In the past nine months, not a single woman has been imprisoned in the jails of Afghanistan either due to political opposition or raising voice against the government." This is not true. Amnesty International has found that women protesters in Afghanistan have been subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance and torture and other ill-treatment, both physical and psychological. In the course of its research, Amnesty International spoke with 12 women involved in protests in different locations across Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover, five of whom had been arbitrarily arrested and detained." "The women interviewed by Amnesty International said that during protests the Taliban subjected them and the journalists covering the protests to beating, electric shocks with tasers, tear gas and chemical spray. They also said the Taliban regularly destroyed their banners, pamphlets or other materials and attempted to follow them home after the protests. To prevent protesters and journalists from taking photos or videos, the Taliban have either forbidden protesters and journalists from using their phones or confiscated them." "Four of the five women protesters who were detained said that they were unable to notify their family members that they had been arrested. When their family members approached the detention centres where they were held, the Taliban told them they were not in custody, which lasted for a period of around 10 days for most women...One protester told Amnesty International that she was detained alone in a 12x12m cell for 10 days and subjected to severe beating and psychological torture. She described the threats the Taliban members made: "They kept coming to my room and showing me pictures of my family. They kept repeating the same thing all these days: 'We can kill them, all of them, and you won't be able to do anything... Don't cry, don't make a scene. After protesting, you should have expected days like this.'"" "Before they were released, the women and their family members were required to submit their and their family members' official documents, such as a work license, land and house deeds, passports and tazkeras (national IDs). Women offered different explanations for the Taliban's motivation in doing this. Some believed the Taliban wanted to block them from leaving the country, and others said the Taliban was attempting to intimidate them through the financial ruin their actions could pose to their family members."

UNAMA, UN releases report on human rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover, 22 July 2022

"The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) today released a report (Human rights in Afghanistan: 15 August 2021 – 15 June 2022) outlining the human rights situation in Afghanistan over the 10 months since the Taliban takeover. The report summarises UNAMA's findings with regards to the protection of civilians, extrajudicial killings, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests and detentions, the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, fundamental freedoms and the situation in places of detention. The report also contains recommendations to both the de facto authorities and the international

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

community. [...] While the de facto authorities have taken some steps seemingly aimed at the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the amnesty for former government officials and security force members, the 3 December decree on women's rights and a code of conduct relating to prisoners, they also bear responsibility for a broad range of human rights violations."

Pajhwok Afghan News, UNAMA releases report on human rights situation in Afghanistan, 20 July 2022

"The Acting Afghan Government Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid has rejected the UNAMA report on human rights violations and extra-judicial killing in Afghanistan. On his Twitter handle Mujahid wrote: "UNAMA report regarding human rights situation is not real. No extra-judicial killing is permitted in the country, if someone is found guilty of such incident that person would be labeled a criminal and dealt with according to Sharia Law. UNAMA report in this regard is baseless and propaganda"

The Guardian, 'Harassed here too': Afghan artists find no sanctuary in Pakistan, 14 July 2022

"Now in Peshawar, Pakistan, Haikalzada said that after the Taliban returned musicians and artists were confined to their homes, musical institutions were closed and musicians hid their instruments. They had heard stories of the Taliban destroying musical instruments in Kabul."

Ustad Sanam Gul, 50, a renowned musician from Afghanistan who fled to Pakistan, was among them. Gul comes from a long line of musicians and had earned the title of ustad (teacher) from the state, with more than 60 students under his tutelage at his two academies in Kabul and Jalalabad.

After Kabul fell, he opened a petrol station, but it was destroyed by the Taliban, who told him he could not work since he had promoted music and played for the state.

"The investigation concluded there was a pattern of "strikingly similar reports" of SAS operations known as kill/capture missions, in which an Afghan man or men were shot dead by the elite soldiers on night raids. Male detainees were frequently taken away from captured family groups and killed after they were said to have unexpectedly produced a grenade or gun, prompting the programme to ask whether the activities of the SAS squads amounted to a "British war crime".

AVA, 285 detainees releases from Kandahar central prison, 9 July 2022

"The leadership of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) released almost 285 detainees from the central prison of Kandahar province. [...] It is said that from the total detainees, 140 are drug addicts who had received treatment and they are no longer sick. The released addicts said they could now serve their families and the community.

"Now, we should try not to return to addiction again because it doesn't have benefit," said Nisar Ahmad, a recovered addict.

A few days ago, the IEA released about 350 prisoners from Kandahar prison on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, HRW Investigation Uncovers Killings Of Alleged IS-K Militants Who Were Forcibly Disappeared, 8 July 2022

"A global human rights watchdog has investigated the killing of more than 100 alleged Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militants after they were disappeared by the ruling Taliban, which seized power in Afghanistan in August.

In a report released on July 7, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said that residents of the eastern provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar discovered at least 100 corpses dumped in canals and other places in the region considered a hotbed of IS-K activity.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Taliban authorities appear to have given their forces free rein to detain, ‘disappear,’ and kill alleged militants,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at HRW.

Gossman said their investigation focused on an emptied canal in Nangarhar where “over 100 bodies have been dumped between August 2021 and April 2022.”

Based on extensive interviews in the two provinces, HRW and its local partners counted 54 bodies of men, many in an advanced state of decomposition, along a 15- to 20-kilometer stretch of the canal.

“The bodies showed evidence of torture and brutal executions: some had missing limbs, ropes around their necks, or had been beheaded or had slit throats,” HRW said.

The Taliban has embarked on an aggressive campaign against Afghanistan’s tiny Salafist community for alleged links to IS-K. Members of the community accused the Taliban of detaining and killing followers of the puritanical Muslim sect. They also accused the Taliban of raiding their mosques and madrasahs.”

HRW, [Afghanistan: Taliban Execute, ‘Disappear’ Alleged Militants](#), 7 July 2022

“Taliban security forces have summarily executed and forcibly disappeared alleged members and supporters of an Islamic State offshoot in eastern Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch said today. Since the Taliban took power in August 2021, residents of Nangahar and Kunar provinces east of Kabul have discovered the bodies of more than 100 men dumped in canals and other locations.”

“Taliban forces have carried out abusive search operations, including night raids, against residents they accuse of sheltering or supporting members of the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) armed group, the Afghan affiliate of the Islamic State (ISIS). During these raids, Taliban forces have beaten residents and have detained men they accuse of being ISKP members without legal process or revealing their whereabouts to their families. An unknown number have been summarily executed – shot, hanged, or beheaded – or forcibly disappeared.”

“In November, a team from both groups counted 54 bodies of men, many in an advanced state of decomposition, along a 15 to 20 kilometer stretch of the emptied canal. The bodies showed evidence of torture and brutal executions: some had missing limbs, ropes around their necks, or had been beheaded or had slit throats. Healthcare workers in Nangarhar said that they had registered 118 bodies that had been found across the province between August and December.”

“A media report cited one Taliban fighter who said, ‘We conduct night raids and whenever we find a Daesh [ISIS] member, we just kill them’.”

“From September through November, Nangarhar and Kunar residents reported a wave of Taliban operations and the enforced disappearance and killing of Salafis. In some cases, relatives alleged that the Taliban took away their family members, and afterward denied that the men were in their custody. In other cases, residents said they found the bodies of relatives who had been taken away. Some were reportedly found beheaded.”

AVA, [Eid message issues by supreme leader of Afghanistan](#), 6 July 2022

“Regarding people’s complaints, he said that the Islamic Emirate has a Complaints Hearing Office under the vice and virtue ministry. In case of any injustice, people can contact the office and register their complaints.

He has also directed the complaints hearing staff to take people’s complaints seriously and to follow up on them and resolve any problems.”

AIHRC, [The message of the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan in connection with the deplorable situation of women's human rights in the country](#), 2 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"In the field of civil rights, Afghan women have lost all their civil and individual freedoms, and the right to move, the right to speak, the right to dominate the clothing and other freedoms of women have been denied." ...protesting women are always insulted, prosecuted, arrested, and mentally and physically [...] Women have been insulted in non-governmental offices and educational institutions and severe restrictions have been imposed on them under the pretext of hijab."

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Afghanistan), UN Human Rights Council: [Urgent debate on women and girls' rights in Afghanistan](#), 1 July 2022

"The Taliban have carried out a full-on assault on the rights of women and girls, including their rights to freedom of movement, expression, work, and education. Peaceful protests by brave Afghan women demanding their rights have been violently repressed in some cases. Many reports have emerged of Taliban's threats, intimidation, restrictions, arrests, forced confessions, abductions, and end forced disappearances targeting women. In March this year, girls' rights to education was indefinitely put on hold. In May, women were ordered not to leave their homes unless their heads and faces were covered by a full veil."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), [Taliban Senior Official Denies the Claims of "Attacks Against Civilians" in North Afghanistan](#), 28 June 2022

In an effort to put an end to an armed insurgency in the north of the country, Taliban authorities in Afghanistan are accused of engaging in extrajudicial killings and other violations of human rights.

On Monday, claims of abuses in the chaotic Balkhab district in Sar-e Pol province's north were deemed alarming by the United Nations and rights watchdogs, who called the Islamist party in power to hold those who are accountable...

The Taliban's aggressive and inhumane behavior has alarmed Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation in Afghanistan as on Monday, June 27, he tweeted that reports of unlawful killings, forced displacement, destruction of private property, and other human rights violations in Sar-e-Pol's Balkhab district are concerning."

UNAMA, [Briefing by Acting Special Representative Ramiz Alakbarov to the Security Council](#), 23 June 2022

"The human rights situation in Afghanistan remains precarious. Despite the adoption of a general amnesty and repeated assurances by the de facto authorities that it is being respected, UNAMA continues to receive credible allegations of killings, ill-treatment and other violations targeting individuals associated with the former Government of Afghanistan. UNAMA also continues to receive credible allegations of violations committed by the de facto authorities against individuals accused of affiliation with the armed opposition and ISIL-KP."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan: Taliban must immediately stop unlawful killings and arbitrary arrests in Panjshir](#), 16 June 2022

"Zaman Sultani, Amnesty International's South Asia Researcher, said: "Constantly, reports are coming of arbitrary arrests and unlawful killings of civilians by the Taliban in Panjshir. Events in the last couple of weeks leave little room for doubt that there is a growing pattern of extrajudicial executions and arbitrary arrests committed by the Taliban... Amnesty International is gravely concerned about reports that those arbitrarily arrested are also facing physical torture and beatings that, in some cases, even resulted in death, as has been reported in the case of Abdul Munir Amini on 4 June"

"On 12 June 2022, the Taliban shot dead Murzataza, a resident of Khesa-Awal district of Panjshir who

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

reportedly was also suffering from mental illness. On 4 June 2022, the spokesperson for the Taliban Governor of Panjshir Province in a video statement to the media said that fewer than 40 people were arrested. In Panjshir the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, an armed group fighting against the Taliban, has strong presence. One of those arrested, Abdul Munir Amini, was reportedly tortured to death. Media reports suggest that a larger number of civilians than admitted by the Taliban have been arbitrarily arrested from various different districts of Panjshir in the past few weeks."

AVA, Militant commander killed in special forces raid in Kabul, 13 June 2022

"Zabiullah Mujahid, the IEA's spokesman, said the militant commander was killed and another was arrested during the operation. Mujahid did not however say which group the insurgent belonged to. "A prominent enemy commander named Yusof had been killed and another named Mohammad Agha had been arrested during the operation," Mujahid tweeted. "These people were important members of a group of enemies who were responsible for attacking mosques and other worship places in Kabul and blowing up electricity pylons," Mujahid added. Mujahid also said further details of the operation would be shared with the media later."

Ariana News, Seven Daesh members killed in Takhar operation, 12 June 2022

"Seven members of Daesh militant group were killed in an operation by security forces in Afghanistan's northern Takhar province on Saturday, police said. The militants were hiding in a house in Prozhay Sharqi, District 4 of the provincial capital Taluqan. Habibullah Shakir, the police chief of Takhar, said that security forces carried out the raid on Saturday afternoon based on an intelligence report. He said that the operation lasted for one hour, as a result of which seven militants were killed, three more were arrested and some weapons and ammunition were seized. Two civilians were also killed during the raid, he said. Zabihullah Mujahid, the government's spokesman, said the raid targeted Daesh's funding, equipping and training center. He said that eight key militants including their commander Yonus Uzbekistani were killed in the operation. Separately, Sunday saw two bomb blasts happening in northeastern provinces of Badakhshan and Kunduz. One child was injured in the Badakhshan explosion while the one in Kunduz left three people wounded."

CFR, Exclusive: Ex-Taliban detainee secures release of American woman in Afghanistan, 11 June 2022

"An Afghan American freed in April after being detained by the Taliban used his connections to help secure the release this week of another American — a woman held in northern Afghanistan, Axios has learned. Why it matters: The State Department, which has yet to recognize the Taliban government, did not engage in negotiations to free 33-year-old Mahnaz Safi. Her U.S. family reached out to Safi Rauf, co-founder of Human First Coalition, after reading about his own months-long detention in Taliban custody and humanitarian work. Rauf, a former Afghan refugee and U.S. Navy reservist who helped evacuate thousands of at-risk Afghans during the fall of Kabul, arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York with Safi on Thursday morning after arranging her safe passage to Dubai. Between the lines: Nine months after the last American troops withdrew from Afghanistan, the government of Qatar acts as the formal diplomatic intermediary between Washington and the Taliban. Nonprofits like Human First have played an outsized role in organizing evacuations and distributing aid thanks to a level of institutional knowledge and legal flexibility most governments don't possess. But negotiating the release of foreign detainees represents a different level of engagement. Behind the scenes: Safi, who was born in New Jersey to Afghan parents and grew up in Virginia, decided to travel to a village in Jowzjan Province, Afghanistan, in May. She said her goal was to distribute humanitarian aid in famine-stricken Afghanistan after raising

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

about \$18,000 on GoFundMe — and also to explore her own roots in a homeland she had only known from afar. A self-described "risk-taker," Safi told Axios she ignored warnings from family and friends about how dangerous Afghanistan was for women — dismissing it as media alarmism. Three weeks into her stay, Safi was brought in for questioning by the local police, who were suspicious of why an American with thousands of dollars was living with people who were not her family."

Gandhara, HRW Says Taliban Detaining, Torturing Civilians In Northern Afghanistan, 10 June 2022

"Human Rights Watch (HRW) says Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have been detaining and torturing civilians that they accuse of supporting an armed opposition group in the northern Panjshir Province."

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir, 10 June 2022

"Taliban security forces in northern Afghanistan's Panjshir province have unlawfully detained and tortured residents accused of association with an opposition armed group, Human Rights Watch said today. Since mid-May 2022, fighting has escalated in the province as National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have attacked Taliban units and checkpoints. The Taliban have responded by deploying to the province thousands of fighters, who have carried out search operations targeting communities they allege are supporting the NRF. During search operations in other provinces, Taliban forces have committed summary executions and enforced disappearances of captured fighters and other detainees, which are war crimes. "Taliban forces in Panjshir province have quickly resorted to beating civilians in their response to fighting against the opposition National Resistance Front," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The Taliban's longstanding failure to punish those responsible for serious abuses in their ranks puts more civilians at risk." A human rights advocate who has interviewed several former detainees and a source with direct information about Taliban detentions spoke to Human Rights Watch about the Panjshir situation. Former detainees in early June reported that Taliban security forces detained about 80 residents in Panjshir's Khenj district and beat them to compel them to provide information about the NRF. After several days, the Taliban released 70, but have continued to hold 10 people whose relatives they accuse of being members of the group, a form of collective punishment. Former detainees said the district jail held nearly 100 others who have alleged links to the NRF. None had access to their families or lawyers. Others have been held in informal detention facilities."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatch: 'An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance.', 9 June 2022

"Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a law student in Kabul reports on conflict between Taliban fighter and resistance forces in the Panjshir valley area of the country. For privacy and security reasons, we are withholding our correspondent's name. The text has only been lightly edited to respect the author's voice. The Afghan resistance war on the Taliban is very likely to escalate, according to a recent report by UN experts. The report notes that the main military threats against Taliban are the National Resistance Force-NRF (an anti-Taliban movement made of The Northern Alliance that fought against the Soviets, plus former government military personnel), and ISIS-K. The Taliban have proved to be fragmented, and internal conflicts are evident all the way to the bottom of their ranks. In recent months, the Taliban have preferred members of their own ethnic group in provinces which are made up of predominantly Persian speakers, have confiscated lands from Hazara people and awarded them to Pashtuns, have conducted targeted killings of former military personnel, and – the jewel on top – have sexually harassed women whose husbands or other family members have fought against them in the past. An oppressive regime will eventually be met with defiance. Given the history of Afghanistan, the day of a full uprising is not far off;

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and the provocative and oppressing behaviour of the Taliban against other ethnic groups – such as backing their own tribal members and kin to monopolize trade, government jobs and any service a government is expected to provide – is making the idea of an uprising and a full escalated war against them more plausible and expected. The UN report speculates that after weather change in the country the fighting against Taliban could intensify. The Washington Post meanwhile reports that Taliban are engaged in fighting in Panjshir province, noting that the “Taliban have been denying any conflict, yet thousands of their fighters are stationed in the valley”. The fighting in Panjshir has been intense and more than a hundred Taliban have been killed and many more injured in recent weeks. The NRF has been fairly successful in their guerrilla attacks and have taken out Taliban fighters and important figures in the valley. The major part of the casualties inflicted on the Taliban come from their own counter offenses to finish of the resistance once and for all, but having the higher ground gives the NRF an incredible advantage in keeping them at a distance and carrying out strikes which have delivered fatal blows to Taliban fighters. In response, the Taliban have been detaining hundreds of civilians in Panjshir, have carried out tens of field executions and have been torturing friends and families of the NRF members for information, some of whom have been reported dead after intense torture. In one incident a shepherd was killed by torture and his family were threatened to keep his death quiet or meet the same fate as him. Crimes against humanity, genocide and death by torture are happening in Panjshir, Andarab and Takhar provinces as I write this report. An open letter to the UN has been signed by 60 experts, professors and PhD holders around the world to call for an immediate stop to human rights violation against Tajiks in the aforementioned provinces.”

AVA Press, The Islamic Emirate Arrests Afghan YouTuber in Charges of Blasphemy, 8 June 2022

“The Islamic Emirate’s General Directorate of Intelligence has arrested Ajmal Haqiqi, a YouTuber from Afghanistan, and three of his colleagues on charges of “insulting Islamic sacred values.” Four of the young activists are handcuffed in a video released on the Islamic Emirate’s intelligence agency’s Twitter handle, with Ajmal Haqiqi confessing to “promoting indecency and lewdness, and insulting Quran verses.” One of Haqiqi’s colleagues, Gholam Sakhi, who was once addicted to drugs and claimed to have a “mental condition,” recited verses from the Qur’an in a humorous voice in a video posted by Haqiqi’s YouTube channel, where Sakhi sings and dances. Haqiqi laughs in that widely shared video as Sakhi mimics recitations in a humorous voice. Sakhi’s conversational style is noted for being funny and amusing... No one is allowed to insult or ridicule the verses of the Qur’an, the Prophet’s hadiths, or Islamic sanctities under the rule of the Islamic system,” the Islamic Emirate intelligence agency wrote on Twitter. Those who have recently insulted and disrespected the Qur’an’s holy verses; “They are arrested.””

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

“The Taliban captured Baghlan and Panjshir in early September, weeks after toppling the Western-backed Afghan government and seizing power in Kabul. Since April, deadly clashes have erupted between resistance forces and the Taliban in both provinces. Last month, heavy clashes broke out in parts of Panjshir, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Residents alleged that some civilians accused of having links with the NRF were executed. Others were beaten and tortured in Taliban custody, they said.”

“Meanwhile, locals told Radio Azadi that the Taliban detained more than 100 civilians in the Paryan district of Panjshir in the past week. Their whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, the Taliban said it had detained an unspecified number of people accused of having links with the NRF. Locals have also alleged that

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban fighters have recently beheaded several NRF fighters who were captured, a claim the Taliban has rejected. The ongoing fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Panjshir."

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022

"I write about the hundreds of Afghan musicians who have fled Taliban persecution to neighboring Pakistan, where they now face arrest and deportation. Since seizing power, the militant group has banned music and publicly beaten and humiliated musicians in Afghanistan."

Amnesty International, Death Sentences and Executions 2021, 24 May 2022

"Amnesty International was not able to confirm information on the judicial use of the death penalty in Afghanistan after August 2021"

Committee to Protect Journalists, Afghan journalist Khalid Qaderi sentenced to 1 year in prison, 6 May 2022

"A Taliban military court in the western city of Herat sentenced Qaderi to one year in prison for allegedly spreading anti-regime propaganda and committing espionage for foreign media outlets, according to news reports, a tweet by the journalist's sister Homaira Qaderi, and a local journalist familiar with the case, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of reprisal from the Taliban. Qaderi did not have access to a defense lawyer, and Taliban authorities forced him to sign a document agreeing not to appeal the verdict, that journalist said. His case is CPJ's first documented instance of a journalist being tried, convicted, and sentenced for their work since the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan in August 2021. The ruling was issued in mid-April and the journalist was notified 10 days after his appearance in court, according to those sources, which did not provide exact dates for the proceedings. Qaderi is a reporter and producer of cultural programs for Radio Nawruz, an independent broadcaster in Herat province, and also publishes poetry, according to those sources."

Khaama, Taliban Tries Seven Kidnappers and Others in Military Court, 13 April 2022

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has announced that they have tried seven kidnappers, an assassin, a forger, and other criminals in their military court. Chief spokesperson of the IEA Zabiullah Mujahid in a press release on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, said that the criminals were sentenced to different periods of jail and other punishments. Zabiullah Mujahid said that the military court tries only those who pretend to be members of the IEA and then commit different crimes. This is the first time that the Taliban tries criminals in their military court since the takeover of the IEA."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"There were numerous reports of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment by the Taliban, ISIS-K, and other antigovernment groups. UNAMA reported that punishments carried out by the Taliban included beatings, amputations, and executions. The report showed that the Taliban held detainees in poor conditions and subjected them to forced labor. On September 25, the Taliban hung a dead body in the central square in Herat and displayed another three bodies in other parts of the city. A Taliban-appointed district police chief in Herat said the bodies were those of four kidnappers killed by police that day while securing the release of two abductees.

On October 5, the Taliban hung the bodies of two alleged robbers in Herat, claiming they had been killed by residents after they attempted to rob a house. [...] On November 23, the Taliban's so-called prime minister Akhund instructed the Taliban to respect and protect the rights of detained persons under sharia,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

including by limiting the duration of detention. Still, UNAMA continued to receive reports of detainees not being brought before courts or dispute resolutions following this announcement. [...] In areas they controlled throughout the year, the Taliban enforced a judicial system devoid of due process and based on a strict interpretation of sharia. Punishments included execution and mutilation. [...] According to HRW, the Taliban established its own courts in areas under its control prior to August 15 that relied on religious scholars to adjudicate cases or at times referred cases to traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Taliban courts prior to August 15 included district-level courts, provincial-level courts, and a tamiz, or appeals court, located in a neighboring country. According to HRW, the Taliban “justice system” was focused on punishment, and convictions often resulted from forced confessions in which the accused was abused or tortured. At times the Taliban imposed corporal punishment for serious offenses, or hudud crimes, under an interpretation of sharia. In October the Taliban appointed a new “chief justice” but largely retained members of the pre-August 15 government’s judicial bureaucracy and appeared to maintain many related processes. The “chief justice” was quoted in October as stating that the Taliban would follow the country’s 1964 constitution with modifications for Islamic principles. The Taliban have not subsequently elaborated on this statement, and it remained unclear the degree to which prior elements of the legal system and constitution remain in effect. Reports described the Taliban’s approach to law enforcement as lacking procedural protections, and many Taliban fighters were undisciplined and frequently detained on criminal charges. At least 60 Taliban militants were reportedly held in a section of Pul-e-Charkhi Prison after August 15 for crimes such as raiding homes at night and robbery, according to one news report. On November 22, the Taliban issued a decree declaring that the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association would come under control of the Ministry of Justice. On November 23, more than 50 armed Taliban gunmen forcibly took over the organization’s headquarters and ordered staff to stop their work. Taliban Acting “Justice Minister” Abdul Hakim declared that only Taliban-approved lawyers could work in their Islamic courts, effectively revoking the licenses of approximately 2,500 lawyers.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

“Under the republic, informal justice systems, employing variants of both customary law and Sharia, were widely used to arbitrate disputes, especially in rural areas. This remains the case, though the Taliban have sought to control some local dispute-resolution practices since taking power.”

Khaama, Taliban to investigate torture of former security personnel, 31 December 2021

“Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said they will investigate cases of former security personnel being kidnapped, tortured, and arrested by rank and file of IEA.

“A spokesperson of the IEA Ahmadullah Wasiq said that they are fully committed to the general amnesty announced by Supreme Leader Hebtullah Akhundzada and will not allow anyone to violate amnesty.”

Khaama, Respect my amnesty, stop extrajudicial punishment: Mullah Hebtullah to Taliban, 30 December 2021

“Supreme leader of the Taliban Mullah Hebtullah Akhundzada has directed the Taliban affiliates to respect his announced general amnesty and stop extrajudicial punishment of the employees of the former Afghan government. [...]

“The emphasis on implementing general amnesty and stopping extrajudicial punishment comes after a video of a former security commander being punished and beaten by a Taliban affiliate went viral.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Al Jazeera, Taliban: From Afghanistan's rugged mountains to policing streets, 5 October 2021

"In Kabul's Police District 8, there is a long queue leading to two rooms. In one, there are criminal cases. In another, civilian disputes.

Victims of stabbings, robbery and other misdeeds sit in the same room as alleged perpetrators, staring into the distance until it is their turn to plead their case.

For lesser crimes, Taliban police offer the accused three days to show up at the station. After that, they go after them.

The court system is a work in progress, officials said. Meetings are still under way between Taliban officials – used to tribal justice prevalent in rural Afghanistan – to work out the process in a sprawling city with an active judiciary. Even those who fear them in the embattled city welcome the peace their arrival has brought.

The Taliban has empowered local elders to pass judgement based on their interpretation of Islamic law for minor criminal cases.

In the Sheikh Zayed City residential area of Kabul, a committee of elders ordered the father of a man accused of stabbing a neighbour to pay 35,000 Afghanis, about \$400.

The father counts the banknotes in a rapid shuffle and hands it to the imam, who offers it to the family of the victim. They embrace. Justice served."

Afghan Analyst Network, Creating a Hierarchy of Victims? ICC may drop investigations into US forces to focus on Taleban and ISKP - Afghanistan Analysts Network - English, 1 October 2021

"As to whether allegations of war crimes or crimes against humanity would be dealt with in domestic courts, the Prosecutor is correct to say that the Taleban are unlikely to prosecute their own. Taleban action against the ISKP and former government officials can be expected, but it is debateable whether that would be through their courts, which are even further from reaching international fair trial standards than the previous government's, or as summary executions or punishment beatings. Reprisal killings of members of the former Afghan security services have been alleged by UNAMA and of members of ISKP and other Salafists in media reporting, see for example, [here](#) and [here](#)."

AP News, Taliban official: Strict punishment, executions will return, 23 September 2021

"KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — One of the founders of the Taliban and the chief enforcer of its harsh interpretation of Islamic law when they last ruled Afghanistan [Mullah Nooruddin Turabi] said the hard-line movement will once again carry out executions and amputations of hands, though perhaps not in public.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi dismissed outrage over the Taliban's executions in the past, which sometimes took place in front of crowds at a stadium, and he warned the world against interfering with Afghanistan's new rulers. [...]

Turabi, now in his early 60s, was justice minister and head of the so-called Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice — effectively, the religious police — during the Taliban's previous rule.

At that time, the world denounced the Taliban's punishments, which took place in Kabul's sports stadium or on the grounds of the sprawling Eid Gah mosque, often attended by hundreds of Afghan men.

Executions of convicted murderers were usually by a single shot to the head, carried out by the victim's family, who had the option of accepting "blood money" and allowing the culprit to live. For convicted thieves, the punishment was amputation of a hand. For those convicted of highway robbery, a hand and a foot were amputated.

Trials and convictions were rarely public and the judiciary was weighted in favor of Islamic clerics, whose

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

knowledge of the law was limited to religious injunctions.

Turabi said that this time, judges — including women — would adjudicate cases, but the foundation of Afghanistan's laws will be the Quran. He said the same punishments would be revived.

"Cutting off of hands is very necessary for security," he said, saying it had a deterrent effect. He said the Cabinet was studying whether to do punishments in public and will "develop a policy."

In recent days in Kabul, Taliban fighters have revived a punishment they commonly used in the past — public shaming of men accused of small-time theft.

On at least two occasions in the last week, Kabul men have been packed into the back of a pickup truck, their hands tied, and were paraded around to humiliate them. In one case, their faces were painted to identify them as thieves. In the other, stale bread was hung from their necks or stuffed in their mouth. It wasn't immediately clear what their crimes were."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Return Of The Taliban Emirate, 10 September 2021

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

Livelihood

RFE/RL's Radio Azadi, 'We Are Left With Nothing': Deadly Floods Aggravate Afghanistan's Economic, Humanitarian Crisis, 31 August 2022

"Mira Jan lost his home, crops, and livestock in the devastating floods that have struck large swaths of Afghanistan. "Our house was swept away by the raging floods," Jan, a farmer in the eastern province of Nangarhar, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "We were only able to save ourselves and our children. We have nothing to live off now." Jan is among the tens of thousands of Afghans affected by the deadly floods that have swept the country in recent weeks. Over 250 people have been killed and thousands of homes have been destroyed. The floods have exacerbated the devastating economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan that has been fueled by the Taliban's seizure of power in August 2021."

Global Shelter Cluster, Southeast Afghanistan Earthquake, Rapid Technical Field Assessment Report Kabul, Afghanistan, 30 August 2022

"Factors Affecting Needs and Assistance Options

Damage levels varied greatly across the affected area, frequently related to the quality of construction. Levels of damage, however, directly affect assistance needs. Households that have faced total devastation may be much more greatly traumatized and may also have lost members of the household. These households may require considerably more psychosocial support and may also require additional labor inputs to make up for the loss of family members who previously generated income. Vernacular repairs may no longer be possible and whole room and compound wall reconstruction may be required. Higher

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

levels of damage are predominantly associated with poorer quality of materials and construction, and as such, highly damaged households may also require additional levels of training or financial assistance. [...].

Hazards and Risk Level

As noted, the entire affected area is characterized by a high level of seismic risk. [...]

The capacity of different households to respond to and recover from disasters varies greatly across the world. Some indicators of reduced capacity or increased vulnerability are fairly universal such as levels of poverty, loss of key breadwinners through injury or death, households with high numbers of elderly, the very young, individuals living with disabilities, etc. Local factors may also increase vulnerability, such as altitude increasing the risk of extreme cold. Damage levels due to poor construction may also be a proxy indicator of many factors such as education and poverty, etc.”

IOM, IOM Afghanistan flash flood situation report, 26 August 2022

“Heavy rainfalls triggered flash flooding that has affected 6 regions of the country (: Central, Central highlands, West, Southeastern, Southern and Eastern regions of Afghanistan) Families have been affected, houses damaged or destroyed. Several persons are missing and injured. Most of these affected families have left their houses and are now displaced in host communities or living in open spaces. De-facto authorities have already deployed rescue teams to evacuate families stranded in flooded areas. Transportation, communication and accommodation for assessment and response teams have been hampered by the heavy rains and floods, with networks disrupted, roads blocked and many places still underwater. Long term support will be needed to address livelihood losses, as well as disaster risk reduction to harness recovery and improve resilience to future shocks. IOM has assisted families which consist of emergency shelter, non-food items (blankets, kitchen set and solar lights) and winter clothing.”

Afghanistan: Earthquake Response Situation Report No.3, 26 August 2022

“Humanitarian partners have continued to scale-up their capacity and presence to respond to earthquake-related needs across Khost, Paktika and Paktika provinces following the 5.9 magnitude earthquake. Different humanitarian responses for emergency shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, food security, health, nutrition, protection, education, multi-purpose cash assistance and coordination. However, they face gaps and constraints.”

UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements, January to August 2022, 25 August 2022

“In 2022, displacement due to ongoing conflict reduced and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Almost 30.2K people have left their homes this year due to fighting. In addition to this, close to 582.9K people have returned from neighboring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 528.1K from Iran, and 54.8K from Pakistan.”

MSF, MSF’s emergency project in Paktika province comes to a close, 25 August 2022

“On 28 July 2022, the last Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) team left Paktika province, Afghanistan, after an emergency earthquake intervention. Over the course of five weeks more than 1,380 patients were treated in the MSF temporary clinic in Bermal, at first presenting with trauma injuries related to the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

earthquake and later with primary healthcare needs. Medical care in Bermal is scarce, and so trauma care in those first days of the crisis was invaluable.

During the night of 21 and 22 June, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake shook Khost and Paktika provinces in the east of Afghanistan. Spera District (Khost province), Gayan (Paktika province) and Bermal (Paktika province) were the most affected.

The following day, 23 June, MSF sent two emergency response teams, one from Kabul and one from Khost, to assess what medical care was available in the area. As the teams stopped to assess different areas, they donated tents and medical equipment before travelling on to their final destination, hard-to-reach Bermal.

“On our arrival we saw that the situation was precarious. Families and communities had lost almost everything, and they were living under the open sky. We realised that the closest healthcare facilities were almost 150 kilometres away,” says Dr Taufeeq, who was a member of the earthquake intervention team. Three days after the earthquake, MSF set up trauma stabilisation activities, working alongside the Italian non-governmental organisation Emergency who secured the referrals. MSF provided trauma care as well as outpatient and inpatient care for female patients, and additional female staff members were sent from the Khost maternity project to support.

Trucks of medical, logistic, and water and sanitation materials also arrived from Kabul. After the first few days, the number of people coming to the clinic with acute watery diarrhea started to increase and so isolation tents were also set up nearby.

“Within the first 72 hours we were able to provide basic healthcare and trauma care to the affected population,” says Gaetan Drossart, Afghanistan Country Representative. “And the decision to close our activities after a few weeks was taken given the emergency nature of our response and the fact that other organisations were increasing their activities in Bermal.”

“But, access to healthcare in the area needs to be improved in a longer-term, sustainable way,” he says. Just before the end of the intervention, in mid-July, MSF midwives assisted the first institutional delivery in the Lawara area of Bermal district – healthy twin girls. According to their mother, without care in Bermal she would have had to travel four hours by road to reach Urgun and it would have cost her 7,000 Afghani (US\$80). [...]”

UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Flash Update #5 - Flash Flooding in the Central, Eastern, Western and South-Eastern Regions, 24 August 2022

“Over the past week, heavy rains and flash flooding have occurred in several provinces across the eastern, central, south-eastern, southern and western regions of Afghanistan. Homes are estimated to have been damaged or destroyed as a result of the floods. People have reportedly been killed by flash floods, 118 since 1 August. In response, several inter-agency teams have been mobilized simultaneously to assess needs and provide immediate assistance. On 21 August, the regional Operational Coordination Team (OCT) agreed to deploy 37 inter-agency assessment teams. UNICEF has also deployed integrated response teams to severely impacted areas and provided WASH, nutrition, and psychosocial support, as well as key messages aimed at creating awareness against communicable disease outbreaks. UNICEF also conducted a rapid assessment of schools damaged by the floods.”

AVA, Deadly flood in Afghanistan; Conflict between politics and humanity, 24 August 2022

“Deadly floods have added to the heavy and devastating calamities in Afghanistan in recent days and have claimed dozens of victims. Reports indicate that only in Khushi district of Logar province, at least 20 people

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

have died, dozens of people have been injured, and thousands of people's houses and fields have been destroyed. Homeless people have to live in the open day and night. Many of them have lost almost all their property. There is no clean drinking water, no food, no shelter and no money to build a new life. [...] The government of "Islamic Emirate" has asked the world to immediately help the flood victims of Afghanistan. A world that is heavily involved in colonial and ideological politics and does not consider humanity and addressing the pain and suffering of human societies as a real priority."

AVA, International organizations, Taqlid authorities and the people of Afghanistan inside and outside should rush to help the flood victims as soon as possible, 23 August 2022

"Hojjat-ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen Seyyed Isa Hussaini Mazari, head of Tabian Cultural Activities Center, in a message on the occasion of the recent heavy rains and devastating floods, especially the massive flood casualties in Khushi district of Logar province, while expressing condolences to the families of the victims, from all international forums, the United Nations, neighboring countries, the supreme authorities of Taqlid and the people of Afghanistan inside and outside the country have separately requested, with the coordination of the Afghan government, to make arrangements as soon as possible to send measured cash and non-cash aid to the poor people of Afghanistan, Otherwise there will be a much bigger human disaster ahead."

AVA, The flood caused huge financial losses and loss of life in several provinces, 22 August 2022

"Flooding during the last two days in Logar, Maidan Wardak, Nooristan and several other provinces has caused huge financial losses and loss of life to people. Local officials of Logar say that according to preliminary statistics, 20 people have died, 30 others have been injured and four others are missing as a result of floods in Khushi district of that province. According to them, following the flood in Khushi Logar district, more than three thousand houses, thousands of acres of agricultural land and gardens were destroyed, thousands of livestock were lost, and thousands of families were forced to leave their homes."

Deutsche Welle, Flash floods kill dozens in Afghanistan, Pakistan, 21 August 2022

"An exceptional monsoon season sparked flooding in the eastern Afghan province of Logar and in neighboring Pakistan. More than 50 people have been killed and several people are still missing."

Ariana News, 511 dead, 3,700 injured in flash floods over the past year in Afghanistan, 18 August 2022

"State Ministry for Natural Disasters Management officials said 511 people have died and more than 3,700 people have been injured during the past year in flash floods across Afghanistan. Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, officials said more than 23,000 residential areas and 66,700 acres of agricultural land were destroyed and almost 8,000 livestock were killed in these floods. [...] Meanwhile, this year, the country witnessed a deadly earthquake in Paktika and Khost provinces, which according to the latest reports, killed more than 1,000 people and injured over 1,500. The burning of forests in Nuristan province and residential houses in Jawzjan province have also been other disasters in the past year, officials said."

UNHCR, Flash External Update: Afghanistan Situation #19, 17 August 2022

"[...]Ongoing earthquake response. In late June, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck districts in Paktika and Khost provinces, south-eastern Afghanistan. Over 1,000 people are estimated to have been killed, including 250 children, while an additional 3,000 people were injured, among them 600 children. At least

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

70% of houses in the most impacted areas were damaged or destroyed. [...]

The broader humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains challenging across the country, with more than half of the population remaining dependent on assistance. This includes many displaced people, who often live in makeshift settlements under difficult conditions. [...]

UNHCR first visit to Nuristan province in 15 years: In the reporting period, UNHCR staff undertook a twoday mission to Nuristan Province for the first time since 2007, as the province had been largely inaccessible due to active conflict. The province capital, Parun, is more than eight hours by road from Jalalabad over mountainous terrain in Nangarhar Province, eastern Afghanistan. During the visit, the UNHCR team met with authorities, IDP representatives and partner agencies. The visit highlighted the lack of access to basic services, including potable water, education, health, access roads, and lack of access to viable livelihood opportunities in remote districts and locations. As part of the immediate response, UNHCR started the distribution of tents and CRIs to the most vulnerable IDPs, while also assessing the further potential for scaling up further through an area-based approach in the two new PARR locations.”

AVA, Floods Took Lives of 41 People in Afghanistan, 17 August 2022

“OCHA United Nations Humanitarian Aid Coordination Office in Afghanistan announced on Wednesday, that in the past few days, hundreds of residential houses have been destroyed due to heavy rains and floods in several provinces of the country, besides the fact that 41 people have died. [...] According to OCHA, a total of 3,720 families have been affected by the floods of the last few days, of which 2,400 families are residents of Nangarhar.”

European Union Agency for Asylum, Key socio-economic indicators in Afghanistan and in Kabul city: Country of Origin Information Report, 16 August 2022

UNFPA, Statement of UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem on Afghanistan, 15 August 2022

“One year since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, the country remains in the throes of a deep economic and humanitarian crisis. Soaring food and fuel prices – exacerbated by a drought and the war in Ukraine – have resulted in an estimated 95 percent of the population, and nearly all female-headed households, not having enough to eat.

Afghan women and girls have seen the continuous erosion of their rights. Girls have been excluded from secondary schools, a move that violates their fundamental right to education, denies them the opportunity to realize their full potential and is disastrous for the economic development of the country. It also puts girls at increased risk of early marriage, early pregnancy, violence, and abuse. Women’s rights to work and to participate fully in other aspects of public life have also been severely restricted.

The breakdown of the health system has compromised women and girls’ access to reproductive health services, including maternal health care, particularly for the more than 9 million people living in remote areas of the country. For the estimated 24,000 women who give birth each month in hard-to-reach areas, childbirth can, in effect, be a death sentence. Vital services for survivors of gender-based violence are also limited following the dissolution of dedicated reporting pathways, justice mechanisms and shelters, with potentially fatal consequences.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report No.8, 31 July 2022, 15 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Across the country flooding affected thousands of people, killing at least 39, as well as destroying farmlands and severely impacting livelihoods [...]. Schools remained closed for girls in secondary school in July.”

UNHCR, Five things you should know about Afghanistan, 15 August 2022

““1. Afghans make up one of the world’s largest populations of people uprooted by conflict and human rights abuses. ... 3.5 million Afghans are displaced inside their country due to conflict, including more than 800,000 who have been uprooted since January 2021 – the majority by fighting that took place between May and August 2021. Over the past year, improved security in parts of Afghanistan has allowed many people to return home. But they often come back to damaged or destroyed homes, a war-ravaged infrastructure and a lack of jobs. Meanwhile, some areas have witnessed sporadic violence and fresh displacement. An earthquake in June in the southeast of the country followed by successive aftershocks rendered many homeless. 2. Half of the people in Afghanistan are facing extreme hunger. Afghanistan’s economy has collapsed over the past year. The combination of a prolonged drought, soaring food prices and job losses have pushed around 25 million Afghans into poverty, with more than half the population now reliant on humanitarian aid to survive. Foreign development aid has come to a grinding halt. Three quarters of people’s incomes is now spent on food. Six million people are teetering on the brink of famine and 1 million children face severe malnourishment. While a widespread hunger crisis was averted last winter, food prices continue to rise – partly due to the war in Ukraine – as household incomes continue to shrink. 3. The climate crisis is making Afghanistan’s humanitarian crisis worse. Climate change is driving increasingly frequent, intense natural disasters that are hitting communities already devastated by conflict. Even before the Taliban’s return, a severe drought had withered crops and reduced groundwater levels. The drought continued into 2022 and was accompanied by a heatwave so intense it led to multiple wildfires in the country’s east. Then came unseasonably heavy summer downpours and flash flooding in many parts of Afghanistan that submerged villages and damaged houses, roads and farmlands. More than 1.5 million Afghans have been displaced by such disasters, in addition to the 3.5 million displaced by conflict. [...]”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), The concern of the Islamic Aid Organization about the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, 14 August 2022

“The Islamic Aid Organization announced in a report that after the domination of the Islamic Emirate, due to economic and political collapse, Afghanistan has become the scene of one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. This organization added: 19.7 million people regularly go to bed hungry, which is one of the highest statistics in the world. Mothers are crippling in debt to feed their children, and fathers are desperately looking for work, the report said. This organization has also said that boys in Afghanistan drop out of school to help their families, and young girls also get married due to poverty and disability.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Afghanistan Scene of World's 'Worst' Humanitarian Crisis: Islamic Relief Organization, 13 August 2022

"Afghans, particularly women and children, are suffering the most from an economic collapse, as a result of the combined effects of years of violence, maladministration, drought, natural disasters, and international sanctions. In a report released on Saturday, the 13th of August, the Islamic Relief Organization stated that due to Afghanistan's recent political and economic breakdown, a humanitarian disaster has become a reality. At least 24 million Afghan people, or more than half the population of the country, immediately require humanitarian assistance. The number of Afghan people who go to bed hungry every day is 19.7 million, which is one of the greatest figures ever recorded for a single country, according to the report. The majority of all rural households and more than a quarter of urban households have now used all available resources, and they are turning to ever-distressing and dangerous measures. That includes begging on the streets, selling their homes, selling their body organs, looking to take on increasingly risky work, or marrying off their young daughters to get a dowry for survival."

United Nations Secretary General, Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, 11 August 2022

"[...] Between January and June 2022, almost 23 million people received at least one form of humanitarian assistance. This is 94 per cent of the 24.4 million people that need help. Food assistance has also been stepped up to reach nearly 22 million people this year. Following the 5.9 magnitude earthquake in the south-eastern region of Afghanistan on 22 June, humanitarian partners have reached 85,000 people, which represents 85 per cent of those directly affected, with food, emergency shelter, health care and other critical assistance. Our colleagues add that the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) have played a pivotal role in preventing a collapse of the health and education sectors by ensuring essential workers continue to be paid. Despite this massive response, the scale of needs in Afghanistan far outstrips the capacity of humanitarian partners, according to the Humanitarian Coordinator, Ramiz Alakbarov, who said that in a statement today. Mr. Alakbarov stressed that this tragic reality will continue unless a functioning economy and banking system is restored, girls are officially able to return to school, and women and girls can meaningfully and safely participate in all aspects of social, political and economic life, including humanitarian work."

UNOCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2022 Response Overview, 11 August 2022

"[...] Millions of people already reached with one form of assistance will continue to require multiple rounds of assistance over the course of the year to survive. This often includes costlier, more comprehensive and more impactful packages of assistance and services to cover their needs.

[...]

Acute vulnerabilities continue to be compounded by emerging shocks including a high-magnitude Earthquake, wide-spread outbreak of diseases (including Acute Watery Diarrhoea) as well as atypical floods and other seasonal risks, all on the backdrop of a crippling economic decline and ruptures in basic services. [...] The combination of global and in-country food and other commodity price spikes and funding shortfalls is already forcing humanitarians to provide fewer rounds of assistance than originally intended."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNHCR Operational Data Portal, UNHCR Earthquake Emergency Response External Update#4, 11 August 2022

“1,000 people killed, including 250 children; 3,000 people injured, including 600 children; at least 70% of houses in the most impacted areas are damaged or destroyed [...]

On 22 June 2022 a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck vulnerable districts in Paktika and Khost provinces, south-eastern Afghanistan. Over 1,000 people are estimated to have been killed, including 250 children, while an additional 3,000 people were injured, among them 600 children. At least 1,500 homes are reported to have been damaged in Giyan district of Paktika province alone. Interagency teams including UNHCR were quickly on the ground to assess the situation. Findings from rapid assessments reaffirm the extensive damage to houses, absence of (and lack of access to) basic services such as water, education, health, electricity, access roads in remote locations, and lack of viable livelihood opportunities. It is estimated that at least 70% of the houses in the most impacted areas are damaged or destroyed, leaving many without shelter and sleeping in the open, prone to harsh weather, health and protection issues, and other hazards.”

UNAMA, UN Humanitarian Coordinator Reaffirms Commitment to Meeting Life-Saving Needs and Supporting Vulnerable Communities Across Afghanistan, 11 August 2022

“The Afghan people continue to stand in dire need of international assistance despite an ongoing humanitarian response of unprecedented scale and nature. [...]

“Today, the tragic reality is that the scale of needs in Afghanistan far outstrips the response capacity of humanitarian actors to meet them, and it will simply not be possible to move the population from a mode of surviving to thriving unless a functioning economy and banking system is restored; longer-term, more sustainable interventions are resumed; line ministries are technically capacitated; girls are officially able to return to school; and women and girls can participate meaningfully and safely in all aspects of social, political and economic life, including humanitarian work,” the Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov said.

[...] The future looks increasingly bleak in the absence of concerted efforts to address structural drivers of need and vulnerability that help lay the groundwork for community-led, bottom up economic recovery. Around 25 million people are now living in poverty, and as many as 900,000 jobs may be lost from the labour market this year as businesses struggle to stay afloat, and women and girls remain locked out of secondary school and the formal economy.”

Al Jazeera, Photos: Afghans paying the price for peace since Taliban takeover, 10 August 2022

“Over the past year, millions of lives have been hit by the strict measures leading to the withdrawal of development support and limitations imposed on the country’s financial systems. The liquidity crisis, cash shortages, the collapse of the banking system and Western sanctions – for the displaced people dwelling in makeshift settlements, the complex financial terms circulating in the Afghan context stand for only one thing: shocking levels of poverty. Staggering numbers of Afghans are unable to access their salaries or lifetime savings, while the increased costs of living and scarce job opportunities have driven entire families into mounting debt. Most people have nothing to spend and shrinking demand for basic goods has forced small businesses to shut down. In the shadow of the Ukraine war, the prices of food and essential products have skyrocketed, placing them out of reach for the destitute communities.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan), Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan - Response Overview (1 January - 30 May 2022), July 2022
[see infographic via source hyperlink]

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan) Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Emergency Earthquake Response Plan (Jul - Sep 2022), 30 June 2022
"PEOPLE IN NEED 362K"
"PLANNED REACH 362K"

Planned reach and requirements by sector

SECTOR	PEOPLE IN NEED	PLANNED REACH	REQUIREMENTS US\$
Education in Emergencies	126K	50K	2.7M
Emergency Shelter and NFI	362K	362K	55.6M
Food Security and Agriculture	362K	362K	18M
Health	362K	362K	6M
Nutrition	50K	45K	2.9M
Protection	362K	252K	3.9M
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	362K	362K	17.7M
Coord. and Common Services	-	-	3.5M
Total	362K	362K	110.3M

Can cultural activities (including sport, music, and art) take place? What restrictions and guidelines does the Taliban place on them?

Khaama Press, Increasing Security Threats; Taliban Places Restrictions on Ashura Ceremony in Northern Afghanistan, 7 August 2022

"Locals in Mazar-e-Sharif, in Balkh province of northern Afghanistan, say that the Taliban has prevented Ashura ceremony preparations at the shrine of Hazrat Ali, aka Rawza-e-Sharif, and denied permission to hold the Ashura event there for security reasons."

The Guardian, Photographer Fatimah Hossaini: 'In Kabul, there was so much hope and desire', 7 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The Afghan-Iranian artist narrowly escaped from Kabul to Paris last August, as the Taliban took over. She talks about the terror of that time, why she still longs for home, and her work photographing Afghan women in exile in France. [...] "In Tehran, people are a little depressed with the situation. But in Kabul there was so much hope and desire. A new generation was burning with it. I could see women in every sector: musicians, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians. I could teach my classes at the university without a hijab. I could show my students any image I liked. These things would never happen in Iran." But life really was about to change. When a newly elected Joe Biden confirmed in April 2021 that American troops would be withdrawn by 11 September, Taliban insurgents began to intensify their attacks on the Afghan state; in May, for instance, a car bomb outside a Kabul school killed more than 60 people, most of them schoolgirls. "Even I could see that the security situation was different," Hossaini says. "I lost two journalist friends [to Taliban attacks] during those months. [...] But her mind was clear now: it was, she finally conceded, time to go. Like thousands upon thousands of other desperate Afghans, she pitched up at Kabul airport. She would spend the next four days there. "It was crazy," she says. "Mothers abandoning their children; lovers abandoning each other. People were so desperate, they would do anything to leave"."

The Guardian, 'Harassed here too': Afghan artists find no sanctuary in Pakistan, 14 July 2022

"Now in Peshawar, Pakistan, Haikalzada said that after the Taliban returned musicians and artists were confined to their homes, musical institutions were closed and musicians hid their instruments. They had heard stories of the Taliban destroying musical instruments in Kabul."

Ustad Sanam Gul, 50, a renowned musician from Afghanistan who fled to Pakistan, was among them. Gul comes from a long line of musicians and had earned the title of ustad (teacher) from the state, with more than 60 students under his tutelage at his two academies in Kabul and Jalalabad.

After Kabul fell, he opened a petrol station, but it was destroyed by the Taliban, who told him he could not work since he had promoted music and played for the state.

"The investigation concluded there was a pattern of "strikingly similar reports" of SAS operations known as kill/capture missions, in which an Afghan man or men were shot dead by the elite soldiers on night raids. Male detainees were frequently taken away from captured family groups and killed after they were said to have unexpectedly produced a grenade or gun, prompting the programme to ask whether the activities of the SAS squads amounted to a "British war crime".

Gandhara, Afghan Bodybuilders Fear Taliban Restrictions Could Kill Their Popular Sport, 17 June 2022

"Mohammad has been sweating it out at the gym almost daily for the past four years in the hope of becoming a bodybuilder. But since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, his dream has faded. Even though the militant group has allowed the sport, it has ordered bodybuilders to cover up their bulging biceps, six-packs, and chiseled thighs during training and competitions. The Taliban is in conflict with everything that is beautiful." -- Sajjad Nuristani, journalist and fitness trainer Athletes and gym owners say the restrictions will kill the sport, which is focused on showcasing muscular development. In bodybuilding competitions worldwide, tanned athletes in tiny briefs flash their sculpted bodies. Mohammad is outraged by the Taliban order, which requires bodybuilders to cover their abdominal muscles and limbs with loose-fitting garments even while working out in gyms. "There are only men where we train," Mohammad, who did not reveal his full name for fear of retribution by the Taliban, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "The Taliban order has no religious justification, but it creates many problems for us." After the Taliban regime fell in 2001, bodybuilding became one of most popular sports in Afghanistan. Over 1,000 gyms sprung up across the war-torn country, including hundreds in the capital, Kabul, where huge posters of famous bodybuilders were visible in public."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Pakistani Visas, Taliban Taxes, Afghan Bodybuilders, 17 June 2022

"Afghan Bodybuilders Told To Cover Up Radio Azadi reports on the Taliban ordering Afghan bodybuilders to cover up during training and competitions. The order by the Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice is the latest attempt by the militant group to police the appearance of Afghan men and women in public. The restriction on bodybuilders has been criticized by athletes. "The Taliban order has no religious justification, but it creates many problems for us," said Mohammad, an aspiring bodybuilder. While the Taliban has effectively banned all women's sports, bodybuilding is the first male sport the hard-line Islamists have sought to regulate."

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"Further to this, despite the de facto authorities' repeated public commitments to respect human rights, civic space has shrunk rapidly and dramatically since their return to power. Restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, the right to peaceful assembly, and the right to participate in public affairs have all had a chilling effect on individuals and communities."

AVA, National Mother's Day was celebrated in Kabul, 15 June 2022

"The Deputy of Culture and Arts of the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Islamic Emirate celebrated National Mother's Day on Tuesday afternoon (June 14th) and stressed the importance of respecting the rights and respect of the country's mothers. Meanwhile, Sheikh Hassan Khan Haqqani; The head of finance and administration of the tourism department of the Ministry of Information and Culture said: "The discussion about the rights and respect of parents in Islam has a great philosophy that needs more time to explain." Mawlavi Ghulam Mohammad Niazi; One of the religious scholars also said in this ceremony: Every mother is a woman; but not every woman is a mother. Mother is a sacred word that we cannot call every woman a mother. He said that Islam values the status of mother and said: in Islamic and Quranic culture, paradise is under the feet of mothers; but in the laws of human status not only the status of mothers is not preserved; It also disrespects the great position of the mother. Officials at the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Islamic Emirate are celebrating National Mother's Day, accused by the international community of violating the rights of women and mothers."

AAN, Policing Public Morality: Debates on promoting virtue and preventing vice in the Taleban's second Emirate, 15 June 2022

"The Taleban's 'religious police' are back in force, leaving many Afghans fearing a return to the notorious brutalities of the Taleban's 1990s Amr bil-Maruf ministry. Yet, two decades on, argues guest author Sabawoon Samim* (with input from Roxanna Shapour), Taleban views on the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice have evolved, as has Afghan society. While the Taleban still believe it is an Islamic state's duty to actively police public morality, he also traces the emergence of a new generation of Taleban leaders, some of whom are less conservative, and asks whether they may take a softer approach to policing public morality than their predecessors. [...] Drawing on 45 interviews with Taleban officials, fighters, tribal elders, teachers and others in five provinces, plus the capital, Kabul, conducted before and after the Taleban captured power [1] this report looks at Amr bil-Maruf in the two Taleban administrations twenty years apart. It considers the religious injunction that Muslims should hold each other accountable by promoting virtue and discouraging vice. We take a look at what was problematic about Amr bil-Maruf in the Taleban's first Emirate and how it changed during the insurgency. We relay ideas generally among

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the Taliban about what policing public morality should involve and at the re-established Amr bil-Maruf ministry – at how and why it has differed, so far, from the 1990s. In particular, the author looks at what sets at least some members of the new generation of Taliban leaders apart from their predecessors, and at how this might influence the Taliban's approach to policy and practice when it comes to policing public morality."

Pajhwok, Our business at a standstill, say Ghazni barbers, 14 June 2022

"Barbers in southern Ghazni province say their work has come to a standstill following restrictions on trimming beard and cutting stylish hairs. The Vice and Virtue departments have imposed new restrictions in various provinces, including Ghazni. The departments have asked people not to shave beards and avoid growing stylish hairs."

Al Jazeera, Nabi Roshan: Afghanistan's Jon Stewart forced into exile, 8 June 2022

"Nabi Roshan was a renowned comedian, dubbed by many as the Jon Stewart of Afghanistan, with his show aired on the country's largest TV network – watched by millions each week. But last August he was forced to flee the country after the Taliban armed group took over the country 20 years after it was driven out of power in a United States-led military invasion. He is now among more than 3,000 Afghan refugees based in Albania. [...] Roshan tries to keep a low profile but he often gets stopped by admirers – fellow Afghan refugees – who recognise him from his Shabak-e-Khanda (Laughter Network) show – popularly known as Afghanistan's SNL. And often he is invited to speak at gatherings of the small Afghan community living at the refugee centre in Shegjin, a small town by the Adriatic Sea."

Afghan Voice Agency, Karzai: Afghans want girls' schools to reopen, 26 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency [Sic] (AVA)_In an interview with the BBC, the former president insisted: "There is no way that the country can live without our girls going to school."

He added: "I am sure (secondary) schools for will reopen because that is what the Afghan people want." Despite impassioned calls from different quarters, girl students above grade six have been out of school for the past 120 days."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"After August 15, the Taliban generally did not respect freedom of association."

Ariana News, IEA cancel public holiday for Nowruz but say celebrations allowed, 21 March 2022

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said there would be no public holiday for the Persian New Year this week, but stated they would not stop people from celebrating the festival. Persian New Year, known as Nowruz and celebrated throughout Iran and Central Asia, is a popular festival in Afghanistan and is usually marked by a public holiday, when families gather to prepare festive dishes and welcome the beginning of spring. Mohammad Yunus Sidiqi, spokesman for the labour ministry, told Reuters that there would be no official public holiday on Monday, when Nowruz was set to take place. An information ministry spokesman said the holiday was not in accordance with Islamic law, but that private celebrations by civilians would be allowed. "We are not officially celebrating Nowruz," said Abdul Ahad Amad, head of publications at the information ministry. "If people want to do something we are not preventing them.""

Ava Press, Playing Music Is Fiercely Forbidden: The Taliban Have Imposed New Restrictions on Local Artists

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in Kapisa, 6 March 2022

"The Taliban have recently launched a series of house-to-house clean-up operations and crackdowns on artists, which has caused great concern. [...]

Local artists in province[s] have expressed concern about restrictions imposed by local officials in the province, saying that their economic problems and security concerns have multiplied since the fall of the republic. They say their professional lives are under threat. Local artists in Kapisa are asking the authorities to allow them to work again. This is while, officials [in the] Vice and Virtue department in Kapisa say that playing music is strongly forbidden by Sharia law and a crime by the Taliban."

Khaama Press, Khost province residents ordered to remove Afghanistan's flags from homes, 27 February 2022

"The provincial governor of the eastern Khost province Muhammad Nabi Omari ordered residents of the province to collect and remove Afghanistan's (black, red, green) flag from the rooftops of their homes and houses and from their vehicles.

The provincial head of the Taliban in a gathering on Saturday, February 26, 2022, said that the citizens of Khost province only have three days to remove flags.

"You are given only three days to remove the flags from your homes, shops, and cars. Hanging the white flag of the Taliban is optional and no one is forcing you to do that but the previous flag is no longer acceptable." Said Muhammad Nabi Omari.

The central administration in the capital Kabul has not officially commented on the accounts of Omari yet. Earlier, a spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Zabiullah Mujahid had said that the decision about the national flag and keeping the previous flag is not yet finalized.

Meanwhile, the Afghan people have been urging the Taliban not to change the flag as the (black, red, green) flag is a national interest and belongs to no leader and faction."

Gandhara, Outrage Stoked By Video Of Taliban Humiliating Musicians, Burning Instruments, 18 January 2022

"Afghan singer Goodar Zazai says he wept as he saw a recent video of the Taliban humiliating two local musicians and burning their instruments. Filmed near the border with Pakistan in the Zazai Aryub district of Paktia Province, the musicians' heads had been crudely shaved by members of the Taliban's feared Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. It is a common punishment imposed by the Taliban against those suspected of minor crimes. In this case, the men had violated the Taliban's ban on music by playing Pashtun folks songs on a hand-pumped harmonium and a large wooden drum known as a dhol. The musicians appear to have been beaten. [...] Hundreds of musicians, fearing similar abuse, have fled Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power in August [...] Its [the Taliban] position on music was inconsistent immediately after Taliban fighters stormed Kabul on August 15. That is because there was not any clear order issued beyond a public statement from Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who declared music to be "un-Islamic.""

Deutsche Welle, Hundreds of Afghan artists need protection, 20 December 2021

"Meanwhile, more and more Afghan artists are receiving death threats, are living underground or hiding their works, or even destroying them. Some of them are attempting to flee the country across national borders on their own □ — only to end up in third countries that are also unsafe."

NBC, Afghanistan's only music school completes exit from Kabul fearing Taliban crackdown, 18 November

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

2021

“The last two of more than 270 students, faculty and staff from Afghanistan’s only music school have left the country in the wake of the Taliban takeover, the institution’s founder said on Thursday.”

AAN, Music Censorship in 2021: The silencing of a nation and its cultural identity, 17 November 2021

“Music and musicians once again face serious threats following Afghanistan’s takeover by the Taleban in August this year. Over the past two decades, the theory and practice of traditional Afghan instruments, as well as other musical forms, has seen a remarkable revival after the destruction of the country’s musical heritage during the 1990s, with skills being passed on to a new generation of performers. Now, musicians are once again being forced to relocate abroad. This means they will only be able to keep their musical heritage and identity alive from beyond Afghanistan’s borders, jeopardising an already fragile but important recent shift in how music and musicians are perceived in Afghan society. Fabrizio Foschini looks at the hardships that have befallen Afghan musicians and the risks that music faces once again. [...]

The Taleban never publicised their official position on music during their 20-year war against the Afghan government. Musicians were occasionally targeted but most likely as a means of reasserting the Taleban’s authority in the first years of the insurgency (see for example here). In Taleban-held areas, the treatment of musicians depended largely on local commanders’ relationships with communities or the presence of musicians in areas under their control (See this report in the Telegraph). [...] However, a clearer glimpse of their future attitudes to music emerged once they consolidated their hold on towns which fell during their 2021 spring-summer offensive. In Balkh, for example, which they captured on 21 June, the Taleban implemented a ban on music. Local radio stations were only allowed to play religious chants and men caught listening to music in the bazaar were reportedly subjected to corporal punishments. [...]

The days following the fall of the Republic on 15 August were marked by the destruction of musical instruments, either as a political message or acts of vandalism. This not only intimidates, it also takes away the means for people to earn their living, especially given how expensive and beloved instruments are. In the capital, unidentified armed men entered the Afghan National Institute of Music (ANIM), tried to steal the institute’s vehicles and reportedly destroyed a number of instruments (NPR reporting here). On 27 August, several pianos and *tabla* were smashed when a Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA) studio was vandalised (see, for example, this India Today report). In Jalalabad, the Taleban targeted music shops, reportedly as early as 15 August, the day they entered the city. They doused instruments with petrol, set them on fire in the city’s streets and ordered musicians to find other jobs. Music shops across the country were closed down within days and have remained so ever since (see here).

In an event that shocked the nation on 27 August, Taleban fighters took Fawad Andarabi, a player of the *ghichak*, a type of bowed lute, from his home and shot him dead (see here). The fact that the killing happened during the Taleban’s military offensive in Panjshir by way of the Andarab valley did not diminish the significance of this event. Fawad Andarabi had been at home when Taleban fighters, who had already paid him a visit, returned and summarily executed him (see here).

Since then, there have been occasional reports of incidents involving musicians or performances. For example, Kabuli musicians told AAN that a duo of *dhol* (percussion) and *sorna* (woodwind) players were on their way to a wedding when the Taleban stopped them near the old city’s main roundabout and broke their instruments. On 17 September, an Afghan journalist (@TajudenSoroush) reported on Twitter that Taleban militants had overrun a wedding party in Takhar province and beaten up a group of female musicians who were playing for an all-female audience.

More recently, on 29 October, gunmen introducing themselves as Taleban opened fire on a wedding in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Surkhrod district in Nangrahar after guests tried to stop them from smashing loudspeakers, killing at least two people and injuring ten others. The couples getting married in the joint ceremony had reportedly received permission from a local Taleban commander to play recorded music in the area reserved for women. The Taleban have sought to distance themselves from the incident and later announced they had arrested two of the perpetrators, saying the attack had started because of a personal feud.

Like many of the Taleban's new legal provisions, their ban on music has not been officially announced or explained; it has emerged over time through a series of declarations, prohibitions and measures (see this Gandhara report). Taleban spokesmen, for example, have denounced music as un-Islamic (see Newsweek report here) and Taleban officials have met the owners of hotels, restaurants and wedding halls in Kabul and instructed them to avoid live music. As Zabiullah Mujahed told The New York Times: "Music is forbidden in Islam ... but we're hoping that we can persuade people not to do such things, instead of pressuring them."

However, the forms of 'persuasion' employed have not excluded force: Afghan musicians and DJs have been repeatedly intimidated and subject to violence by Taleban – although individuals were arguably acting beyond their mandate in the case of the worst attacks. They have also seen their instruments and professional paraphernalia destroyed. At this rate, the Taleban may succeed in convincing musicians to give up their profession, without the government having to announce a ban officially (see this AP report). What is certain, is that many musicians are nowadays burying their instruments and trying to leave the country. [...]

Their current attitude towards music appears to be the same as the one they adopted then – rejection of most forms of music. Music is seen as something that is 'dangerous', distracting the mind from religion and causing people to have sinful thoughts. [...]

The Taleban's own use of music, which has been the subject of a number of studies over the past decade, has almost exclusively focused on *tarana* – poems in praise of their fighters [1] grounded in melodies and texts deeply rooted in Pashtun folk culture, but unaccompanied by instruments. The absence of instruments is a major criterion for the perceived lawfulness of music by the movement. [2] These *tarana* became a major propaganda tool for the Taleban during their nearly two-decades-long insurgency, possibly one of central importance for winning the fight "for hearts and minds" of Pashtun youths in Afghanistan and Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They had, however, already been composed and performed by the Taleban in the 1990s. [3]

Apart from the *tarana*, the only other forms of musical performance endorsed by the Taleban are compositions in their praise or strictly devotional music (see here) such as the *marsyeh* (requiem) or *na't* (a recitation in praise of the Prophet Muhammad). Yet once again, the distinction seems to be largely between vocal and instrumental performances, rather than devotional versus secular, as the musical gatherings at the Sufi Chishti Khanaqah in Old Kabul, a devotional practice considered as *ghaza-ye ruh* (food for the soul) have all but stopped since the Taleban's takeover. (See the author's piece about the music scene in Old Kabul here.)"

AVA Press, [A Young Boy Killed for Listening to Music in Badakhshan](#), 13 November 2021

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_A 19-year-old young boy was shot for listening to music by the , sources in Badakhshan said.

The incident took place in the Zargaran village, Ashkashum district of on (Tuesday, November 9), sources told Hasht-e Subh.

The young victim was named Wahidullah and had just graduated from school. was shot by the Taliban while he was listening to music.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

According to the sources, the Taliban first checked his cell phone, and when they found out that he was listening to music they beat and shot him.

He died due to severe bleeding while taking to the hospital, sources told Hasht-e Subh.

The Taliban haven't shown any reactions to the incident.

In addition, beard shaving and haircut as "-style" have been banned in some provinces as well by the Taliban."

BBC, Afghanistan: Gunmen attack wedding to stop music being played, 31 October 2021

"Gunmen who identified themselves as Taliban attacked a wedding in eastern Afghanistan to stop music being played, killing at least two people and injuring 10 others, officials say.

A Taliban spokesman said two of the three gunmen had been arrested but denied they had acted on behalf of the Islamist movement.

Music was banned when the Taliban ruled the country from 1996 to 2001.

The new authorities have not yet issued such a decree."

Al Jazeera, Afghan National Music Institute strikes a chord in Qatar, 23 October 2021

"About 96 members of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, or ANIM, which includes faculty and musicians have fled their homes in Afghanistan. [...] The school's doors have been closed since mid-August. The building is now under constant patrol by the Taliban. Situation on the ground

Since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan there has not been an outright ban on music, but rather restrictions, such as no loud music is to be played in public.

Out of fear of potential consequences, several radio and TV stations in Kabul have ceased the broadcast of music or entertainment they believe might go against the Taliban's practices and governance, which continue to be moulded and reshaped."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, 'I Feel Like A Dead Fish': Silenced By The Taliban, Afghanistan's Musicians Despair, 13 October 2021

"Ahmad Gholami, a 25-year-old Afghan musician, had dedicated his life to the art of playing a sitar-like lute called the tanbur.

But after nearly a decade mastering the instrument well enough to earn his living as a professional musician, the Taliban has banned music under its tribal interpretation of Islamic law.

Gholami and other musicians he knows have effectively been silenced by an order from the Taliban-installed police chief in the central province of Bamiyan who has declared that no singing or musical instruments are allowed in his jurisdiction. [...]

the Taliban has beaten musicians in some areas, burned instruments, and banned music. That has led hundreds of musicians to flee the country in fear of their lives. [...]

Now, the Taliban's Information and Culture Ministry says music is "forbidden" under its strict Hanafi interpretation of Islamic law.

One of the first things Taliban fighters did in August when they seized control of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province, was to break into a music studio used by well-known Afghan musicians.

The militants dragged their harmonium, lutes, drums, and other instruments out into the street -- dousing them with petrol and setting them ablaze.

Noman Khan and other musicians who had used the studio promptly fled the country in fear of their lives. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Meanwhile, local Taliban authorities in Afghanistan continue to issue decrees outlawing music in the capital, Kabul, and in major cities like Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-e Sharif.

Siddiqullah, the Taliban-installed police chief in Bamiyan, justifies the bans and the destruction of instruments by arguing that nobody is allowed to play music.”

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatches: ‘The Taliban have banned live music in hotels’, 9 October 2021

“The Taliban have banned live music in hotels. Officials of Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice – which was established by the Taliban after the took control of Afghanistan – met with most of hotel owners in Kabul Wednesday.

In this meeting, the Taliban instructed the hotel owners to avoid live music, and segregate places of men and women in the hotels. They already did this in some other provinces as well. In Takhar they even beat up a groom because he brought live music to his wedding ceremony.

In Afghanistan, hotels and restaurants are regulated by the specific laws and regulations under authority of the Ministry of Information and Culture. They obtain licenses from this Ministry and the Government uses this Ministry to communicate with them. The Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice – as you understand from its name – will now establish policies for each and every government agency through which they will tell people what is right and what is wrong.

Previously, women and men were separated but only by a partition made of plastic or other stuff, but they have now made it clear that hotel owners have to separate them by walls. This indicates that they still hold the opinion of prohibiting music in the country. I actually think that this is a starting point for them to slowly ban music. In other statements, one of the Taliban’s top leaders has told the media that if singers stop singing he will give them an amount of 40K AFN on a monthly basis. These statements are clearly a sign that there will be no musicians in the country, and those who choose to stay will have to change their profession and seek another source of income.”

The Guardian, ‘A friend tells me he is burning his paintings’: Afghan artists in Australia speak on 20 years of war, 6 October 2021

“The Afghanistan-born visual artist and poet Elyas Alavi, who gained asylum in Australia as a Hazara refugee in 2007, staged an exhibition of his work in Kabul in 2014 and returned to his home country again in 2016.

He said he now feared he may never be able to return to Afghanistan.

“A friend tells me he is burning his paintings ... and I’ve heard of people burning their philosophy books and art books,” he said.

“Now he and some of his family, most of them are living in hiding because they just don’t know what’s going to happen. The Taliban are checking people’s mobiles ... looking for [content] that is against Sharia law, and they are [targeting] writers, artists, the LGBTQI community.”

Alavi said the Afghan-Australian community felt betrayed by the Australian government.

“The prime minister says Afghanistan is a tragic country with a tragic history and Australia cannot do anything, it is the fate of these people and it’s always going to be a tragedy,” the now Adelaide-based artist said.

“But the government can get more people at risk out, more than the 3,000 extra visas they’ve announced ... and there are no permanent visas for those who are already here.”

Ariana News, Afghan Film emphasis on making serials based on Afghanistan realities, 4 October 2021

“Jawed Afghan, the new director of Afghan Films, was recently appointed by the Islamic Emirate of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghanistan (IEA), and says that he will develop the directorate of Afghan Film and, using its past capabilities, show the true story of Afghanistan to the world.

The director of Afghan Film emphasized the increase in the number of employees of this institution and the production of new films.

Afghan Film is Afghanistan's main government cinema institution, which has been around for decades and has played an important role in supporting and strengthening Afghan cinema. [...]

Although the director of Afghan Film does not say anything about the continued presence of female staff in the film industry, but he emphasized that the employees of this institution will continue their work as in the past and using the past capacities, the current narratives of the country will be shown to the world. [...]

Afghan Film is considered one of the most important directorates in the production of Afghan films; an office whose archive also narrates the history of Afghanistan. But it is not yet clear what type of films and series this directorate will make and whether it will be allowed to reopen cinemas in Afghanistan."

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

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

Taliban taxes and collection of tax

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Pakistani Visas, Taliban Taxes, Afghan Bodybuilders, 17 June 2022

"Radio Azadi reports on how the Taliban is hiking taxes on Afghans to fund its \$2.6 billion annual budget. That is despite many Afghans struggling to make ends meet amid an economic crisis that has disrupted basic services, left them with rising costs and dim employment prospects, and battered the health and financial sectors. Afghans can expect to pay more taxes on everything from moving goods on highways to hanging signs in storefronts. But the Taliban government's lack of transparency and the loss of essential services makes it difficult to see what citizens are getting in return. "We need to know better what the [Taliban-led] government plans to spend on," said William Byrd, an economist at the United States Institute of Peace. "The key thing about the whole budget is there needs to be transparency.""

Khaama, Tax Exemption Extended for Another 4 Months by Ministry of Finance, 10 May 2022

"The Taliban Ministry of Finance has published a statement stating that the tax exemption period has been extended for another four months due to small enterprises' inability to pay taxes. The tax exemption has been extended for four months, according to a statement released on Monday, May 9. It was approved by the Prime Minister and proposed by the Ministry of Finance's Directorate of Revenue. Small business owners, according to the statement, have been unable to pay their taxes and avoid tax penalties due to a variety of issues. The Ministry of Finance has given all entrepreneurs till the end of the fourth month of the 1401 solar year to clear their tax penalties and balances."

Afghan Voice Agency, IEA scraps customs duties on incoming humanitarian aid, 13 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) approved a ministry of finance proposal to scrap customs duties on humanitarian aid on Tuesday during a cabinet meeting chaired by IEA Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund. The cabinet also ordered ministries that receive aid to notify the ministry of finance about expected arrivals at least two days ahead of the arrival of relief convoys. Humanitarian relief has been a lifeline to an estimated 24.4 million people in Afghanistan who are facing severe and in need of and support.”

Ariana News, MoF finalizes plan to collect Zakat and Usher, 16 January 2022

“The Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said on Sunday a plan outlining the collection process of Usher (Islamic tax on certain harvests) and Zakat (Islamic tax on personal income) has been finalized and will be submitted to the council of ministers soon.

Officials said that after the approval of the plan a special board will be established to collect the Usher and Zakat from Afghan citizens.

“Two things are very important to us; first we want to collect it (Usher and Zakat) via a digital system, and second we want to spend it via a regular system based on Sharia laws,” said Ahmad Wali Haqmal, spokesman for the MoF.

Some clerics meanwhile welcomed the IEA’s plan, saying that Zakat and Usher money should be distributed to people who deserve it.

“When the officials collect Zakat from traders, it should reach deserving people, and the process should be transparent. Second, it should be done in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Chamber of Commerce, which registers traders’ properties,” said Amanullah Ahmadi, a cleric.”

Pajhwok, Efforts to recover arrears from Baghlan cooperatives begin, 15 December 2021

Agriculture department officials in northern Baghlan province say they have started making efforts to recover money cooperatives owe to the department. [...]

Qari Mohammad Naeem Hamkar, director of the Baghlan Agriculture, Livestock, Ushr and Zakat Commission, told a news conference that he had talked to the governor’s office and police commander about collecting the arrears from the cooperatives as soon as possible and hand them over to the state treasury.

“We are trying to get the money from them. Some people have agreed to pay us and we have talked to the police commander and the governor’s office about it,” he said.

AAN, Killing the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg: Afghanistan’s economic distress post-15 August, 11 November 2021

“In many districts captured by the Taliban in summer 2021, residents reported the new rulers immediately and systematically taxing the population that had fallen under their control (as well as billeting fighters in villages and expecting local people to feed them). Such ‘taxes’ are taken yearly, so unlike customs and taxes on minerals, will not provide steady revenues to the administration.”

Gandhara, Taliban Imposing ‘Charity’ Taxes on Farmers Who Need Aid, 29 October 2021

War, drought, and COVID have devastated farmers across Afghanistan.

Now, Afghan farmers who’ve lost money trying to grow crops over the past year say the Taliban is dealing them another crippling blow.

The cash-strapped regime is making them pay so-called charity taxes on their land and harvests, describing the payments as an obligation under Islamic law.

The charity taxes are being collected despite the fact that farmers themselves are among the 14 million

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghans that the World Food Program says are already facing acute hunger.

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatches: 'The Taliban Ministry of Agriculture is setting new rules to collect Islamic taxes.', 22 October 2021

“Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Here, a lawyer in Kabul offers his personal observations and perspective on new Islamic taxes being levied on farmers in Afghanistan. [...] The Taliban Ministry of Agriculture is setting new rules to collect Islamic taxes. The Ministry of Agriculture have announced that farmers are required now to pay zakat and oshr to this Ministry.

In Islamic law zakat refers to a religious obligation which requires Muslims to pay 2.5% of their income to the poor. In the previous government, the Taliban used to force the public to pay this amount because it was one of their revenue generation mechanisms. The Taliban hold the position that the money will go to the poor families but they have never provided any evidence of doing so. However, it was previously used to fund their war against the government.

Oshr also refers to one-tenth of whatever is produced or harvested and made available to the market. This type of Islamic tax can be collected in kind or in cash.

Over the past two decades a wide variety of businesses in Afghanistan have confirmed that the Taliban asked for more than it is said and meant by the terms zakat and oshr. In the former government the application of such rules was voluntary/optional. However, in the areas where the Taliban had more influence than the government it was a must.

If the Ministry's applies its decision to farmers in the country, it means that the farmers are required to add these two on top of other taxes that they are required to comply as per the taxation laws and regulations.”

What is the state of the financial industry and civilians' access to money?

Ariananews, Afghans continue to pay heavy price for US's economic sanctions, 31 August 2022

“A number of other experts consider the imposition of sanctions by the United States as the main cause of the expansion of poverty in the country and emphasize that its continuation will once again cause a mass migrant exodus.”

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation as of 30 August 2022, 2022

“Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritized activities. This funding update includes an indicative allocation of funds so as to accurately represent the resources available for the country.”

WFP, Global food crisis: Cash offers hope as people feel the heat, 29 August 2022

“In Afghanistan, vocational training activities to learn new skills while being paid. Their savings can help them weather the country's crisis, and hopefully increase their independence and employment opportunities. There will always be a need for direct food provision in some contexts, such as life-saving nutrition support. But in other contexts, especially where essential goods and services are available, giving people more money can be an appropriate, cost efficient and empowering response.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), “WE WILL DIE IN POVERTY BEFORE DYING BY COVID”
Young adults and multilayered crises in Afghanistan, 21 August 2022

“[T]he worst surge in violence across the country during the first half of the year resulted in massive displacement, job losses and limited access to markets. Within Afghanistan, both Herat and Kandahar are a magnet for internally displaced persons who leave their homes mostly in western central highlands and southern regions arriving in Kandahar and Herat to get settled for seeking assistance and/or seeking jobs in the labour market (Mansfield, 2021), more intensely during the months of June and July 2021.... Kandahar security deteriorated most significantly in the bordering city of Spinboldak with reports of 100 people being killed (Aljazeera, 2021). In both provinces, daily violence, kidnapping mostly traders and businessmen and their relatives for ransom and finally, both Kandahar and Herat were fully captured by the Taliban on 13 August 2021.”

“[R]apid change in the security situation, especially over the pandemic period, and an increase in local crime reduced access to work in the agriculture sector that was already affected by the drought and rising food prices. Furthermore, political instability and regime change destabilised the economic sector and reduced income, work opportunities, and access to national and international grain and fruit markets, eventually paving the way for even further impoverishment.”

Refugees International, Fit for Purpose: Getting Humanitarian Aid Right in Afghanistan One Year after the Taliban Takeover, 18 August 2022

“Acute malnutrition has taken hold in many parts of the country. People are turning to desperate measures to feed their families...The Afghan economy shows no signs of recovery, and this year’s harvest will likely underdeliver. Donors are falling short, and the war in Ukraine is making it harder to get food and other forms of aid into the country...The Taliban’s oppression of women and girls is also taking a significant humanitarian toll. Afghan female aid workers are finding it more difficult to do their jobs, and women and girls in need are becoming harder to reach.”

[T]he explosion of humanitarian needs was driven by a series of factors. Key among these were the suspension of development assistance and salary payments for Afghanistan’s civil service, the delinking of the Afghan central bank and commercial banks from the global financial system, the freeze on Afghanistan’s foreign reserves, the subsequent devaluation of the Afghan currency, and the mismanagement of the economy by the Taliban de facto authorities. These moves compounded the impact of years of conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“[A] staggering 22.8 million people, or 55 percent of the population, were expected to be in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. More than half of all children under five years of age are expected to be acutely malnourished in 2022, a 21 percent increase since the start of 2021.”

“When Refugees International visited Afghanistan this summer, nearly 60 percent of households were resorting to crisis coping strategies. This is an improvement from the winter but is still six times higher than in August 2021. There are credible reports of people selling body parts and their children and, in the worst case, taking their own lives. Child marriage has always been a practice in many rural communities. But now aid agencies report that girls as young as five or six are being sold off as brides. The families of the husbands need to pay for each of these girls, and those payments are spread out over the years providing income to the family of the girl.”

“According to Human Rights Watch, Taliban officials in only three of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces had provided “written agreements to aid agencies unconditionally permitting women aid workers to do their jobs” as of November 2021. In over half the country, women aid workers confronted “severe restrictions.” ...In the provincial capitals Refugees International was able to reach, Afghan female NGO

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

workers reported significant restrictions on their movement, particularly outside of urban areas. Some women NGO leaders had reduced their presence in the office to avoid attracting attention. Other female staff traveled only with a male escort or limited their movements outside of the provincial capitals. In districts and villages in the north of the country, some local NGOs indicated that female staff members were able to work openly for weeks at a time, only to have the de facto authorities crack down on their participation suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere. These crackdowns were not always consistent across geography, with the imposition of restrictions shifting unpredictably from one district to the next. Nor did they always appear tied to specific Taliban leaders or commanders at the local level.”

“Afghan women-led NGOs expressed serious fears that donors were moving funds away from women-led organizations. Some Afghan women leaders indicated that this trend contributed to the dwindling number of NGOs and other local civil society groups in their space. Although donors insist that this was not the case, the perception illustrates heightened sensitivities and concerns amidst Afghan women civil society leaders, particularly in the face of development funding cuts since August 2021. Afghan NGOs also expressed concern that new additional costs associated with female staff members might not be met by donors. These costs result from new requirements imposed by the de facto authorities, including separate office space and the presence of a male family member or “mahram” to accompany the female staff members during travel to and from and for work.”

“On the ground, there is no question that the Taliban are interfering in the distribution of humanitarian assistance. Such interference involves attempts to influence beneficiary lists and hiring practices, and disputes over types of assistance and which communities are to receive aid, and in what order of priority. The UN recorded 185 incidents of interference in the first five months of 2022. That is up from 138 incidents during the same period last year. Humanitarians also see more demands by the Taliban authorities for data and information regarding budgets and staffing contracts.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report No.8, 31 July 2022, 15 August 2022

“Across the country flooding affected thousands of people, killing at least 39, as well as destroying farmlands and severely impacting livelihoods [...]. Schools remained closed for girls in secondary school in July.”

Care International, Economic and Food Crisis in Afghanistan: The Impacts on Women and Girls, 15 August 2022

“The potential for women to earn an income in Afghanistan has deteriorated considerably since August 2021. 87.2% of the women surveyed reported a considerable decrease in their household income since August 2021. In Khost, a total of 100% (38) of households reported decreased income, and in Balkh, Ghazni, Herat, and Parwan, over 90% of respondents also reported a decrease.”

“As per the policy under the current regime, women are required to be accompanied by a mahram¹ if they want to travel more 70km away from their homes. However, in some districts, the local authorities have told women that they cannot go outside of their homes, even to the local markets, without a mahram. The discrepancy in the application of the rules at the local level further inhibits women’s movement. Women who were comfortable going to the markets to buy food now rely more heavily on male household members to purchase food.”

“In order to cope with the lack of food, interviewees reported adopting the following mechanisms:... Resorting to high-risk coping mechanisms: Afghanistan has seen a high spike in the practice of early and forced child marriages, where cash-strapped families unable to feed all their children resort to selling children – most often their girls – and in some cases, their organs. 12% of households (or 41 households)

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

indicated having to marry one of their girls under 18 due to the food crisis.”

The Guardian, Afghanistan: NGOs call for asset to be unfrozen to end ‘near universal poverty’, 15 August 2022

“The 32 NGOs – representing most of the major agencies operating in the country – say: “In the past 12 months millions of Afghans have endured a new wave of hardship, with widespread hunger, unemployment and near universal poverty. Ninety-five per cent of the population do not have enough food to eat. Women and girls are suffering disproportionately. NGOs on the ground are reporting that families are being forced to make impossible choices in order to survive.

[...]

Samira Sayed Rahman, the Afghanistan-based advocacy coordinator for the International Rescue Committee, one of the NGOs that has signed the statement, said: “On a recent trip to the south and south-east, I saw a healthcare system in collapse. Hospitals have not had the money to pay their staff in months. They do not have the money for pharmaceuticals and medicine. They do not have the money for equipment. Much of the healthcare sector is being run by the goodwill of Afghan doctors and nurses. That is not a sustainable model. Many are trying to leave.

Asuntha Charles, the national director of World Vision Afghanistan, said: “The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is cataclysmic, and children – as ever in crises like this – are on the frontlines. Over 4 million children are out of school, the majority of them girls, and more than 1.1 million are engaged in child labour. I have met families forced to sell their children, as young as three years old, simply to survive. As the world’s attention drifts, Afghans are falling deeper into catastrophe. We cannot turn our backs on them now.”

Vicki Aken, the Afghanistan country director for the International Rescue Committee, said: “At the root of this crisis is the country’s economic collapse. Decisions taken last year to isolate the Taliban – including the freezing of foreign reserves, the grounding of the banking system, and the halting of development assistance which financed most government services – have had a devastating impact. Extreme poverty is reducing demand for goods, forcing Afghan companies out of business, contributing to rising unemployment and exacerbating food insecurity.”

UN News, humanitarian funding still needed for ‘pure catastrophe’ situation in Afghanistan, 15 August 2022

““The situation can be best described as **a pure catastrophe**,” said Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov, UN Deputy Special Representative in Afghanistan, who is also the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the country.

[...]

Currently, some 25 million Afghans are living in poverty, and “immediate and urgent attention” is needed to address rising food prices resulting from the global food crisis and the country’s economic decline.

[...]

Still, hundreds of thousands of girls are blocked from attending secondary school, while cholera outbreaks have occurred and other diseases have increased, including those affecting livestock”

Bloomberg, Taliban’s rule batters Afghanistan year after us departure, 15 August 2022

“Millions of women have lost basic rights while the economy’s collapse and surging food prices have prompted fears of widespread starvation.

[...]

Teenage girls can no longer attend school, few women are allowed to hold jobs, journalists are under

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

siege and the country's economy has collapsed just as a surge in global food prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine made widespread starvation a serious risk.

[...]

Women's Rights

Afghan women are -- once again -- the primary victims of Taliban rule. Not long after taking power, the group barred teenage girls from getting an education beyond the seventh grade, dismissed thousands of women from government jobs and prevented females from traveling alone unless accompanied by a male relative. Women are also again forced to wear head-to-toe burqas in public.

[...]

Economic Free-fall

An abrupt cut in international aid, which accounted for 40% of GDP, after the Taliban takeover was a crushing blow, coming at the same time as the worst drought in three decades and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UN Development Programme says Afghanistan's economy will shrink 5% in 2022 after contracting 20% last year, while the country's per capita income is projected to decline by 30% to \$360 in 2022. At the same time, the cost of essential items such as food and fuel have climbed by about 40%, it says.

[...]

Hunger

Nearly 23 million people, or more than half the country's population, face acute hunger, a 65% increase since July 2021, just before the Taliban overran the country, according to reports by the World Food Programme and aid group Mercy Corps.

The situation is so desperate that some Afghans have resorted to selling personal belongings or even their young children into marriage in order to feed the rest of the family. Many others are trying to flee the country, adding to strains in neighboring nations including Pakistan."

ICRC, [Afghanistan: 113,500 newborn Afghan babies, but how will they survive?](#), 12 August 2022

"On the streets of Kabul we see more and more people selling their personal belongings, to raise cash to put food on the table. We see long lines of women begging for bread in front of bakeries. In rural areas, severe drought prevents farmers from growing food and generating income."

TOLO News, [OCHA:25 millions afghan currently live in poverty](#), 12 August 2022

"The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its recent report said that about 25 million Afghans currently live in poverty, and 900,000 jobs might be lost this year.

"Around 25 million people are now living in poverty, and as many as 900,000 jobs may be lost from the labour market this year as businesses struggle to stay afloat, and women and girls remain locked out of secondary school and the formal economy," the report reads.

[...]

"Today, the tragic reality is that the scale of needs in Afghanistan far outstrips the response capacity of humanitarian actors to meet them, and it will simply not be possible to move the population from a mode of surviving to thriving unless a functioning economy and banking system is restored; longer-term, more sustainable interventions are resumed; line ministries are technically capacitated; girls are officially able to return to school; and women and girls can participate meaningfully and safely in all aspects of social, political and economic life, including humanitarian work," the Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan, Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov said.

[...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Norwegian Refugee Council also stated in its report on the one-year anniversary of the Islamic Emirate that the level of hunger in Afghanistan is "shocking."

"We have witnessed shocking levels of poverty and suffering in Afghanistan over the past year. The economic restrictions imposed on the country and the unwillingness of both the de facto authorities and the international community to effectively engage with one another have pushed millions of Afghans into despair," NRC's report reads."

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban's Catastrophic Year of Rule, 11 August 2022

"More than 90 percent of Afghans have been food insecure for almost a year, causing millions of children to suffer from acute malnutrition and threatening serious long-term health problems."

"Since taking power, the Taliban have imposed rules that comprehensively prevent women and girls from exercising their most fundamental rights to expression, movement, and education, and affect their other basic rights to life, livelihood, health care, food, and water. They have prohibited women from traveling or going to their workplace without a male family member accompanying them – an impossible requirement for almost all families – and barred them from many jobs. The Taliban have denied almost all girls access to secondary school."

"Acute hunger is pervasive across Afghanistan, even though food and basic supplies are available in markets throughout the country, Human Rights Watch said. Almost 20 million people – half the population – are suffering either level-3 "crisis" or level-4 "emergency" levels of food insecurity under the assessment system of the World Food Programme (WFP). Over one million children under 5 – especially at risk of dying when deprived of food – are suffering from prolonged acute malnutrition. The WFP reported in June that tens of thousands of people in one province, Ghor, had slipped into level-5 "catastrophic" acute food insecurity, a precursor to famine."

"Overall, Afghans have been suffering from some form of food insecurity since last August, skipping meals or whole days of eating and engaging in extreme coping mechanisms to pay for food, including sending children to work."

The New Humanitarian, '38 million people are suffering because a few hundreds are in power', 11 august 2022

"During the former Islamic Republic, foreign aid grants funded 75 percent of public spending. Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the United States has provided \$775 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, but the UN says at least \$4.4 billion is needed to address the emergency needs of more than 24 million Afghans – 60 percent of the population.

Humanitarian workers say what funding is reaching the country isn't arriving quickly enough.

"A lot of money has been committed, but it's trickling down quite slowly," said Samira Sayed Rahman, the Afghanistan-based communication and advocacy coordinator for the International Rescue Committee (IRC). "What's happening right now is that 38 million people are suffering because a few hundred are in power."

That suffering includes hunger driven by the fast-rising cost of food. The higher prices are the result of a perfect storm of declining currency values, high unemployment, and export restrictions on key products like wheat and sunflower oil due to the conflict in Ukraine.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

According to the Red Cross, the price of cooking oil alone has surged by 55 percent over the last year. Wheat flour is up by 68 percent.

This has led to a situation where 70 percent of Afghan households are unable to provide basic needs for their families, according to the World Bank. The UN says nearly 23 million people, including 3.2 million children, are at risk of malnutrition. That's an increase of at least 100,000 children from early 2021.

Sayed Rahman said joblessness was a key factor driving up the rising number of Afghans in need of humanitarian assistance. "It's starkly more in the urban communities, because that's where unemployment is at its highest," she noted.

This means families with little previous experience of poverty and shortages are also starting to seek food aid, even in the cities.

By October 2021, two months after the Taliban returned to power, at least 50,000 newly displaced people were living in Kabul. More than 700,000 Afghans were displaced by conflict in 2021. Thousands more are being pushed to the cities each year by drought and uncertain harvests.

As with other public services, healthcare in Afghanistan was also highly reliant on foreign aid. Hospitals have been heavily impacted by the sanctions and aid cutbacks, with thousands of healthcare workers across the country going without wages for months at a time.

"Right now, much of the Afghan healthcare system is being run by the goodwill of the Afghan doctors and nurses who are essentially working for free," said Sayed Rahman, who has visited health centres in the south and southeast of the country in recent months. "But that's not sustainable," she said. "No one can continue to work without pay for this long."

In January, the World Health Organization was already warning that the healthcare system was "on the brink of collapse" and was in desperate need of additional funding from the World Bank, the European Commission, and USAID.

Afghanistan's new poor

Increasing food prices have made the threat of hunger an ever-present danger even for many Afghans who a year ago had been leading relatively comfortable lives. More than one million people are out of work. Some children feel forced to do hard labour to make ends meet.

Naimatullah, 24, left his native Balkh province in late July to come to Kabul and work as a brickmaker. But the economic downturn has hit the construction industry hard. With fewer businesspeople erecting multi-storey premises and opening store fronts, Naimatullah told The New Humanitarian the demand for bricks is down compared to even a year ago.

"In the past, we relied on business-owners or richer families who wanted to build or remodel their homes, but no one has the money for new building nowadays," he said.

With rising food costs and having to split his daily wages with the other brickmakers, Naimatullah is barely making enough to feed himself each day.

Workers from the former Western-backed government are also struggling. Those who are still trying to earn a living in the public sector say their wages have been slashed, with most making a fraction of what they once did.

Taliban officials say the reduced government wages are due to funding shortfalls resulting from the sanctions and aid cutbacks.

Workers from two ministries in the provinces of Kabul and Logar told The New Humanitarian their incomes have been reduced by as much as 80 percent over the last year. The situation is even worse for women who used to work in the government.

Though female employees of the Ministries of Public Health, Education, and Interior have been allowed to return to work, thousands more women have been told to stay at home while also being paid a reduced

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

salary. The Taliban has promised that female government workers will eventually be able to return to work, but no date has been announced.

Private businesses are also suffering. The owners of textile and publishing factories told The New Humanitarian many of their skilled workers have left for Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Nawab Niazi, the owner of a textile company in Kabul, said he's finding it extremely difficult to replace dozens of workers who went abroad over the last year. To prepare for what new orders the business does get, they have to really rely on their older, longer-term employees.

"[We] have to train new workers as quickly as possible," he said.

Due to the limited cash flow in Afghanistan, Niazi said his company now insists on at least 50 percent of payment up front.

"It's made it difficult, because a lot of people that initially approach us can't meet that threshold, so we lose some potential business," he said. "But it also gives us a little more peace of mind because we know that the companies and organisations we're dealing with now have enough money to pay us."

Even businesses catering to more well-to-do Afghans say they've had to cut their workers' wages. The owner of two high-end restaurants in central Kabul told The New Humanitarian he was forced to reduce his workers' salaries by 10 to 30 percent over the last year.

The decline in the value of the afghani has put staple foods out of reach of most Afghans. In January, it reached a record low of 105 against the US dollar, behind only the Turkish lira in terms of the worst performing currencies in the world. Currently, it's between 89 and 91. In the days before the Taliban takeover, it hovered around 80.

And it's not just the afghani's value that's suffering. For most of its history, the Afghan currency was printed outside the country, mostly in Europe. Even prior to the Taliban takeover, new notes hadn't reached Afghanistan in months. But now Da Afghanistan Bank, the Central Bank, has been forced to recirculate old, damaged notes back into the economy. This reliance on worn-out notes has affected the nation's money exchangers, who say they're now facing difficulties trying to get banks to accept the damaged currency."

Thomson Reuters Foundation, [In afghanistan a wrenching choice between drought and migration](#), 16 August 2022

"Conflict, water shortages, and economic crisis have wiped out jobs, ruined crops and left millions of Afghans in humanitarian need

Climate change-induced droughts cause strife nationwide

Humanitarian crisis worsening since Taliban takeover

Water shortage could force people to migrate to survive

[...]

Afghanistan is one of the world's most vulnerable nations to climate change, and among the least equipped to deal with it, according to the United Nations and aid agencies.

This is exacerbating a catastrophic humanitarian crisis as Western nations have frozen billions of foreign-stored Afghan bank reserves, and suspended development aid which previously made up about 75% of the nation's public spending.

[...]

Yet as droughts and erratic weather intensify, a growing number of people are at risk of losing their livelihoods and incomes, and may end up forced to migrate despite the nationwide instability, U.N. and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

climate change experts have warned.

[...]

Triple threat

Conflict, severe drought and economic crisis have left 24.4 million people - more than 60% of Afghanistan's population - in need of humanitarian aid, the United Nations says.

"Recurrent drought and erratic climatic shocks are resulting in a below-average harvest - further threatening incomes and livelihoods," Ramiz Alakbarov, acting head of the U.N. Mission in Afghanistan, said in emailed comments.

Last year, a drastic reduction in rainfall caused water and food scarcity across 25 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, he added."

Save the Children, One Year Under Taliban Rule, Girls are More Isolated, Hungry, Sad: New Report, 10 August 2022

"The report, titled *Breaking point: Life for children one year since the Taliban takeover*, shows that 97% of families are struggling to provide enough food for their children, and that girls are eating less than boys. Almost 80% of children said they had gone to bed hungry in the past 30 days. Girls were almost twice as likely as boys to frequently go to bed hungry.

A lack of food is having devastating consequences on children's health and threatening their future. Nine in 10 girls said their meals had reduced in the past year and that they worry because they're losing weight and have no energy to study, play and work. [...]

Children interviewed by Save the Children said the economic situation – leaving households without enough to eat and without basic items – was driving an increase in child marriages in their communities, and that this was impacting girls more than boys. Out of the children who said they'd been asked to marry to improve their family's financial situation in the past year, 88% were girls."

AVA, Afghanistan was introduced as the poorest country in the world, 10 August, 2022

"By publishing a report, the World Bank has introduced the countries with the most severe food and debt crises. According to this report, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Yemen have been declared as the poorest countries. [...] According to the World Bank report, 69% of Afghan people are unable to meet their food needs and 16% of families consume less than one meal a day."

The New Humanitarian, One year on, few options for Afghans escaping hunger and Taliban persecution, 10 August 2022

"More than 90 percent of the Afghan population is suffering from food insecurity, and each month tens of thousands of children need emergency medical treatment due to malnutrition, according to a recent report by Human Rights Watch. Households headed by women, who lost employment after the Taliban took power, have been hit the hardest. [...] "The situation is at its worst ever," Zaman Sultani, South Asia researcher at Amnesty International, told The New Humanitarian. "People are selling their daughters to get enough money [to live]. People are also selling their body parts and organs to feed the family. That is what the humanitarian situation is like on the ground, and it keeps on getting worse.""

The New Humanitarian, Unfreeze Afghan assets or more hungry children may die, 9 August 2022

"Following decades of conflict, people in Afghanistan are now grappling with another deadly issue as almost universal poverty grips the nation: soaring hunger. The Afghan economy had been deteriorating long before the government changed, but over the course of the Taliban's first year back in power the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

country has suffered an economic implosion. This has led to almost 20 million people experiencing acute levels of food insecurity and put the lives of 1.1 million children with severe acute malnutrition at risk. There is no doubt that the abrupt suspension of international development aid last year has had a knock-on effect on the economy: For 20 years, development funding provided an estimated 70-80 percent of the previous government's budget, and its withdrawal swiftly brought the health and education sectors to their knees, affecting millions of people. The freezing of Afghanistan's assets has also been a cause of this dire economic stagnation. Some \$9.1 billion of Afghanistan's national reserves have been frozen overseas, and lack of access to these reserves is effectively preventing Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) – the Central Bank of Afghanistan – from performing its core regulatory functions of managing banking system volatility, stabilising the country's currency, and, by extension, avoiding dramatic increases in the price of basic commodities such as food, fuel, and medicines.”

TOLO News, Beggars Increase on Streets of Kabul Amid Widespread Poverty, 9 August 2022

“As the level of the poverty and unemployment rises across the country, the number of beggars is growing every day in the capital city of Kabul. Some beggars in Kabul told TOLONews that they are willing to cease begging if the Islamic Emirate provides them with employment with which they can earn a living.”

International Rescue Committee (IRC), One year on: How the IRC expanded our impact in Afghanistan, 8 August 2022

“The IRC has provided Afghan families with general cash assistance for decades. Since last year, we've expanded to provide cash to address specific needs, such as health, nutrition, and work.

Cash for health, for example, can help families travel to regional hospitals for treatment. Meanwhile, cash for work can help women start their own businesses, such as making pickles and selling them at the market, or help farmers purchase livestock so they can expand their farming.

Noor* fled Kunduz Province with her three children when the Taliban came and conflict was raging. She had no time to bring any belongings except some clothes for her kids.

“I thank [the IRC] for what they have done for us so far,” she said after she received cash assistance in late 2021. “Today, I want to buy tea and sugar, onions, and things like that we need. It means that my kids will not starve to death. Now, they are hopeful.””

Khaama Press, Prospects of Employment; Taliban Supreme Leader Issues Order to Round Up Beggars in Kabul, 8 August 2022

“According to the Taliban-controlled Bakhtar News Agency, the Deputy Prime Minister of the group has been directed to coordinate with respective agencies to begin work on rounding up panhandlers from Kabul city, addressing and solving their problems.

After biometrics, beggars with skills and abilities will be given jobs and their guardians will be asked to give up and swear off begging in the future, according to Bakhtar.

Per the statement, street children beggars would receive an education, and beggars who are extremely underprivileged and unable to work will receive a monthly salary.”

Human Rights Watch, Economic Causes of Afghanistan's Humanitarian Crisis, 4 August 2022

“Private Afghan banks continue to struggle to cover withdrawals by depositors, including humanitarian aid organizations. Even when funds are transmitted electronically into banks to pay for humanitarian operations, wages, or remittances, banks' lack of cash means that funds cannot be withdrawn. The Central Bank of Afghanistan, because of the shortage of both US and Afghan banknotes, has severely restricted

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

transfers of banknotes to private banks and imposed limits on withdrawals of afghanis, while also prohibiting many types of electronic transactions in US dollars. Private banks lack adequate local currency to cover withdrawals, have few or no dollars in cash, and, without significant assets on deposit, are unable to extend credit.

Banks are also facing difficulties settling incoming dollar transactions via correspondent accounts at private banks outside the country, most likely due to foreign banks' fears that they may be violating UN and US sanctions on the Taliban."

Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Economic Crisis Underlies Mass Hunger](#), 4 August 2022

"Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis cannot be effectively addressed unless the United States and other governments ease restrictions on the country's banking sector to facilitate legitimate economic activity and humanitarian aid, Human Rights Watch said today.

The US and other governments and the World Bank Group revoked the credentials of the Central Bank of Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover on August 15, 2021.

"Afghanistan's intensifying hunger and health crisis is urgent and at its root a banking crisis," said John Sifton, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. "Regardless of the Taliban's status or credibility with outside governments, international economic restrictions are still driving the country's catastrophe and hurting the Afghan people."

Despite actions by the US and others to license banking transactions with Afghan entities, Afghanistan's central bank remains unable to access its foreign currency reserves or process or receive most international transactions. As a result, the country continues to suffer from a major liquidity crisis and lack of banknotes. Businesses, humanitarian groups, and private banks continue to report extensive restrictions on their operational capacities. At the same time, because outside donors have severely cut funding to support Afghanistan health, education, and other essential sectors, millions of Afghans have lost their incomes.

An Afghan humanitarian official told Human Rights Watch in mid-July, [...] "A functioning banking system is an immediate and crucial need to address the humanitarian crisis." [...]

US and World Bank decisions to restrict Afghanistan's banking sector have significantly amplified the crisis by hampering most legitimate economic activities, including humanitarian efforts. The Central Bank of Afghanistan is unable to carry out basic central banking functions, including holding currency auctions, importing banknotes, and processing or settling legitimate commercial and humanitarian transactions. Because of these incapacities, even basic economic activities remain severely curtailed.

"Importers are struggling to pay for goods, humanitarian groups are facing problems with basic operations, and the Afghan diaspora can't send enough money to their relatives and friends," Sifton said. "Millions of hungry Afghans are experiencing the abysmal reality of seeing food at the market but being unable to purchase it."

Making matters worse, Afghanistan's economic crisis is occurring as inflation and cost increases have been accelerating, with an over 50 percent increase for basic household items since July 2021. According to World Bank data, prices for staples such as rice and wheat have almost doubled in the last two months. At the same time, prices for agricultural inputs like fertilizer and fuel have doubled, and they are in short supply, meaning Afghanistan's own domestic food production is set to decrease in 2022. [...]

The Taliban leadership should recognize that their poor human rights record is imperiling hopes to reach any agreements to resolve the banking crisis, Human Rights Watch said. [...]

Taliban authorities are reportedly prepared to accept independent monitoring of the central bank by outside auditors, a key demand of the US government and World Bank. But they continue to reject key

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

demands from governments to remove sanctioned officials from the central bank's leadership and to reverse their position denying secondary education to girls and women."

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Unprecedented flash floods batter rural Afghanistan, 3 August 2022

"Statement by Neil Turner, the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Country Director, on the situation in severely flood-hit Afghan provinces:

"This year's unseasonal flooding is catastrophic for impacted communities in Afghanistan. The scale of destruction is unparalleled. Flash floods have swept away entire sections of roads and other critical infrastructure - bridges, wheat mills, hospitals and schools. People have lost their businesses, and the entire families have seen their homes and acres of farmland destroyed.

"We estimate that more than 18,000 people have been affected, many of whom were already struggling to survive. Over 40 people have lost their lives to date. The disaster has hit nine of Afghanistan's provinces, including Khost and Paktika, areas which only just witnessed a devastating earthquake in June.

"The situation in rural Afghanistan was already critical before the flooding. The economic crisis following the Taliban takeover last year has pushed many farmers into severe debt, as they struggle to pay for the seeds and fertilizer to plant this season. With their crops wiped away and winter just around the corner, these communities have zero time to recover. [...]

Facts and figures

- NRC has launched an emergency response to help people affected by the flooding in Nangarhar, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. We are also scaling up our work in Khost and Paktika, where our teams continue to assist the earthquake-affected communities.
- NRC's assessment of the impact of flash floods indicates that over the past week across nine provinces 42 people lost their lives and 56 were critically injured; 1,720 houses were destroyed; 3,073 houses were damaged; 790 acres of agricultural land was destroyed; 444 tube wells were inundated; 12 wheat mills were destroyed; 28 bridges collapsed; more than 5 km of roads were damaged.
- Over 24 million people - more than half of the Afghan population - need humanitarian assistance to survive. That is an increase of 30 per cent from last year.
- The dire humanitarian crisis and economic collapse of Afghanistan is driven primarily by the international financial and political restrictions placed on the de facto authorities, which followed the 2021 takeover of the country.
- The REACH mid-year assessment for Afghanistan indicates a worsening economic situation for Afghans, with families taking on more debt, primarily driven by the need to purchase food amidst rising food prices and shrinking incomes, even as they spend less each month.
- FAO-WFP have now listed Afghanistan in the top six countries that have populations identified or projected to experience starvation or death, or at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions, requiring the most urgent attention.
- Poor harvests were already forecast for the year due to ongoing drought, household debts and the inability of farmers to procure seeds and fertilizers under the current economic sanctions. This, coupled with destruction caused by the floods raise serious concerns around food availability during the forthcoming winter period."

Ariana News, \$40 million cash aid package arrives in Kabul, 2 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) announced that a humanitarian cash aid package of \$40 million arrived in Kabul on Tuesday.”

International Organisation for Migration: Displacement Tracking Matrix, Afghanistan – Survey on drivers of migration – round 2 (November 2020 – March 2021), 2 August 2022

“This report will demonstrate how Afghan mobility is the result of a range of factors related to economic conditions and prolonged conflict within the country. Most importantly, these factors are mutually reinforcing, exacerbating one another and emphasizing the multifaceted nature of migration out of Afghanistan. During the reporting period, between November 2020 and March 2021 (Round 2), the decisions to leave Afghanistan and to choose a destination country revolved primarily around the intersection of economic conditions and conflict within the country. Those leaving Afghanistan, therefore, were motivated by the multiple intersections of these factors as opposed to an identifiable single reason”.

SIGAR, July 30, 2022 Quarterly Report to Congress, 30 July 2022

“The UN World Food Programme projects that 18.9 million Afghans will face acute food insecurity between June and November 2022, including 4.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women. Some 19.7 million Afghans faced acute malnutrition between March and May 2022.

A 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, killing at least 1,000 people and injuring 3,000. Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada made a rare plea for international help in response efforts.

The Taliban released their first annual budget since taking power, outlining 231.4 billion afghani (\$2.6 billion) in expenditures and forecasting 186.7 afghani (\$2.1 billion) in domestic revenues for 2022.

The Taliban signed an agreement with a United Arab Emirates state-run aviation company to manage ground handling and security operations at international airports in Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat”

The Khaama News Agency, Over 13 Million Afghan Children Need Humanitarian Assistance: Save the Children Report, 27 July 2022

“According to a study from the Save the Children organization released today, Wednesday, July 27, 18.9 million people, including 9.2 million children in Afghanistan, are anticipated to experience an emergency or critical food insecurity between June and November 2022.”

“Save the Children’s report cited the United Nations Development Program stating that 97% of the Afghan population faces the prospect of living in poverty and falling below the poverty line.”

“Acute malnutrition affects 1.1 million Afghan children under the age of five, according to the report.”

“Covid-19, measles, acute watery diarrhea (AWD), and dengue fever are among the numerous disease emergencies Afghanistan is currently dealing with.”

“A significant contraction of the economy, rising poverty, and financial instability, as well as high unemployment and high food and agricultural input prices, have been caused by the rapid drop in international grant support, loss of access to offshore assets, and disruption of financial links.”

“In addition, the Ukraine crisis has had a significant impact on how much food costs rise and become out of reach for many Afghans.”

“With the rebels-turned-politicians behind the wheel, Afghanistan’s unstable economy is impacted by the Taliban’s political isolation and economic sanctions, which exacerbated the country’s already-impoverished citizens’ poverty, unemployment, and hunger.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Khaama Press News Agency, Muttaqi Calls on U.S. to Release Central Bank Asset: Tashkent Conference, 27 July 2022

"The acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the US-imposed sanctions on Afghanistan have hindered the overall progress of the country, calling on the United States government to release Afghanistan's Central Bank assets."

"Speaking at the Tashkent conference on Afghanistan Tuesday, Muttaqi exclaimed the decades-long war and ongoing US sanctions are the main reasons for poverty in the country, adding the Islamic Emirate government is now ready to engage with the world based on mutual interest."

"According to the Acting Minister, lifting economic sanctions against Afghanistan is the best way to normalize relationship between the two countries, saying such a move will as well leave a positive impact on the mind of Afghan people."

Pajhwok, Nangarhar flood victims demand urgent assistance, 25 July

"Flash floods unleashed by heavy downpours killed five people, injured as many, destroyed more than 500 homes and devastated crops on thousands of acres of land in eastern Nangarhar province, official said on Monday. The affected people say they suffered huge financial losses and they need urgent help. Officials of Nangarhar say five people died and five others were injured due to recent rains and subsequent flooding in Jalalabad city, Sararud, Batikot, Kot, Rodat, Achin, Spinghar and Kuzkunar districts.

The Department of Information and Culture confirmed the floods had destroyed more than five hundred houses and swept away crops on thousands of acres of land in the mentioned areas.

In this regard, Sediqullah Qureshi, head of press coordination at provincial Department of Information and Culture, told Pajhwok: "Due to the floods, our countrymen suffered heavy financial losses besides some casualties. The worst hit is Batikot district where crops on hundreds of acres were destroyed".

(...) Hamid Mahmoudi, a civil society activist, said he had received information from various districts that people had lost everything to the flooding, asking the government to provide urgent assistance to the people.

(...) According to reports, floods destroyed highways in Nangarhar and some other provinces and caused financial and life losses to the people."

Khaama Press, Flooding Inflicts Economic Loss Across Parts of Afghanistan, 24 July 2022

"Numerous residential buildings and about 200 acres of agricultural land were devastated by the floodwaters in Parwan province, according to local sources.

The Dara Qom Chaq area's floods in Parwan province in northern Afghanistan have suffered the most damage, according to Qari Abdul Ghafar Haydari, Taliban district governor.

Local sources in Maidan Wardak province, in central Afghanistan, in addition, indicate that the floods have damaged hundreds of acres of agricultural land as well as a substantial amount of crops.

Earlier this year, flooding in this province destroyed agricultural fields and residential properties.

Sources from Panjshir province, in northern Afghanistan, said yesterday that the flood had closed down the province's highway to traffic and had destroyed agricultural fields.

Residents in Jalalabad, the capital of the province of Nangarhar in eastern Afghanistan, have reported that the Kabul-Jalalabad highway was flooded by water today, Sunday, 24th July.

The effort to reopen the highway has reportedly started, according to Qari Hanzala Malang, provincial Director of Transportation in Nangarhar.

Natural calamities in Afghanistan this year, including devastating floods and earthquakes, caused irreparable economic and human losses all over the country."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tolo News, Balkhi: Humanitarian Situation 'Exacerbated' by Sanctions, 23 July 2022

"Based on the figures of the United Nations, over 97 percent of the population of Afghanistan faces poverty and lives on less than two dollars a day."

[...] "The humanitarian situation was exacerbated (which) preexisted. When we came to power, it was exacerbated by the automatic sanctions that were leveled against Afghanistan and these are the toughest sanctions that not even Russia faces, not even Iran faces, so we were cut off from the international Swift system, we couldn't do any international transactions." [Statement by MoFA spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi in an interview with CGTN]

[...] "Some residents of Kabul said that due to lack of jobs, it is too difficult for them to find a piece of bread for their families."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Afghanistan, Pakistan Rank Lowest In Gender-Gap Index, UN Says, 20 July 2022

"The World Economic Forum, in a report released on July 13, says the two countries are joined by Iran in the bottom five countries in the global ranking, which measures economic participation, educational attainment, health, and political survival of women.

Taliban-ruled Afghanistan is last of 146 countries in the index, while neighboring Pakistan is just one place better at 145th, the report says. Iran is 143rd."

ICRC, Afghanistan: People suffer as spending capacity shrinks and prices rise, 13 July 2022

"In August 2021, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) took control of the country, following which a number of international donors immediately suspended most of the non-humanitarian funding that constituted over 70% of the government expenditures. Additionally, about \$9 billion assets in the Afghan Central Bank were frozen, resulting in an acute financial crisis for the banking sector in the country and for families across Afghanistan.

Compounding the impact of this dire situation, the country has been hit by one of the worst droughts in recent years, significantly reducing food crops and water supplies in many parts. Reports show that the drought has severely affected wheat yield, cutting it by a quarter in some provinces, according to some recent statement from the Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Department in Jalalabad. Consequently, the price of staple food has shot up even more, making even basic groceries inaccessible to most people." "... food insecurity and higher inflation rates are affecting hundreds of thousands of unemployed Afghans and their families."

"Ahmad Siar, a truck driver in Kabul, has been without a contract for many months. He also complains about unemployment and the spiking food prices. "Earlier my family could afford to eat a good meal at least once a week, but now we barely manage a good meal once a month. The price of basic food items has increased so much that people like me simply cannot buy them. Instead, we have been forced to carefully ration what we eat and buy only half the quantity of groceries that we used to normally buy," he says."

AVA, Switzerland Assist \$2.2m to Afghanistan, 13 July 2022

"The United Nations says that due to the economic crisis, drought, and natural incidents in Afghanistan, millions of people need urgent humanitarian aid."

AVA, China vows ¥50m in immediately aid for Afghans, 12 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The June 22 earthquake struck southeastern Afghanistan, killing more than 1,500 people and wounding nearly 2,000 others. Tens of thousands of houses were destroyed in the deadliest quake in Afghanistan in the past two decades.. The Chinese Embassy in Islamabad said recent floods impeded rescue efforts in some provinces of the country."

ToloNews, 57 People Killed in Recent Flooding Across Afghanistan, 12 July 2022

"At least 57 people were killed and 72 were wounded in recent flooding across Afghanistan, the State Ministry of Disaster Management said."

[...] "The floods also affected a large portion of farmland."

"The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock said that the Afghan farmers have suffered heavy financial losses due to recent floods."

"In many provinces of the country, where the heavy rains happened, the floods occurred and affected agriculture lands, canals and gardens," said Musbahuddin Mustaeen, a spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

Meanwhile, the farmers said that they have suffered financial losses and that their crops have been destroyed.

"Heavy floods flowed due to heavy rains in many districts, particularly the Sayed Abad district. The farmers and people suffered heavy losses," said a farmer in Wardak province.

"Due to fatal floods and storms, one citizen was killed, and one other was wounded. Heavy financial loss has resulted," said Shafiullah, a resident of Nangarhar province."

AVA, At least 26 die in Uruzgan floods, 12 July 2022

"[...] Uruzgan officials said 26 people died as a result of floods in the province in the past few days. The deputy governor of Uruzgan said in the last two days, floods in Khas Uruzgan, Gizab and Chora districts have caused huge financial losses to the residents."

AVA, From flood and earthquake to famine and migration; what should we do?, 12 July 2022

"[...] the occurrence of an earthquake [...] it is believed that compared to the losses and damages caused, significant domestic and foreign aid was sent to the earthquake affected areas; But the fear of the lack of fair distribution of aid, homelessness, the fate of families that have been torn apart, hundreds of homeless and orphaned children, disabled people who have to die and be revived thousands of times for the rest of their lives, reviving the cycle of life in poor and remote villages that have been completely destroyed, overcome the emotional and psychological consequences after the deadly earthquake and worst of all, the spread of diseases such as cholera"

"The flood is another devastating calamity that has swept through almost the entire country, killing dozens of people and hundreds of livestock, destroying people's fields and destroying agricultural products. Thousands of houses throughout the country have been completely destroyed as a result of the recent floods. All this while many regions receive almost no aid; Because the newly established government does not have enough resources to provide aid and care for the victims, and aid organizations either have a similar problem or act based on their own political, economic and ideological interests and goals, not necessarily the urgency of people's needs."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"In addition to these crises, poverty and famine caused by political-economic collapse, which led to flood migrations and other pitiful and painful problems, have brought the country closer to the abyss of a full-scale human disaster."

At the same time, catastrophic wars like Balkhab, which occurred as a result of the ambition of a rebellious local commander, have imposed the greatest suffering on women, children and innocent civilians who left their homes and went to the mountains and cold deserts."

Ariana News, Flash floods kill 63, injure scores in Afghanistan, 12 July 2022

"At least 63 people have died in flash floods caused by heavy rain in several provinces of Afghanistan in the past week, officials said on Tuesday.

Eighty-one others were injured in the floods which happened in 12 provinces of the country, said Ghulam Ghaws Naseri, acting minister of state for disaster management.

According to the official, 12,250 homes were destroyed or damaged by the floods; 12,000 acres of agricultural land was damaged and 2,000 livestock killed.

"Rains and floods have damaged a lot of homes. Floods have killed people's livestock. Victims need urgent aid. They are poor people," said Syedajan, a Nangarhar resident.

"Floods have hit districts including Surkhrod, Momand Dara, Khewa," said Mir Agha, another Nangarhar resident."

[...] "The monsoon in India in June, July and August directly effects our country, causing rain in east, southeast, northeast, south and some central parts," said Mohammad Nasim Muradi, head of the Afghanistan Meteorological Department.

"Such rains bring flash floods in some parts of the country causing human and financial losses."

The official said that heavy rains and flash floods were expected in the coming days as well."

ToloNews, 26 People Killed in Floods in Uruzgan: Officials, 11 July 2022

"Local officials in Uruzgan province said that at least 26 people have been killed in recent floods in the Khas, Gaizab and Chora districts of Uruzgan and the flooding has caused financial damage as well.

"Just in Khas Uruzgan district, around 500,000 Kaldor in financial damage has been inflicted," said Hekmatullah Muzamil, deputy of the Uruzgan governor.

Meanwhile, families who have been affected by the recent floods in the province say they lost all their belongings and they urged the officials and humanitarian agencies to provide them assistance.

"Everything we had is destroyed. The livestock have been destroyed and everything is under the mud," said Mohammad Wali, who has been affected by the floods.

"The materials in many shops have been destroyed and hit by the floods," said Qudratullah, a member of affected family.

Local officials of Uruzgan province said the two-day floods in the province have caused much financial loss to the residents of the province, they asked aid organizations to provide assistance to the affected families of the recent floods."

ToloNews, Afghans Celebrate Eid Amid Dire Economic Conditions, 9 July 2022

"However, harsh economic conditions have affected the celebration of Eid this year compared to previous years.

The residents of Kabul said that they returned to work as usual instead of celebrating the holiday.

"I spent my Eid on the street under the hot sun. The people are economically weak, no one bought the flowers," said Akbar, a vendor.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Meanwhile, the price of food and other materials has recently risen in the markets of the capital city."

ToloNews, Widows in Uruzgan Face Dire Economic Situation, 7 July 2022

"Some widows who lost their husbands over the past several years of conflict in the southern province of Uruzgan say they are facing a dire economic condition.

They said they the breadwinners of their families and are must beg for money on the streets of the provincial capital city of Tarn Kot.

"My children are sick. I don't have money to buy them medicine and there is no breadwinner," said Haseena, a widow.

"I am from Kandahar and came here. I have three children and I should feed them," said Asma, a widow.

These widows said that their children are deprived of education due to poverty. They called on the relevant organizations to provide them with work opportunity.

"I hope to find work, I will be happy. My children are thirsty and starving," said Sador Gul, a widow.

"They may help us by providing a sewing factory or a shop," said Hameeda, a widow."

[...]

"With the fall of the former government and freezing of Afghan assets by the US, the country's already feeble economy became severely worse."

Khaama News (Afghan News Agency), UNOCHA: Germany Contributes €50 Million to Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, 6 July 2022

"Afghanistan's poverty and unemployment have increased due to the country's political unrest and drought. [...] more than 22 million people, or more than half of the country's population, are experiencing extreme hunger, with the majority unable to predict when their next meal will be, according to the United Nations World Food Program."

ToloNews, '13 Billion Afs' Allocated for Disabled: Ministry of Martyrs, 6 July 2022

"The Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled said it has allocated more than 13 billion Afghanis to pay six-months' worth of compensation for the nation's disabled people.

Kalimullah Afghan, head of the finance department of the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled, speaking at a press conference, said that the process of distributing the funds to the disabled will begin.

"It has been 17 days that the process of paying specific salaries for every disabled person, based on the nature of their disability, has started and it keeps ongoing," he said."

[...]

"Meanwhile, some disabled persons said it has been months that they have not been paid and they are facing many economic challenges.

Zalmi, who is 70, lost his leg after being hit by a rocket in the wars in Afghanistan.

Zalmi says he is the sole breadwinner of his family of nine, and is concerned about not being paid.

"In the winter I went to the department of human resources, we got medical examinations. They said your salary will be paid on Wednesday, but it has been several months and I have not received it," he said.

Abdul Mobin, a disabled person, told TOLONews that it has been five months since he has received his salary.

"On Wednesday, I went to the bank, they said that in the coming week one thousand people will receive their salaries but we don't know ... They are deceiving us," he said."

AVA, Germany donated 50 million euros in cash to Afghanistan, 6 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Drought and political developments in Afghanistan have led to the spread of poverty and unemployment in the country. According to statistics, more than half of the population of Afghanistan is facing hunger and needs help."

AAN, Donor's dilemma: How to provide aid to a country whose government you do not recognise, 5 July 2022

"The call for international recognition [by Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada in his Eid ul-Fitr message on 1 May 2022] was highlighted in the closing statement of a gathering of more than 4,000 *ulema* (religious leaders) and elders which was held in Kabul on 29 June to 2 July 2022. The statement, however, made no reference to reopening girls' schools (see media reports here and here).

"There are currently five multilateral funds for Afghanistan:

Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) was established by donors as the platform to pool resources and coordinate support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan in 2002 and appears to be the primary vehicle slated for delivering non-humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Its balance currently stands at USD 1.2 billion, with plans to commit or disburse all available funds by the end of 2022, according to the ARTF team speaking to AAN on 4 July 2022."

Norwegian Refugee Council (Afghanistan), Surviving an earthquake in an economic collapse, 4 July 2022

"The trauma of surviving an earthquake is compounded by the country's near-total economic collapse, crumbling state infrastructure, absence of development assistance, ongoing sanctions and political isolation of the Taliban-led government. Survivors of the earthquake have shared with us their deep-rooted concerns about how they will survive after losing everything they have."

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, SCA distributes aid packages to 500 affected families in Paktika province, 3 July 2022

"Following the earthquake in Paktia province, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) distributes aid packages including In-kind Food Baskets, Non-Food Items, Hygiene Items, and Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance to 500 affected families worth a total of 25 million Afghanis after a rapid assessment at the scene."

IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan — Baseline Mobility Assessment and Emergency Community-Based Needs Assessment Summary Results (March—April 2022), July 2022

"2.8 million households are in debt, a 6% decrease since the previous round"

"42% of households rely on less preferred or less expensive foods as a coping mechanism"

"55% of households have no source of income (excluding debt)"

"69% of people cannot afford basic food needs"

"71% of people in urban settlements cannot afford basic food needs, compared with 68% of rural and 68% of peri-urban settlements."

"10% of households rely on food aid for bread"

"16% of households eat one meal or less per day"

"23% of people are unable to access basic food needs"

"1% of households resort to extreme measures such as selling organs, selling children, or child marriage to afford food"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"On average throughout Afghanistan, over half of households in all communities (55%) have no source of income. Households in Bamyan province on average face the highest rate among all provinces, where almost 9 out of 10 households are without a source of income (89%). Ghor, Kabul, Paktya, Kapisa, and Baghlan provinces also face high rates of over 70% of households without a single source of income."

"Rural, urban, and peri-urban settlements report similar percentages of households without an income (54%, 57%, and 56% respectively)."

"Over 2.8 million households in Afghanistan are in debt. This marks a 6% decrease in indebted households compared to the previous round (which found 3,024,350 households were in debt). Kabul and Nangarhar provinces have the highest overall number of indebted households (436,996 and 363,909 respectively)."

"Indebtedness is a major factor in decision-making, both for internal displacement and cross-border movements."

[Afghans having to sell organs and children to repay debt]

"When Afghan households need to repay debt, they are most likely to sell assets, move abroad or within Afghanistan, or sell land or their houses in order to do so, according to the community focal points. Households may also engage in performing unpaid labor in order to repay debts. Extremely vulnerable households sometimes engage in child marriage or sell their children or bodily organs in order to afford food, although these coping mechanisms are not commonly practiced."

"... political events of 2021 led to complex economic impacts. Inflation soared in 2021, and by March 2022, basic household goods were 20% more expensive than in August 2021. The Afghani currency depreciated by 18.4% between August 2021 and January 2022, before appreciating slightly in March and April 2022. These overlapping, hard-hitting economic realities push families into practicing extreme coping mechanisms in order to pay off debt."

"Certain food-related coping mechanisms that are less common but more severe include marrying off children, selling children, or selling body organs in order to afford food. The harsh economic impacts of 2021 pushed families into engaging in extreme coping mechanisms in order to afford food. Across the country, only one per cent of households engage in these coping mechanisms."

"A total of 552 people engaged in selling organs in the six months prior to data collection; one-third of these cases (32%) were in Badghis province, and a high number (29%) were in Sar-e-Pul province."

"Across Afghanistan, 2,113 children were sold in the six months prior to data collection as a food-related coping mechanism. One-third of these cases (34%) were in Sar-e-Pul province and one fifth of these cases were in Balkh province."

"Additionally, 31,458 children were married off as a food-related coping mechanism in the six months prior to data collection. Thirty per cent of these cases were in Sar-e-Pul province. Sar-e-Pul province thus shows high rates of all extreme coping mechanisms."

UNAMA, Briefing by Acting Special Representative Ramiz Alakbarov to the Security Council, 23 June 2022

"Even more alarming, 82 per cent of households are now in debt, while the deteriorating economy offers few chances to climb out of debt. Coping resources that helped many families get through last winter's difficulties and humanitarian emergency are now being depleted."

Ariana News, IEA calls on Afghans at home and abroad to invest in new state-run initiative, 19 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“First Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar said Sunday the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is working on an economic policy that will help restore the economy and lift the country out of poverty. Speaking at an event to launch a new state-run limited liability company, Afghan Invest, Baradar called on Afghans to bring their foreign-based capital back into the country and invest in the new initiative. According to the IEA, 13 investors have already collectively invested \$250 million. Baradar said at the launch that Afghanistan is potentially an extremely wealthy country given the enormous, largely untapped, mineral reserves.”

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Pakistani Visas, Taliban Taxes, Afghan Bodybuilders, 17 June 2022

“U.S. Watchdog Cautions Over UN Cash In an interview with Radio Azadi, John Sopko, the U.S. special inspector-general for Afghanistan reconstruction (SIGAR), expressed concerns that money sent by the United Nations to Afghanistan for humanitarian and economic aid will end up in the hands of the Taliban-led government. In late April, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told journalists that the UN had flown \$500 million in cash into Afghanistan. “We have been talking to the UN officials about how they are safeguarding [those] funds,” he said in the interview. “We have had discussions on best practices for protecting it.... We are hoping it’s protected, but it’s more difficult to ensure that, since we at SIGAR have no presence in Afghanistan.” The United States and other foreign donors have continued to withhold most of their financial assistance to Afghanistan, fearing that if the Taliban was to receive those funds, it would reward and legitimize a regime that took power by force and has committed gross human rights violations.”

AVA, Poverty in Afghanistan / The Red Cross called for 80 million francs in emergency aid, 16 June 2022

“The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has released a report on Afghanistan today (Thursday, June 16) stating that due to the humanitarian situation, it has extended its emergency request from 36 million francs to 80 million francs by 31 December 2023. The Red Cross has called for help for 2 million people in 34 provinces; the figure, which the organization believes makes up 10 percent of Afghanistan's affected population. The committee went on to say that drought, severe economic and health crises have affected the entire territory of Afghanistan. According to the Red Cross, restrictions on the participation of women and minority groups, and displacement inside and outside the borders have added to this difficult situation. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) further noted that disruptions in the public service system have weakened investment in Afghanistan. “More than half of children under the age of five are expected to experience acute malnutrition,” the Red Cross added. Unemployment, a weak health system, gaps in the health system, education, energy and public services are other factors that put pressure on people. This urgent call for help to the people of Afghanistan was made by the International Committee of the Red Cross at a time when Afghanistan is facing unprecedented unemployment, poverty and hunger following recent developments.”

ACTED, Cash Based Transfers in Ghor, UNDATED [January 2022 – June 2022]

“Through this 6-month intervention, ACTED will provide 5 months of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to 22,774 crisis-affected HHs (159,418 individuals) and an additional 1-month of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to the most vulnerable 12,652 HHs (88,564 individuals) identified through additional data gathering during SCOPE registration. The objectives of this intervention are to distribute cash assistance to the most food insecure households, including Pregnant and Lactating women and children under 5, to prevent deterioration of their food security and nutritional status and to mitigate against negative coping strategies.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

ACTED, Cash Based Transfers in Herat, UNDATED [January 2022 – June 2022]

“Through this 6-month intervention, ACTED will provide 5 months of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to 15,000 crisis-affected HHs (105,000 individuals) and an additional 1-month of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to the most vulnerable to 8,477 HHs (59,339 individuals) identified through additional data gathering during SCOPE registration. The objectives of this intervention are to distribute cash assistance to food insecure HHs in Informal Settlements (ISETs) in Herat including returnees and IDPs to minimize the negative coping strategies during the months of most severe food insecurity.”

Ariana News, Central Bank discusses monetary policies with university lecturers, 15 June 2022

“The Monetary Policy discussions are being held between central bank officials and university staff across the country in a bid to find ways to preserve and strengthen the value of the Afghan currency, officials said. “The purpose of these meetings is to see how we can get the professors’ views on the monetary policy so that we do not face any problems in this area in the future,” said Idrees, the acting governor of Da Afghanistan Bank. Economists have welcomed the move and say advice from the academics could help stabilize the currency. According to these experts, in order to stabilize the Afghan currency, domestic production must also be increased. “The Afghan currency is in a good position against the currencies of neighboring countries, and it is a good thing that the Da Afghanistan Bank officials are meeting with economists about the monetary policy,” said Kamaluddin Kakar, an economist. “We welcome the step by the Da Afghanistan Bank and such meetings should be held with such professionals on such important issues so that we do not face any problems in the future,” Hakimullah Siddiqi, another economist said. The private sector also urges officials of Da Afghanistan Bank to increase the level of engagement with experts.”

AVA, Allocation of \$ 150 million to Afghanistan by the World Bank, 14 June 2022

“The World Bank has allocated \$ 150 million to support Afghanistan, according to officials from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It is said that this budget will be used to increase wheat production and farmers' access to water resources.”

AVA, High Fuel Prices in Kabul, 14 June 2022

“The price of fuel, and also the price of taxi fares, have surged, causing a strain for many who are struggling to make ends meet amid an economic crisis. [...] The taxi drivers said that the price of one liter of diesel is 100 Afs, which caused a surge in the taxi fare as well.”

AVA, Investors, Urging the Islamic Emirate for Solution, 14 June 2022

“The Afghanistan Commercial Companies and Investors Union claims that the former government owes 60 billion afghanis to the union members through bank guarantees, remittances and for security, asking the Islamic Emirate for a special approach to address their loans. Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, Seeking the Islamic Emirate government’s consideration, head of the union Mohammad Baz Ghairat vowed to double investments in Afghanistan and increase job opportunities for locals if their loans are handed back to investors. “Given the country’s high unemployment and homelessness rates, we assure you that if these loans are given to us, we will raise the number of factories in the investment sector from hundreds to thousands,” said Ghairat, as TOLONews quoted. Ghairat urged the Islamic Emirate to establish a special commission in order to facilitate the return of Afghan investors from neighboring countries,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

which will pave the way for investments in Afghanistan without any security or financial threats. "We urge the Islamic Emirate to establish a special commission to facilitate the return of Afghan investors from abroad, similar to the Commission for the Return of Political Figures, so that they can return to the country with complete confidence and invest," he added."

Gandhara, Head Of U.S. Watchdog Worried About UN Cash Flowing Into Afghanistan, 10 June 2022

"The head of a U.S. government watchdog says he is concerned that money sent by the United Nations to Afghanistan for humanitarian and economic aid will end up in the hands of the Taliban government. In a wide-ranging interview with RFE/RL's Radio Azadi, John Sopko, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), said his organization has concerns over the funds but since it has no presence inside the country, it will have to rely on the UN to ensure no money goes to the Taliban."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Global Annual Results Report 2021 GOAL AREA 4 Every child lives in a safe and clean environment, 3 June 2022

"In Afghanistan, where the political situation coupled with a severe drought resulted in an acute humanitarian crisis affecting much of the country, UNICEF responded with WASH interventions. This included support and supplies for water system chlorination, water trucking, the delivery of water and sanitation services in schools and hygiene promotion nationally. Nevertheless, targets were not met owing to multiple operational factors, such as border closures, supply chain disruptions and a range of monetary system issues, including the blocking of bank accounts of the country's 32,000 Community Development Councils, which have been a critical implementing partners in the WASH sector."

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022

"Radio Azadi reports on the one sector of Afghanistan's collapsing economy that is thriving: the smuggling of people trying to escape the country. The Taliban has banned the transit of undocumented migrants across the border to Pakistan and Iran. But smugglers have overcome the ban by bribing corrupt Taliban border guards." "We fit about 20 people in each vehicle, and the Taliban charges 1,000 afghanis (about \$11) per car," said Mahmud. He earns \$800 a month smuggling up to 150 people weekly from Zaranj in Nimroz into Iran."

Tolo News, Afghans Complain About Lack of Disability Payments, 3 June 2022

"Some disabled individuals in Kabul are complaining about not receiving their monthly support payments. Despite the budget for this year being approved, their salaries have not yet been paid. Abdul Wasi is a disabled person who was injured 30 years ago as a result of a mine explosion in Kabul's Paghman area. He said that not getting paid has compelled him to work in order to support his family."

AREU, Welfare of Young Adults Amid COVID-19, Conflict and Disasters: Evidence from Afghanistan, 1 June 2022

"A majority (91.7%) of the population were either poor, or vulnerable to poverty with per capita expenditures falling within two times the poverty line (equivalent to US\$1.88)"

UNHCR, Funding Update 2022, 31 May 2022

"Afghanistan Situation as of 31 May 2022 [...] \$609.5 million [...] 61% UNHCR's financial requirements 2022 [...] The financial requirements of the Afghanistan Situation include requirements in Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan MCO, Pakistan and Tajikistan."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tolo News, Afghan Traders Abroad Face Hurdles Investing in Afghanistan, 30 May 2022

"Some Afghan traders living abroad said current problems caused by the banking system and international sanctions, as well as the closed girls' schools, are causing obstacles to investment in Afghanistan. Obaidullah Sadar Khail, head of the Afghan trader council in the UAE, told TOLONews in a special TV program that the problems in the banking system that began nine months ago have still not been solved."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The Special Rapporteur was particularly troubled to learn about accounts of parents struggling to survive including by increasingly engaging in child marriage, and being exploited by criminal organisations to sell their children or body organs to survive. It is key that the national budget is gender-sensitive and balanced, to ensure that the funds allocated to security are not disproportionate compared with those allocated to health, education, and social services."

UNAMA, PRESS STATEMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council further expressed deep concern regarding the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Afghanistan, recognized the need for strengthened efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs in Afghanistan, emphasizes that the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance requires all actors to allow full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for all humanitarian personnel, including women, and further recognizes the need to help address the substantial challenges facing Afghanistan's economy, including through efforts to restore the banking and financial systems and efforts to enable the use of assets belonging to Afghanistan's Central Bank for the benefit of the Afghan people."

WHO, Director-General's address at the High-Level Welcome at the 75th World Health Assembly – 22 May 2022, 22 May 2022

"Following the Taliban takeover last year, I travelled to Afghanistan, where I met a group of women nurses who told me they had not been paid in three months, but would continue to serve their patients WHO paid their salaries so they could continue to deliver the care on which their communities depend [...]"

Tolo News, Business Sector: Money Transfer Challenges Persist, 22 May 2022

"A part of the problem was solved, but still problems exist in transferring money. We face problems while importing raw materials to Afghanistan," Said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, deputy head of the Chamber. [...] The banking system has faced challenges with the collapse of the former government in Afghanistan. Since the country is importing almost all necessary goods from abroad, money transfers are essential for food and other items."

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Funding Update – 2022, 17 May 2022

[See table via hyperlink]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, [Taliban dissolves Afghanistan's human rights commission as 'unnecessary'](#), 17 May 2022
"Afghanistan faced a budget deficit of 44bn Afghanis (\$501m) this financial year, Taliban authorities said as they announced their first annual national budget since taking over last August."

International Rescue Committee, [From Humanitarian Response to Economic Recovery: recommendations for addressing acute needs and the root causes of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan](#), 11 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, state failure and economic collapse are now the primary drivers of a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding at breakneck speed. Unemployment and poverty are now the greatest drivers of internal displacement. However, the crisis in Afghanistan is evolving into a catastrophe of choice as these same governments maintain policies of economic isolation that are pushing the Afghan economy to the brink and causing nearly 19m Afghans to experience high levels of acute food insecurity in the coming months. Access to Afghanistan's foreign reserves remain frozen, the banking system grounded, and development assistance, which financed most government services, on pause. These policies have had knock-on impacts across the economy, reducing public spending from around 55 per cent of GDP in 2020 to around 11 per cent post-Taliban takeover. The impact has been swift and catastrophic for ordinary Afghans, compounding an already dire economic and humanitarian situation. The international community can and should do much more to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of innocent Afghans, with action on the economy urgently needed."

Afghan Voice Agency, [Afghanistan pine nuts exports decline by 95 percent](#), 11 May 2022

"Yahya Khan, the union head, said that the export of the dried fruit dropped by 95 percent due to lack of air corridors. He said the price of pine nuts inside the country had decreased due to the decline in its export."

"It is worth mentioning that before the political change in the country, Afghan traders used to trade with many countries, but now the trade is limited to a few countries."

Ariana News, [Liquidity crisis at core of Afghanistan's economic challenges: SIGAR](#), 6 May 2022

"Afghanistan continued to face a severe liquidity crisis this quarter with access to physical bank notes constrained and banks facing major liquidity challenges due to declining economic activity, lack of trust in the banking center among Afghans, and an inability to transact internationally."

"The banking system is totally paralyzed. The central bank is not operating," according to Robert Mardini, director general for the International Committee of the Red Cross as cited by SIGAR."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Afghanistan Collective Feedback Digest - A compilation of community voices - Issue 6](#), 5 May 2022

"People expressed many of the same needs as in earlier months, including food, cash and shelter. Reports that

some community leaders and Taliban de facto authorities are telling aid recipients they must share assistance they

received, or who are directly giving it to family and associates not on eligibility lists, continues to be a top feedback topic."

Tolo News, [FARAKHABAR: Formation of Economic Zones Discussed](#), 4 May 2022

[see video via hyperlink]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tolo News, Afghans Complain of Deactivated ATMs, Difficulty Accessing Funds, 3 May 2022

"Citizens complained of the deactivation of ATM machines, saying that they are struggling to withdraw their money from the banks. Residents of Kabul said that the ATM machines in several parts of the city are deactivated. [...] However, the Central Bank said that ATM machines are now active across the country. "Da Afghanistan Bank (Central Bank) issued a statement to all private banks to reactivate their ATM machines and therefore, all ATM machines are active now," said Mohammad Sabir Momand, a spokesman for Da Afghanistan Bank. After the fall of the former government, the Afghan banking system faced severe problems. However, restrictions on withdrawing and transferring funds were recently lifted."

Ariana News, Afghans using crypto to 'safeguard' their savings, 26 April 2022

"Afghans are reportedly acquiring digital assets that they use to preserve their savings and to lessen the chance of having their money seized by the new authorities, Bloomberg reported this week."

UNOHCHR (Afghanistan news), Afghanistan: UN experts call on US Government to unblock foreign assets of central bank to ease humanitarian impact, 25 April 2022

"Alarmed by the critical humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, UN human rights experts call on the Government of the United States to unblock the foreign assets of Da Afghanistan Bank of more than US \$7 billion to enable the unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance to cover the basic needs of tens of millions of people in the country. They issue the following statement:

We are gravely concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which puts at serious risk the lives of more than half of the country's population, with disproportionate impact on women and children. While gender-based violence has been a long-standing and severe threat to women and girls, it has been exacerbated by the measures imposed by the US, together with the drought and widening gender-based discrimination adopted by the de facto authorities."

ToloNews, World Bank to Push Ahead with Some Afghan Projects, 20 April 2022

"It said around 37% of Afghan households did not have enough money to cover food while 33% could afford food but nothing more. The World Bank has resumed work on three projects in Afghanistan focused on health, agriculture and livelihoods, but will maintain a hold on some \$150 million for education projects, two sources familiar with the decision said Tuesday. The multilateral development bank had put all four projects, valued at around \$600 million, on hold in late March, citing its deep concerns over the Islamic Emirate's ban on girls attending public high school."

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), 29 people suffer casualties in Afghanistan last week, 16 April 2022

Positive things happened in Afghanistan's economic and security sectors last week as casualties declined by 60 percent, while \$96 million in cash assistance also arrived in the country. Last week's major developments:

- Last week, Afghanistan received \$96 million in cash assistance
- US, India, Iran stressed the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan
- UN, US expressed concerns over human rights situation in Afghanistan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

- Acting Afghan government rejected the international community's concern over human rights situation in Afghanistan
- US, UN again demanded the reopening of all-girls schools in Afghanistan
- 26 people were killed and three others injured in Afghanistan last week

Ariana News, IEA calls for investors, says visas for foreigners will recommence, 11 April 2022

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has called on national and international agencies to start interacting with local traders and business owners and promised to start issuing visas to foreigners.

IEA officials said the ministry of mines and petroleum has been granted permission to secure contracts with domestic and foreign companies. Officials said at a economy-focused meeting Monday that a process is being put into place for visas to be issued to foreigners. According to officials, contracts have already been signed with companies for the extraction of iron ore in Herat province and for the extraction of lead in Ghor province.

An IEA official said government is also looking at ways to issue visas for business owners arriving at Kabul airport."

Ariana News, World Bank says Afghanistan private sector adversely affected due to economic crisis, 9 April 2022

"A World Bank survey has said that Afghanistan's ongoing economic crisis has adversely affected economic activities in the country with the private sector suffering the most.

The survey was carried out in October and November and was made public on Thursday, April 7, 2022.

The survey indicates that most Afghan traders complain about the lack of demand in markets, which has reduced economic activities and investment in the country. One in three respondents of the survey has said that they have suspended their businesses after August 2021.

Based on the findings of the survey, 38 percent of small firms have suspended their operations, 35 of medium firms have been closed, and 25 percent of big firms have stopped their activities. In the meantime, the existing economic situation has also impacted women-run businesses, and 42 percent of these businesses have been suspended [...] The World Bank survey also points to unemployment after the 15th of August 2021 and says that companies in Afghanistan have laid off more than half of their employees, majority of them being women."

UNOCHA, Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths' opening remarks at the High-level Pledging Event for Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

"Second, as the distinguished minister from Qatar, made very clear, we must find a way to get money back into the economy and into people's pockets. The salaries of public sector workers, of healthcare workers, teachers and other essential services - the people that I saw in that hospital the day before yesterday - must be paid. These are the people that are critical to the survival of millions of Afghans [...]

And thirdly, for this to happen, Afghanistan can no longer be isolated from the international financial system. Restoring the formal banking system is critical for the country and for humanitarian aid delivery, again, as the Minister of State of Qatar has said. And for that, the Central Bank must have necessary technical capacity and we need that Humanitarian Exchange Facility up and running as soon as possible.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

We must also recognise the role, and we will hear from their leaderships, of regional entities like the Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and of course the OIC [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation] which has already been mentioned, can play in restoring confidence in Afghanistan's banking system and the measures to restore its economic agility but also to do so with appropriate accountability mechanisms."

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report #3 1-28 February 2022, 22 March 2022

"UNICEF began the distribution of emergency cash support for an estimated 194,000 public teachers with 113,868 teachers paid in February."

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatch: the Taliban want to replace the conventional banking system with Islamic banking, 20 March 2022

"The Taliban-led Central Bank of Afghanistan has established a committee to review and amend the Central Bank Law and the Banking Law of Afghanistan. According to the Central Bank, a seven-member committee is set up to study and propose amendments to the Central Bank Law. The committee has to adjust the legal framework of the Central Bank with the Islamic banking system and eliminate the conventional banking system. The Central Bank Law is almost sixty years old and does not provide any grounds for an Islamic banking system. Instead, the Banking Law provides mechanisms through which Islamic and conventional systems can be implemented. The commercial banks have special windows for Islamic banking which are regulated by the Central Bank-issued regulatory framework. [...] Additionally, the Central Bank has instructed all commercial banks to convert to the Islamic banking system. The commercial banks are instructed to provide the Central Bank with their plan explaining the timeline and the necessary changes for converting into Islamic banking systems. The First Micro Finance Banking Bank of Afghanistan has already started the conversion and recruited companies to re-structure the bank to become an Islamic banking system. One of the major challenges that the financial system of the country would face is that the Central Bank as well as the Taliban-led government has to deal with lack of capacity enforcing the Islamic banking system in the country. The Central Bank has always talked about the challenge not only in the Islamic banking area but also in the conventional banking area as well. The Central Bank now has its special Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice section. According to some people at the Central Bank the officials in this section instruct the central bank employees to keep their beards, pray five times a day, and have even told some that if they do not comply with the above, there will be no salary for them."

BBC, Afghans turn to cryptocurrencies amid US sanctions, 16 March 2022

"Following the Taliban takeover in August last year, 22-year-old Farhan Hotak from the province of Zabul in southern Afghanistan was left with no cash in hand". "After the Taliban takeover, crypto spread like wildfire over Afghanistan," he said. "There is almost no other way to receive money". "The US has seized \$7.1b (£5.4b) worth of assets from the Afghan central bank and ended transfers of US currency. Companies in Poland and France contracted to print the Afghan currency ended shipments."

Al-Jazeera, It is hardly surprising Empire stole Afghan money, 14 March 2022

"On February 11, US President Joe Biden announced the allocation of \$3.5bn belonging to the Afghan people to cover lawsuits by 9/11 families. Afghanistan's foreign currency reserves, which this money is part of, had been frozen by the US administration since August 2021, when the Taliban took over Kabul."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The billions of dollars promised for “reconstruction” went into the bank accounts of imperial functionaries and local collaborators tasked with “rebuilding” Afghanistan – most making its way back to Empire.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network, Living in a Collapsed Economy (3): Surviving poverty, food insecurity, and the harsh winter, 13 March 2022

“The current crisis in Afghanistan is not a matter of assisting vulnerable groups so they can be tided over until things get better, but of the economic system collapsing. It is dispiriting to see the slow and continuous slide into greater debt afflicting so many of the individual households and the ways in which many of the businessmen are forced either to spend, sell or simply lose what was – and still should be – productive capital. The longer this economic crisis lasts, the fewer resources Afghanistan’s businesses and households will have to pick themselves up again, with the risk that some of the damage will be irreversible. Even Afghans’ famed resilience has its limits, given the cascade of crises they face. [...] This is not an economic crisis that has mainly hit the poor and the vulnerable and it cannot be addressed by emergency food aid alone. At its most basic level, the economy needs its cash to flow again – salaries, bank assets, remittances – as soon as possible.”

Khaama Press, UNICEF: Japan provides \$3 Million for Afghanistan’s health sector, 12 March 2022

“United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has provided \$3 million so that people in Afghanistan access health services” Further, the statement reads that a portion of this money will be allocated to child care, children’s nutrition, and support to Afghan children. The UN agency has said that they plan to assist 12.9 million children in 2022, a thing that is impossible without urgent assistance. It has also called on the International Community to increase their aid for the health sector in Afghanistan. Japan is one of the biggest supporters of children in the world that has given UNICEF \$114 million for Afghanistan since 2015.”

OHCHR, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet visits Kabul, Afghanistan, 11 March 2022

“Today, one in three people in Afghanistan face emergency or crisis levels of food security and there is limited access to cash, high levels of unemployment and displacement. Furthermore, there remains an unfortunately high risk of attacks by the ISKP and others.”

RTE, Inside Afghanistan, Relentless Poverty and Hardship, 10 March 2022

“She tells us that she hasn’t eaten meat in three months, surviving on bread and tea. She worries about the fact that there is less food around and says there is no work for the men in the village. Some travel to neighbouring Iran but the currency there is very low so even if they do find work, life is still very hard. She says they don’t make rugs, which is a specialty in this area, and points out that even if she did, she couldn’t sell them at the bazaar as no-one could buy them because of the sanctions imposed after the Taliban takeover.”

United States Institute of Peace, Afghanistan’s Frozen Foreign Exchange Reserves: What Happened, What’s Next, 1 March 2022

“President Biden’s executive order blocking more than \$7 billion of Afghan foreign currency reserves held at the U.S. central bank left confusion and consternation in its wake. [...] Biden’s executive order was based on the declaration of a U.S. national security and foreign policy emergency stemming from the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“widespread humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan ... and the potential for a deepening economic collapse.” The executive order asserts that the preservation of property of Da Afghanistan Bank (Afghanistan’s central bank, or DAB) is “of the utmost importance to addressing this national emergency and the welfare of the people of Afghanistan.” DAB’s foreign exchange assets held by the New York Federal Reserve Bank, amounting to over \$7 billion — frozen by the U.S. Treasury since August 15 — are to be blocked and transferred into a consolidated account, according to the executive order. The administration will “seek to facilitate access to \$3.5 billion of those assets for the benefit of the Afghan people and for Afghanistan’s future pending a judicial decision,” the White House stated. The outcome of ongoing civil litigation by some of 9/11 victims’ families will determine what happens to the other half of the funds. One group of plaintiffs was awarded a summary judgment in 2012 of over \$6 billion plus accumulated interest, against numerous disparate defendants — including the Taliban movement. The U.S. Department of Justice, in a February 11 statement of interest (SOI) to the court, argues that this award should be drastically reduced because the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (TRIA) “permits claimants to attach assets only to satisfy judgements for compensatory—rather than punitive—damages.” This would reduce the maximum size of any possible award by \$4.7 billion, meaning the \$3.5 billion-plus of reserves remaining subject to litigation would be more than sufficient to fully satisfy claims in cases currently before the court.”

OCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan - Response Overview (1 - 31 January 2022), 1 March 2022

“In January 2022, humanitarian partners have reached 8.4 million people with at least one form of humanitarian assistance, including 8.2 million vulnerable persons; 39,000 cross-border returnees; 72,000 refugees; 28,000 people affected by floods and other weather-related events; and 19,000 new IDPs. Reach was enabled by a combination of new funding in 2022 (\$569 million) and funds carried over from 2021 (\$542 million). However, \$3.87 billion (87 per cent) of the \$4.4 billion required to deliver humanitarian assistance in 2022 remains unfunded. At the same time, acute needs continue to be compounded by the crippling economic decline and ruptures in basic services. While humanitarian assistance has ramped up significantly over the past six months, particularly food distributions and seasonal support, partners will focus efforts over the coming months on providing more integrated, holistic support in line with the nature and scale of multi-sectoral needs now present.”

UNICEF, What is the state of the financial industry and civilians’ access to money?, 25 February 2022

“[Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell at the end of three-day trip to Afghanistan] In the streets of Kabul, scores of very young children dart in and out of traffic, chasing cars and asking for money. Store shelves and vegetable markets are well stocked, yet hardly anyone can afford to buy. In a hospital in Kandahar, emaciated babies lie motionless two to a bed, too weak to even cry amid a spike in cases of severe acute malnutrition. A 25-year-old mother of five told me that her family subsists on a diet of bread and water. “And things are poised to get even worse. According to our projections for 2022, more than 1 million children will need treatment for severe acute malnutrition. Nearly 13 million children will need humanitarian assistance. Diseases like measles and acute watery diarrhoea will continue to spread. Up to 97 per cent of all Afghan families could be living below the poverty line in a matter of months. [...] “UNICEF is on the ground, doing everything we can to assist children. We are training teachers, setting up community-based classes, vaccinating children against preventable childhood diseases, improving access to water and sanitation services, and providing treatment for severe acute malnutrition. We have paid cash incentives for teachers and health workers, and provided supplies to public health facilities across the country. “But aid agencies can only do so much. The international community and the de facto

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

authorities need to find ways to work together, for the sake of children. [...]"

UNAMA, Briefing to the United Nations Security Council by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ms. Deborah Lyons, 2 March 2022

"It is now most urgent to address Afghanistan's economy. And so, I would like to take a moment to highlight some of the key challenges. I want to start by emphasizing that we are nearing a tipping point that will see more businesses close, more people unemployed and falling into poverty. It is approaching a point of irreversibility. We welcome the many General Licenses issued by the United States Treasury and most particularly the recent General License Twenty aimed at facilitating commercial and financial activity and allowing work with all governing institutions, a huge step forward, albeit with some restrictions regarding sanctioned individuals. But other challenges to reviving the economy still remain. These include the collapse of demand due to cessation of all development assistance, restrictions on international payments, lack of access to hard currency reserves, lack of liquidity, and constraints on the Central Bank to carry out some of its core functions. UNAMA to date has taken all conceivable measures to inject liquidity into the economy, including the physical import of cash. UNAMA, together with the UN partners and the World Bank, is seeking to establish—on a temporary basis—I want to emphasize — a humanitarian exchange facility to allow a scale up in humanitarian programming, which as you all know is badly needed in this coming year, and also will provide access to US dollars to legitimate businesses to enable them to import goods and allow the supply chain to function once again. We will continue to engage with the Central Bank and the de facto authorities on this facility and with Member States on further support to the banking sector. Madame President, When UNAMA's mandate was rolled over for six months in September 2021 it was still too early for the international community to react to the Taliban's seizure of power. Six months of indecision, marked by continued sanctions albeit with some relief, and unstructured political engagement, are eroding the vital social and economic coping systems and pushing the population into greater uncertainty. [...] The Taliban also highlight progress on the economic front, including strong revenues despite decreased economic activity, reduced government corruption, and a budget that does not require donor resources. [...] Most importantly, they complain that these positive achievements are being undermined by an undeclared economic war against them by the international community that has greatly affected and resulted in choking of the economy and they know also exacerbating the suffering of the population."

TOLO News, Afghans Hold Protests Around Country for Release of Frozen Funds, 22 February 2022

"Dozens of Afghan men and women on Monday launched demonstrations to express their anger over a decision made by the US to preserve billions of frozen assets for the victims of September 11 attacks.

"This money is Afghans' money, not money to pay as compensation by Joe Biden. The money should be surrendered to Afghanistan," said Arzo, a protestor."

AVA Press, One fifth of starving Afghan families sending children out to work, 14 February 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_A survey of 1,400 households across seven provinces of Afghanistan found that 82% of Afghans have lost income since the collapse of the former government and transition of power last August, with 18% reporting they had no choice but to send their children out to work. [...] According to Save the 's_ [Save the Children's] analysis, if just one child in each of these families is being sent to work, then more than one million children in the country are engaged in child labour. More than 80% of those surveyed reported a loss of income, with a third (34.8%) having lost all of their household income, and a quarter (26.6%) having lost more than half. Families living in cities were hit hardest, with half of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

families in saying they had lost their entire income. The huge spike in prices caused by the economic crisis has left many families unable to afford food. About 36% of families reported that they are purchasing food in the market on credit, whereas 24% said they did previously. Thirty-nine percent are borrowing from better-off families, compared to just 25% previously. As families sink further into debt and poverty, 7.5% said they were begging or relying on charity to feed their families. Last month, Save the Children reported that the number of dangerously malnourished children visiting its health clinics had more than doubled since August."

BBC, Afghanistan conflict: US plans to use frozen funds for 9/11 victims and relief, 11 February 2022

"The US government is planning to use \$7bn (£5.16bn) in frozen Afghan assets to compensate victims of the 9/11 attacks and for relief efforts. Washington froze the money after the Taliban took power last year but has been under pressure to find a way to use it without aiding the militants. A Taliban spokesman condemned the move, calling it "theft" and a sign of "moral decay". The move came in an executive order declaring a national emergency.

As for the funds, President Biden's order formally blocks them, and says US financial institutions should transfer them to a consolidated account at the Federal Reserve. The money, along with another \$2bn held in Europe, the UAE and elsewhere, is primarily the proceeds of international assistance given to Afghanistan over the last two decades. On Friday, a senior administration official said that a third-party \$3.5bn trust fund would be set up to ensure that the money addresses the immediate humanitarian needs of the Afghan people, while at the same time "ensuring no benefit goes directly to the Taliban". "We've not made specific decisions about how the funds will be used," the official said, adding that it would be months before the money was available, pending a judicial decision.

The rest of the money, the official said, would remain in the US and was subject to ongoing litigation by US victims of terrorism. [...] Mohammed Naeem, a Qatar-based spokesman for the Taliban's political office, tweeted on Friday that the seizure of the Afghan central bank funds is "theft" and "represents the lowest level of human and moral decay". The Taliban had previously warned that a failure to return the funds would cause "problems" including mass migration and further economic collapse. Afghanistan's economy has been in a freefall since the Taliban takeover, with the UN warning the country could approach a "near-universal" poverty rate of 97% by the middle of 2022."

Ariana News, U.N. aims to launch new Afghanistan cash route in February, 11 February 2022

"The United Nations aims to kick start this month a system to swap millions of aid dollars for Afghan currency in a plan to stem humanitarian and economic crises and bypass blacklisted Taliban leaders, according to an internal U.N. note seen by Reuters.

Since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) takeover in August, foreign financial assistance has stopped and international banks are wary of testing U.N. and U.S. sanctions on the IEA, leaving the United Nations and aid groups struggling to obtain cash even as they continue to receive humanitarian donations.

The U.N. explanatory note, written last month, outlines an "urgently needed" Humanitarian Exchange Facility (HEF). The United Nations has warned that more than half of Afghanistan's 39 million people are suffering extreme hunger and the economy, education and social services are collapsing.

"The overall objective is to have the HEF up and running in February," the note said. "Prior to the full establishment of the facility, we seek to facilitate several trial swaps, to demonstrate exactly how the mechanism will work."

U.N. and humanitarian officials warn that the facility can be only a temporary measure until Afghanistan's

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

central bank begins operating independently and some \$9 billion in foreign reserves frozen abroad are released.

But when that could happen is uncertain. The reserves held by the United States are tied up in legal action and Western governments are reluctant to release funds unless they see the IEA show greater respect for human rights, especially those of women and girls.

The HEF would allow the United Nations – which is seeking \$4.4 billion for humanitarian assistance this year – and aid groups access to large amounts of the national currency, the afghani, held in the country by private businesses.”

IOM, IOM Comprehensive Action Plan Calls for USD 589 Million to Support Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, 9 February 2022

“The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is today [9 February] appealing for more than USD 589 million to respond to the urgent humanitarian and protection needs of over 3.6 million crisis-affected persons and to strengthen the resilience and recovery of communities both in Afghanistan and in six neighbouring countries. IOM’s revised Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries builds on its expertise in responding to migration and displacement crises and strengthening integrated approaches to migration management, governance and sustainable development, as well as on its operational presence in Afghanistan and in all neighbouring countries. “The ongoing crisis in Afghanistan is intensifying humanitarian needs and increasing displacement risks both inside the country, as well as across borders to countries in the region,” said Ugochi Daniels, IOM Deputy Director General for Operations. “Nearly six months after the August 2021 political upheaval and resulting political transition, more than half of the Afghan population are now in need of humanitarian assistance, which is 30 per cent more than last year. This means Afghanistan faces a real risk of systemic collapse and humanitarian catastrophe, as nearly all Afghans have now plunged into poverty.” As projected when IOM’s CAP for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries was initially launched in September 2021, the political, social and economic shocks in Afghanistan have reverberated across the country and the region. [...] As the second-largest provider of emergency shelter and non-food items in Afghanistan, IOM has been able to distribute more than 196,000 winterization assistance to help displaced Afghan populations withstand the harsh weather conditions. IOM’s health operations, active in 12 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan, continue to provide healthcare – including COVID-19 vaccination efforts – to some of the hardest-to-reach populations, who in some cases had received no assistance in the decades before the arrival of IOM’s teams.”

International Rescue Committee, Afghanistan: Banking Sector Assessment: December 2021, 9 February 2022

“The central bank will face a number of challenges in the coming 3-6 months. There is limited training and knowledge amongst leadership levels the central bank in monetary policy and banking matters, which raises questions on their ability to maintain the functions of the central bank. The central bank has also faced, and will continue to face, a reduction in skilled technical workers as some employees seek to flee the country. Finally, the reduction in technical workers alongside limited financial resources to support the central bank operations (since the central bank will also suffer from reduction in international assistance) may mean that the central bank will face challenges in its ability monitor commercial banks and money exchangers. For humanitarian actors, what this means is that in the coming 3-6 months is that they will be operating in an increasingly unregulated environment where the central bank as well as

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

commercial banks will be downsizing and consolidating their operations while still trying to remain functional. The central bank will be more lax in its oversight of both banks and exchangers. Banks will remain constrained because of stringent central bank withdrawal restrictions. Humanitarian actors are one of the few opportunities for Afghanistan to increase the flow of foreign currency into the country, suggesting that the GoIEA [Government of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan], banking regulators and banks would be very keen to work with these actors and accommodate their requirements.”

Humanitarian Response of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Afghanistan: Banking Sector Assessment, December 2021, 9 February 2022

“In the post-Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, not only is the political landscape tremendously challenging and fragile, but also the banking sector is facing many challenge that will make it difficult for humanitarian actors to operate in the country. The banking systems currently exists on a lifeline, and trust in banks has likely been destroyed for the coming years and possibly decades. Economic sanctions will likely remain on the country for the coming 3-6 months, which will continue to cripple the banking sector. Humanitarian actors that aim to operate in the country will need to adopt a flexible approach that makes use of unconventional financial intermediation that is not (or at least not solely) reliant on the formal banking sector. Humanitarian actors seeking to disperse money across the country will need to rely on the hawala networks provided by money exchangers, as it functions as one of the few remaining financial networks that permeates the country, including the rural countryside. This report has provided information on the opportunities and risks of using different financial intermediaries. Whatever the option pursued, the only certainty is that the coming 6 months will be a period of tremendous hardship on the banking sector and the economy will continue to deteriorate, making humanitarian actors assistance essential in prevent emergency levels of food insecurity and other compounding issues from gripping the entire country.”

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Daily Noon Briefing Highlights: Madagascar, Afghanistan, Yemen, 7 February 2022

“Cash assistance was also provided to close to 8,000 families in eight provinces [Kabul, Badakshan, Kunduz, Samangan, Sar-e-Pul, Jawzjan, Faryab and Nangarhar]”

The Guardian, Scared, Hungry and Cold: Child Workers in Kabul, 7 February 2022

“As the UN predicts that 97% of Afghans could be living below the poverty line by June, the number of child labourers and beggars has tripled in Kabul, aid workers say. “[...]”

While food aid trickles into Afghanistan – the UN has announced an appeal for \$4.5bn (£3.3bn) – the sudden sanctions have brought an inevitable economic crash. “[...]”

The cessation of development money, which paid the salaries of civil servants, doctors, teachers and labourers taking part in foreign-implemented cash-for-work schemes, has thrown millions into poverty. “[...]”

The future looks bleak, says the Afghan economist Haroun Rahimi. “The honest answer is that there isn’t a lot the Taliban can do either if sanctions continue – no government could, even if they have perfect policies. “[...]”

“Right now, they need money, as well as international recognition more than anything,” he says, adding that the scenario seems unlikely and that poverty could continue to rise.”

OCHA, Afghanistan: Quarter Four Dashboard of the Flash Appeal and the Humanitarian Response Plan (Jan - Dec 2021), 7 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“In 2021, humanitarian partners reached 19.6 million people with some form of humanitarian assistance. This is 2 million people more than the 17.7 million people which humanitarians had planned to assist by year’s end. This large-scale response was delivered through 180 partners across 397 (of the 401) districts. The expanded reach was largely achieved through a scale-up push in the last quarter of the year. Close to \$1.7 billion was received through the Afghanistan Response Plans (both the 2021 HRP and the Flash Appeal released in September). While the funding for the humanitarian response increased towards the end of 2021, the complexities in the operational context - including service ruptures and the financial system and liquidity crisis - have challenged the humanitarian community to further scale assistance.”

ToloNews, 2 Weeks to Decide Fate of Frozen Afghan Funds: US Judge, 30 January 2022

“The Biden administration faces a Feb. 11 deadline to make a decision on the \$7 billion held at the New York Federal Reserve. [...]”

ToloNews, NRC Warns of Millions at Risk Due to Economic Measures | TOLONews, 27 January 2022

“The Norwegian Refugee Council on Thursday in a report said the economic measures imposed on Afghanistan are preventing aid agencies from moving funds into and within the country which has put millions of people at risk because they are blocked from receiving emergency relief. According to the report, it is impossible for the humanitarian organizations to help millions of in-need people with humanitarian assistance, unless the US Department of Treasury and other donor agencies take actions towards enabling the banks to facilitate humanitarian financial transfers and support Afghanistan’s central bank to resume its core functions. “The unresolved liquidity crisis is a key driver in what is becoming the worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world. We recently called for USD 4.4 billion for starving Afghans - the biggest call of its kind in the history of humanitarian work. But unless the US Treasury and other Western financial authorities enable us to transfer the aid money, we will be forced to work with our hands tied, unable to get that money to the communities who desperately need it,” warned Jan Egeland, NRC’s Secretary General.]”

UNAMA, UN Secretary General's Briefing to UN Security Council on Situation in Afghanistan, 26 January 2022 [Briefing delivered by Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations]

“We need to suspend the rules and conditions that constrict not only Afghanistan’s economy, but our lifesaving operations. At this moment of maximum need, these rules must be seriously reviewed. International funding must be allowed to pay the salaries of public-sector workers. [...] I welcome this Council’s adoption of a humanitarian exemption to the United Nations sanctions regime for Afghanistan. I repeat my call to issue general licenses covering transactions necessary to all humanitarian activities. We need to give financial institutions and commercial partners legal assurance that they can work with humanitarian operators without fear of breaching sanctions.

And standing with the people of Afghanistan also includes a strong role for the United Nations. This includes the One-UN Transitional Engagement Framework for Afghanistan, which is being launched today – a plan to extend and accelerate humanitarian and development support to the Afghan people, while sustaining and strengthening essential services and systems throughout this critical period of transition. And it includes recommendations for a new mandate for the UN’s Special Political Mission in Afghanistan to support security, progress and human rights, contained in my upcoming report. I urge this Council to consider these recommendations as this country enters a new chapter in its history. Second – and deeply connected to the first – we need to jump-start Afghanistan’s economy through increased liquidity. We must pull the economy back from the brink. This means finding ways to free-up frozen currency reserves

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and re-engage Afghanistan's Central Bank. And it means exploring other ways to rapidly inject liquidity into the economy. The World Bank's reconstruction trust fund for Afghanistan transferred \$280 million to UNICEF and the World Food Programme last month. [...] A collapse of the Afghan economy could lead to a massive exodus of people fleeing the country. Our team in Afghanistan stands ready to work with Member States and others to establish accountable systems to ensure that funds go to the Afghan people most in need, and are not diverted."

UNAMA, Briefing by Special Representative Deborah Lyons to UN Security Council, 26 January 2022

"It is clear from the above how much we have accomplished, but as you all know humanitarian needs continue to be pressing. The approximately one billion US dollars that we asked for last year to address the humanitarian crisis now must be supplemented by 4.4 billion in additional humanitarian assistance for 2022 as set out in our recent appeal. To put this in perspective, this is roughly the same amount that donors spent on the entire operating budget of the government of the Republic in a given year. It is quite simply unsustainable over the long term. Therefore we have simultaneously been advocating—and will continue to do so—for a relaxation of those sanctions that prevent the full delivery of essential services and that continue to starve the economy of liquidity. Because of the liquidity crisis and the inability of banks to operate, we are facing an extraordinary situation where people have money in the bank but do not have full access to it to feed their families nor run their businesses. [...] Your adoption of the humanitarian exemption resolution and the issuing of new general licenses by the United States last December provided welcome assurances that facilitated our humanitarian activities. I am also pleased to announce that this afternoon [26 January 2022] here in Kabul we launched our One-UN Transitional Engagement Framework for Afghanistan, for which we are seeking an additional 3.6 billion dollars. This brings the total ask for 2022 to eight billion dollars. This comprehensive and system-wide strategy introduces a Basic Human Needs pillar to deliver essential services such as health and education, as well as provide maintenance for community infrastructure, and promote livelihoods and social cohesion, with a special emphasis on the socio-economic needs of women and girls. These investments are designed to prevent a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation and indeed generate a sufficient level of economic stability to reverse the steady increase in poverty rates that we have seen, while ensuring that the critical donor funds are not diverted or misused. And yet, we know that donors are understandably reluctant to show more flexibility until they have a better idea of what sort of government the de facto administration intends to create. Many donors were hesitant last fall to engage in ways that might help the de facto authorities consolidate their administration or appear to legitimize the regime. This hesitancy has been temporarily overcome in order to help the Afghan people, who were suffering from an extended humanitarian crisis and facing this brutal winter. However, it is clear that donors, who face their own domestic constituencies, are still not satisfied with the political progress in Afghanistan and are watching closely for more encouraging signals."

UNOCHA, United Nations Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) for Afghanistan, 26 January 2022

"The UN team in Afghanistan has launched its One-UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF) to assist Afghans in 2022. The TEF is the overarching strategic planning document, ensuring the coordination of the UN team's work to reduce the suffering of the people of Afghanistan by saving lives, sustaining essential services—such as health and education—and preserving essential community systems. [...] The US\$8 billion required to implement this UN-wide framework include the \$4.44 billion previously requested through the Humanitarian Response Plan, launched on 11 January, since all the activities in the TEF complement one another and are interdependent. While the HRP aims to deliver lifesaving assistance to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

22.1 million people, through the TEF, the UN requires an additional \$3.6 billion in immediate funding to sustain essential social services such as health and education; support community systems through maintenance of basic infrastructure; and maintain critical capacities for service delivery and promotion of livelihoods and social cohesion, with specific emphasis on socio-economic needs of women and girls. [...] The European Union recently announced 268 million Euros (US\$302 million) to meet the basic human needs of the Afghans. Key contributions also include \$308 million from the United States as well as continued generous support from the UK, Germany, Australia, Italy, Canada, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Republic of Korea and other donors. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved \$405 million in grants to support food security and sustain delivery of essential health and education services, while the World Bank (WB) and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) donors approved first transfer of \$280 million in support of delivery of essential services.”

Deutsche Welle, Afghanistan: Taliban PM urges international recognition for government, 19 January 2022

“Taliban leader and acting prime minister of Afghanistan, Mohammad Hassan Akhund, called on the international community to recognize the Taliban government during a news conference in Kabul on Wednesday.

The broadcast was his first major appearance since assuming the role in September and came as the hardliner conservative administration struggles with a faltering economy and continued violence with other militant groups. [...]

No foreign government has yet recognized the Taliban as the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan, although several have taken steps to normalize relations.

The Taliban blames the current economic crisis on the freezing of billions of dollars' worth of Afghan funds by Western nations led by the United States.

Development aid, which once formed the basis of the central Asian country's economy, has also been cut off.

International aid is still entering the country to help fight the ongoing humanitarian crisis, but governments are wary of propping up the Taliban regime by providing the necessary support.”

Ariana News, Central Bank says ATM to get operational in Afghanistan, 14 January 2022

“Da Afghanistan Bank (Central Bank of Afghanistan), said Thursday, said that Automated Teller Machine (ATM) services by commercial banks will be resumed in the country.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Da Afghanistan Bank stated that the decision was made after a series of discussions with commercial banks and the union of banks of the country.

The ATM services of banks were stalled after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) regained power on August 15 last year.

According to the statement, the ATMs will be available at specific locations for the customers.”

Khaama Press, ATM to get operational in Afghanistan, first time after Taliban return, 14 January 2022

“Central Bank of Afghanistan- Da Afghanistan Bank- in a statement on Thursday, January 13, 2022, said that ATM services by commercial banks in the country will be resumed.

The services stalled after the IEA regained power on August 15 last year and are now supposed to be operational back from Saturday, January 15 on.

Da Afghanistan Bank in the statement said that the decision was made after a series of talks with commercial banks and the union of banks.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Based on the decision, Automatic Tailor Machines (ATMs) of commercial banks in specific areas will be available for customers.

“Da Afghanistan Bank is striving to return banking system and services to normal and reactivating ATMs is a good news for people that will bring further facilities.” Reads the statement.

The Central Bank did not disclose the amount of money one can withdraw from the machines as the restriction of withdrawing a specific amount of money from accounts is still in place.

As per the new policy, one can only withdraw \$200 per week or 20,000 Afghani.”

Al Jazeera, UN chief warns millions of Afghans are on ‘verge of death’, 13 January 2022

“The United Nations chief has warned that millions of Afghans are on the “verge of death”, urging the international community to fund the UN’s \$5bn humanitarian appeal, release Afghanistan’s frozen assets and jump-start its banking system to avert economic and social collapse. [...]

The international community froze Afghanistan’s assets abroad and halted economic support, unwilling to work with the Taliban, given their reputation for brutality during their 1996-2001 rule and refusal to educate girls and allow women to work. The UN has said 8.7 million Afghans are on the brink of starvation and Guterres said it was critical to rapidly inject liquidity into the Afghan economy “and avoid a meltdown that would lead to poverty, hunger and destitution for millions”. [...]

Guterres said one reason for the meeting is to try and create “mechanisms that allow for an effective injection of funds into the Afghan economy and, at the same time, create the conditions for the financial system in Afghanistan to be able to operate in the local currency”.

The UN chief said international funding should be allowed to pay the salaries of doctors, sanitation workers, electrical engineers and other civil servants, as well as help Afghan institutions deliver healthcare, education and other key services.”

Avapress, 50% Factories Have Stop Functioning as Markets Drop, 13 January 2022

“Nearly 50 percent of factories have halted operations due to banking problems and the lack of raw materials as well as the drop in market demand, the Chamber of Industry and Mines said on Wednesday.

“Due to less demands in markets, banking problems, and electricity problems, 40-50 percent of activities have been stopped,” said Mohammad Karim Azimi, an official at the Chamber of Industry and .Some owners of the factories also voiced their concerns over the lack of electricity to run their operations.

Khalid Mohammad is the owner of a factory that has recently stopped its activity. He said that over 80 people were working at his factory but now all of them are jobless. “Due to the recent changes in the country, there is a problem with the raw material and also the lack of good markets. We do construction work, but construction has stopped now,” he said.”

OCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan (2022), 11 January 2022

“Even prior to the August 2021 change in Government challenges stemming from under-investment in basic infrastructure continued to hamper quality of life and access to services throughout Afghanistan. Active conflict, large-scale population movements, recurrent natural disasters and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the social and economic fabric of the country have hindered longer-term urban planning, reduced attention on more expensive durable solutions and diminished people’s access to essential services.

The physical environment and lack of transport and communications infrastructure remain a challenge in Afghanistan, with road access impeded by conflict, the potential presence of explosive hazards, poor road conditions as well as natural hazards, including seasonal flooding and heavy snowfall.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Less than half of all of Afghanistan's districts have phone coverage throughout the district, and disruptions remain common in many areas. The picture regarding access to electricity across Afghanistan is mixed. The United States International Development Agency (USAID) estimates that only 30 per cent of Afghans have access to electricity, while figures from Afghanistan Transparency Watch claim it may be 65 per cent. Regardless of these estimates, sustained and reliable access to electricity is an ongoing issue for many Afghans. Electricity supplies have been especially unreliable since 2020 including in Kabul. The recent financial crisis and drought have further impacted on the reliability and availability of electricity in many areas of the country"

Pajhwok, NRC stresses cash accessibility inside Afghanistan, 11 January 2022
"The UN's aid appeal for Afghanistan would be meaningless if the world and the caretaker government do not work rapidly to ensure cash accessibility inside the country, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) warned on Tuesday. Jan Egeland, NRC secretary-general, said Afghanistan's institutions and banking systems were paralysed at a time when they were desperately needed to reboot the economy and help families support themselves."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: 'neither the central bank nor any other bank for that matter can properly conduct banking activities', 5 January 2022
"The Taliban-led central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank, recently declared that the country's banking sector will resume normal operations soon. The central bank is making such a claim while the liquidity crisis has forced commercial banks to default on payments to customers even within the central bank's own limits. "Whether the banking sector will return to normal depends on a number of factors such as liquidity, consumer confidence, international banking restrictions, interest rate, and the general economic outlook. However, considering the situation on the ground and the current economic crisis, it seems to me that the central bank's claim is just an empty promise to the public."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: long lines and long waiting hours at the only functioning bank in northern Afghanistan becomes routine for cash-strapped citizens, 30 December 2021
"Long lines of more than 200 people are waiting at the door of Azizi Bank in Mazar-e-Sharif desperate to withdraw much-needed cash. The average waiting time is more than three hours while weekly withdrawals are limited to AFN 10,000 (less than US \$100).
"Azizi's central branch is the only functioning bank open in the northern part of Afghanistan. People from other provinces, including Samangan, Sheberghan, and Faryab, travel there every week withdraw cash."

Pajhwok, Cabinet approves Islamic Banking Research Centre, 28 December 2021
"The acting cabinet has directed the Ministry of Interior to create task forces in provinces for prevention of the use of foreign currencies, according to a statement on Tuesday.
"During its 16th meeting, the cabinet formed Disaster Management Commission under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Abdul GhaniBeradar."

Al Jazeera, Afghan protesters call for release of frozen assets, 21 December 2021
"Hundreds of protesters have marched through the streets of Kabul towards the shuttered United States' embassy, urging the release of Afghanistan's frozen assets.
Holding banners reading, "Let us eat" and "Give us our frozen money", the protesters chanted slogans and marched down a central avenue on Tuesday, with the ruling Taliban providing security."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan's tumbling currency compounds economic crisis, 17 December 2021

"The value of Afghanistan's currency is tumbling, exacerbating an already severe economic crisis and deepening poverty in a country where more than half the population already does not have enough to eat. The afghani lost more than 11 percent of its value against the United States dollar in the space of a day earlier this week, before recouping somewhat. But the market remains volatile, and the devaluation is already affecting Afghans."

IRC, 2022 Emergency Watchlist, 14 December 2021

"For the past two decades, Afghanistan has been highly dependent on foreign funding to pay civil servants like health care workers and teachers and operate essential public services. The previous government had relied on foreign funds for around 75% of its public spending."

Reuters, Afghan central bank moves to halt currency slide as crisis deepens, 14 December 2021

"Afghanistan's central bank said on Tuesday it was working to ensure the stability of the afghani, a day after the currency lost almost 12% of its value against the dollar in a matter of hours amid a deepening economic crisis and soaring inflation. [...] The crisis has accelerated sharply in recent days. On Monday the afghani, which traded at around 77 to the dollar before the fall of Kabul and at 97 a week ago, dropped from 112 to the dollar in the morning at Kabul's Sarai Shazada money market to 125 by the afternoon. On Tuesday it had recovered slightly and was being quoted at around 114-115 following the central bank move. [...] However the pressure on the afghani has already had a stark impact on the prices of daily necessities in an economy where unemployment is widespread and where even many in work have not been paid in months. Within the space of a week, wholesalers said the price of a 50 kg (110 lbs) sack of flour had risen by between 20-40% to between 2,800-3,200 afghani, from 2,300 a week ago, with the price of sugar up by a third and rice up by more than 15%. [...] Starved of dollars that used to be physically shipped into Afghanistan, and cut off from the world financial system by the fear of U.S. sanctions, the banking system is only partially functional and some \$9 billion in central bank reserves remain blocked outside the country."

Ariana News, IEA bans use of foreign currencies in bid to stabilize Afghan currency, 14 December 2021

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials on Tuesday banned the use of foreign currencies for commercial transactions in the country in a bid to stabilize the plummeting national currency, the Afghani (AFN). [...]"

This comes as Afghanistan grapples with an economic crisis following the sudden collapse of the previous government, the suspension of foreign donor money and the freezing of foreign assets."

Tolonews, Counterfeit Afghani Bills Turning Up in Kabul: Merchants, 14 December 2021

"Amid the steep decline in value of Afghanistan's currency--the afghani--against the dollar, a number of shopkeepers on Tuesday said counterfeit banknotes are now spreading in the markets.

The shopkeepers called on the central bank to prevent the spread of the counterfeit banknotes. [...]"

The spread of fake banknotes and the drop of the afghani's value caused the cabinet to call for the economic commission to take measures to prevent the injection of more counterfeit banknotes into the markets."

Tolonews, Value of Afghani Plunges, Price of Goods Spike, 13 December 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The alarming drop in value of Afghanistan’s currency, the Afghani, against the dollar happens amid an economic and humanitarian crisis that has also led to a sharp increase in the price of goods, including essential items like food and fuel.

The Money Exchanger’s Union in Sarai Shahzada, Afghanistan’s biggest money exchanging market, said on Monday that one dollar was exchanged for 123 Afghani, while on Sunday it was 110 Afghani, and a month ago it was below 90.

The exchanger’s union said some people have played a role in the increase of the dollar price by spreading rumors, and were pushed out of the market on Sunday.

On Monday, the market’s “Boli” section, which is the main section for determining the value of currencies and also where big money exchange transactions occur, was closed.

“A number of people who in fact are not money exchangers have come here and are promoting fake rates. I hope the situation gets better in the coming days,” said Sayed Ali Sadat, a member of the money exchangers’ union.”

TOLO News, Afghan Currency Drops Further Against Dollar, 12 December 2021

“The value of Afghan currency continues to drop against the US dollar as the country’s economy is on the verge of collapse.

The price of one dollar was over 110 Afs on Sunday.

The union of money exchangers of Surah-e-Shahzad said the lack of sufficient dollars available in the market is the main reason for the rapid fall of the Afs.

“The main reason for the drop in Afs is that the market faces a shortage of dollars and the demand for dollars is high. There are also some negative actors who oppose the Islamic Emirate and make propaganda to cause the drop in value of Afs,” said Haji Zarak, a spokesman for the union.

“The private banks provide interest in Afs. For example, if previously a company had an account, the bank would give the company’s interest in dollars but now they provide the interest in Afs,” said Abdul Wahid Aslami, a money exchanger.

Meanwhile, Da Afghanistan Bank said that the third batch of humanitarian cash aid--\$19.2 million--arrived in Kabul on Sunday.”

Pajhwok, Earnings of beggars down by 55pc in Kabul, 12 December 2021

“Based on their data, Pajhwok’s calculations show on average a beggar in Kabul used to earn 318 afghanis four months ago, but now the figure has dropped to 144 afghanis.”

AVA Press, Worn-Out Banknotes One More Difficulty in Afghan Economic Crisis, 11 December 2021

““There is a lot of worn-out currency in the market, particularly the 100, 50, 20 and 10 Afs bills are very worn,” said Samir, a shopkeeper.

“The government should try to issue a good quality currency,” said Asadullah a Kabul resident.

Zia is a money exchanger who purchases the worn-out currency and then sells it to the government’s central bank.

“The bank doesn’t want to take the money from us. The bank says it doesn’t have the sufficient budget to buy the worn-out currency,” he said.

[...]

“The worn-out currency is one the main challenges in the trade market in the current conditions in Afghanistan. This affects the circle of business,” said Sayed Masoud, an economist.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

TOLO News, Afghans Despair as Prices of Food, Essential Goods Spike, 10 December 2021

"Business people said the rapid rise in value of the US dollar against the Afghani is one of the main reasons for the expensive prices of essential commodities.

"The reason for the surge in prices is the rise of the dollar. We purchase all the products with dollars and sell them in Afs," said Saifullah, an owner of a store.

"Business has dropped compared to before. Those who previously bought five bags of flour, they now buy only two bags," said Khan Agha, a store owner.

The price of one bag of flour is 2,400Afs, a 16-liter bottle of oil is about 2,800Afs. The price of one bag of rice is 2,700Afs.

Citizens said that they have been struggling to pay for food and basic cooking goods due to their high prices."

TOLO News, Govt Struggles With Plummeting Value of Afghan Currency, 9 December 2021

The Central Bank held a meeting with the union of money-exchangers of Sarai Shahzada.

"The Central Bank (Da Afghanistan Bank) attempted to avert the economic crisis," said Haseebullah Noori, an official at Da Afghanistan Bank.

The union of money-exchangers said the large amount of Afs and scarcity of dollars in the market are reasons for the drop of the Afghan currency value.

"In the meeting of the Central Bank, they pledged to cooperate and drop the price of a dollar by 1.5 Afs," said Mohammad Tahir Qayoumi, a member of the union.

The drop in value of the Afghan currency is undermining trade. The traders expressed concerns, saying that the merchandise that is imported is purchased by dollars.

"We are a country relying on imports. We import the materials, especially the food products, from foreign countries and the rise of the dollar will have a bad affect," said Khan Jan Alokozai, a member of the chamber of commerce and investment.

"The rise of the dollar price in return for Afs is having a negative impact on the country's economy and it unfortunately doubles the economic crisis," said Mohammad Karim Azimi, head of the chamber of industry and mines.

AVA Press, Devalued Afghan Currency Adds to the Miseries of Civilian Population, 8 December 2021

"For the first time, the value of the against the national currency exceeded 100 afghanis. [...] The decline comes as the central bank has been unable to control the value of the dollar in recent days.

[...] Unfortunately, in such a situation, the people suffer the most from the devaluation of the currency. At present, most of the buying and selling of raw materials and other goods is done in dollars. The higher the value of the dollar against the Afghan currency, the more people become incapable of buying the necessities of life. The prices of gas, flour, oil, rice, and the materials that people need daily have risen to an all-time high. If this trend continues in the current crisis, there is no doubt that the UN forecast for the spread of poverty will happen much sooner, and a large percentage of people may fall below the poverty line in a few months."

AVA Press, Afghanistan's central bank receives second package of humanitarian cash, 8 December 2021

"The bank did not close the exact amount of money though, the statement reads that the money was delivered to Afghanistan International Bank (AIB) through the central bank of Afghanistan.

The cash in humanitarian aid by the comes as Afghanistan's local currency is at its lowest point ever against the US dollar.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

It is said that the lack of a [sic] has caused the local currency (Afghani) to lose its value and ultimately made the prices of food ingredients to be double.

De Afghanistan Bank in the statement said that the problem of the banking system and local currency will soon be resolved and banks will deliver their best services to people.

In the meantime, officials in UNAMA said that the money is not given to authorities in but to private banks in Afghanistan so that they pay the bills of humanitarian activities of the .

UNAMA has announced to be given Afghanistan central bank \$16 million in cash.”

International Crisis Group, Beyond Emergency Relief: Averting Afghanistan’s Humanitarian Catastrophe, 6 December 2021

“Further revelations awaited: Taliban officials said they were astounded by the lack of currency reserves in Kabul when they captured state institutions. The previous government had almost emptied the central bank.⁵³ The Taliban may have not understood how the economy worked. The central bank had been dependent on regular shipments of dollars from the U.S. Federal Reserve, which assisted the Afghan central bank’s management of foreign assets. The shipments supplied currency auctions in Kabul that traded U.S. dollars for afghanis. These auctions raised as much as \$45 million per week in cash, supporting the afghani’s value and injecting liquidity into an economy in which foreign currencies (mostly U.S. dollars) represented 60 per cent of all bank deposits.⁵⁴ Afghans used their own currency to buy bread, for instance, but they imported wheat flour – and most other products – using U.S. dollars.⁵⁵ Taliban officials had known before marching on Kabul that the economy was dependent on foreign aid, and they had discussed options for cutting the state budget to become less reliant on outsiders, but the cash shortages caught them off guard.⁵⁶ [...]

53 Crisis Group interviews, Taliban officials, September 2021.
54 World Bank data.
55 Crisis Group interviews, academics and former Afghan officials, September-October 2021. See also Manuel Bautista-Gonzalez, “Cash during the fall of Kabul”, Cash Essentials, 6 September 2021.
56 Crisis Group interviews, Taliban-affiliated figures, Doha and Kabul, 2020-2021.”

TOLO News, UN Seeks \$4.5B to Assist Vulnerable Afghans, 2 December 2021

“The absence of cash in Afghanistan is a major impediment to any delivery of services,” he added. “I am hoping that we get it up and running before the end of this month.” With the fall of the former government, the freezing of Afghan assets and the shortage of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, the country has recently plunged into a severe economic crisis.”

DTM, DTM: EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING, 29 November 2021

“CFPs were also asked to rank their community’s most urgent needs. Cash and food were identified as the first priority needs, which aligns with reported community shocks in the past month. These include reduced income (94%), loss of employment (96%) and food price increase (95%) (see below). Drinking water and immediate healthcare were second and third priority needs, which is reflected in the reported risk of displacement due to water insecurity (55%) and the majority of communities without a health clinic or hospital (69%).”

Ariana News, Afghani falls to record low amid pressing currency shortage, 26 November 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Economists are warning of an acute currency shortage in Afghanistan and the subsequent economic predicament as the Afghani has plummeted to its record low in trading. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued a report earlier this week urging prompt actions to prevent the Afghan banking system from collapsing, which is now “in disarray” featuring inadequate liquidity and decreased deposits. The largest currency exchange market in Kabul now has been crowded with people and the Afghani has dropped to its all-time low.”

Ariana News, Afghani falls to record low amid pressing currency shortage, 26 November 2021

“Economists are warning of an acute currency shortage in Afghanistan and the subsequent economic predicament as the Afghani has plummeted to its record low in trading. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued a report earlier this week urging prompt actions to prevent the Afghan banking system from collapsing, which is now “in disarray” featuring inadequate liquidity and decreased deposits. The largest currency exchange market in Kabul now has been crowded with people and the Afghani has dropped to its all-time low. Before the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA)’s takeover of Kabul in mid-August, one U.S. dollar was equal to about 70 Afghanis. But now the exchange rate hovers around 90 Afghanis to the dollar. The continued depreciation of the Afghan currency sparked fears among residents, with many flocking to the exchange market. Unfortunately in these two weeks the Afghan currency has been dropping down against foreign currencies with one dollar costing 95.5 Afghanis last week. Then the Afghanistan Bank released a statement that they will put 10 million U.S. dollars into the market, more than the 2.5 million dollars they actually took out. However, the price [of the U.S. dollar] didn’t go down but unfortunately have increased day by day,” said Zirak, spokesman from the all money dealers of Afghanistan. Zirak said the country’s currency shortage was fueled by the combination of its assets frozen by the United States, the increasing domestic demand for U.S. dollars, as well as banks’ restrictions on dollar withdrawal.”

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Country must have access to funds to avoid humanitarian disaster, 23 November 2021

“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. According to the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 22.8 million people (of a population of approximately 39-40 million) are facing acute food insecurity and hunger, while the World Food Programme estimates that at least a million children are already suffering from acute malnutrition. According to the UN, more than \$200 million of humanitarian aid a month is needed to avert disaster.” [...] “In just a few months, the situation is already critical. People in the public and private sectors have not been paid their salaries, can’t access money, and can’t afford even essential items. [...] “The situation has left the country’s banking system on the brink of collapse. Long queues have formed outside banks and ATMs, which are not dispensing cash. The price of goods has soared while the country’s currency has plummeted in value.” [...] “Public sector workers have not been paid for months, while about 1.2 million private sector workers’ wages remain pending according to local media, with the government and employers unable to access funds to make payments. According to the UN Development Programme, the country’s poverty rate, currently at 72%, is set to reach to 97% by mid-2022.”

AVA Press, UN Report: Afghanistan Faces Major Bank Crisis, 23 November 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The UNDP report said that with current trends and withdrawal restrictions, about 40% of Afghanistan's deposit base will be lost by the end of the year."

TOLO News, UN Warns of "Colossal" Collapse of Afghan Banking System, 22 November 2021

In a three-page report on Afghanistan's banking and financial system seen by Reuters, the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) said the economic cost of a banking system collapse - and consequent negative social impact - "would be colossal." [...]

Afghanistan's banking system was already vulnerable before the Taliban came to power. But since then development aid has dried up, billions of dollars in Afghan assets have been frozen abroad, and the United Nations and aid groups are now struggling to get enough cash into the country. [...]

The United Nations has repeatedly warned since the Taliban took over that Afghanistan's economy is on the brink of a collapse that would likely further fuel a refugee crisis. UNDP said that if the banking system fails, it could take decades to rebuild.

Afghan Voice Agency, Vulnerable Families Provided With Cash-Aid in Kabul, 22 November 2021

"We distribute the aids in two rounds. First, we have provided food materials. Now provide about 76 US dollars to each family,"

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan 'on the brink of catastrophe': UN envoy, 18 November 2021

"The UN envoy for Afghanistan says the country is "on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe", urging the international community to find ways to provide financial support to the Afghan people, who "feel abandoned". Deborah Lyons said an estimated 60 percent of Afghanistan's 38 million people are facing crisis levels of hunger in a food emergency that will likely worsen over the winter."

GANDHARA NEWS, Afghan Currency Hits Two-Decade Low, Foretelling Higher Food, Fuel Prices, 15 November 2021

"Afghanistan's national currency has reached its lowest level in the past two decades against the U.S. dollar as the war-ravaged country's economy struggles to stay afloat following the Taliban takeover.

The November 14 exchange rate on the foreign-exchange market Sarai Shahzada was quoted at 95 afghanis for one dollar.

Two days earlier, the rate was 91.5 afghanis to one U.S. dollar. [...]

With the fall in the currency's value against the dollar, fuel and food prices are sure to rise in the country as costs to import products increase."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatches: inflation worries loom as local currency depreciates rapidly, 15 November 2021

"The value of Afghanistan's currency, the Afghani, decreased against the US dollar Sunday. As of Monday, the exchange rate was 1 to 95—an increase of AFN 6 per dollar in comparison to yesterday. The commercial banks have complained to the nation's central bank about running out foreign exchange reserves, particularly US dollars.

The central bank has resumed US dollar auctions again and the first auction for sale of dollars to commercial banks and other financial institutions will be conducted Tuesday. The central bank is trying to increase the value of the Afghani by infusing US dollars in the market, but this is counterintuitive as the bank does not have sufficient dollars to begin with."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Kabul Now, Afghanistan's currency hits new low against US dollar, 14 November 2021
"Afghanistan's afghani fell to a new low against the US dollar on Sunday, November 14, in currency exchange markets as the country's economy is faltering under the Taliban's government.

The dollar was selling for as much as 94 afghani in Sara-e-Shahzada, the country's largest exchange market in Kabul, on Sunday's afternoon, said Haji Dadgol, deputy head of the market.

[..]

The Afghan currency has continued to fall against the foreign currencies ever since the Taliban overthrew the previous government on August 15 and returned to power."

AAN, Killing the Goose that Laid the Golden Egg: Afghanistan's economic distress post-15 August, 11 November 2021

"The Taleban 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."

HRW, Afghanistan Facing Famine, 11 November 2021

"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."

Ariana News, Afghanistan central bank raises limit on bank withdrawals to \$400 a week, 3 November 2021
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. Afghanistan's foreign exchange reserves have been restricted following the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) take over in August, severely limiting the new administration's room for financial manoeuvre. Some \$9.5 billion in central bank reserves remain blocked outside the country and international support given to the previous government has dried up. This week, the IEA banned the use of foreign currencies for transactions like buying a car or a house, saying all contracts must be denominated in the Afghani currency.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Al Jazeera, Taliban bans the use of foreign currency across Afghanistan, 2 November 2021

“The Taliban has announced a complete ban on the use of foreign currency in Afghanistan, a move certain to cause further disruption to an economy pushed to the brink of collapse by the abrupt withdrawal of international support in the wake of the group’s takeover of the country. “The Islamic Emirate instructs all citizens, shopkeepers, traders, businessmen and the general public to ... conduct all transactions in Afghanis and strictly refrain from using foreign currency,” the Taliban said in a statement posted online by spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid. “Anyone violating this order will face legal action,” the statement said. The use of US dollars is widespread in Afghanistan’s markets, while border areas use the currency of neighbouring countries such as Pakistan for trade.”

IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, October 2021

“Afghanistan’s economy was already characterised by high levels of fragility and aid dependence and food security was significantly impacted by drought. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, both domestically and internationally, has compounded this fragility. Since August, international development assistance, longer-term development projects and institutional support have been suspended. The freeze of foreign assets is driving a liquidity crisis, resulting in the devaluation of the Afghani currency, compounding the economic shock. While measures may be implemented to prevent a total collapse of the economy, this may not go far beyond maintaining the basic functioning of the financial sector. Even with these mitigation measures in place, the economy is expected to further contract in the projection period, and this will lead to further increases in acute food insecurity.”

Foreign Policy, Afghan Crime Wave Adds to Taliban Dystopia, 29 October 2021

“As economic collapse and humanitarian catastrophe stalk Afghanistan, a spike in serious crime and concerns about civil unrest are adding pressure on a population facing a Himalayan winter and already struggling with rising prices, vanishing cash, and unemployment.

[...] Reports are emerging of families selling baby girls to raise money to buy food as poverty and hunger bite deeper and law and order breaks down further. Sources in the capital, Kabul, said kidnappings and extortion are daily occurrences, with Taliban foot soldiers killing on contract to earn cash as they are not being paid.

“It’s \$2,000 to kidnap someone and \$5,000 to kill someone,” said a former Afghan security official who is closely monitoring the crime wave.”

Al Jazeera, As US freezes funds, a harsh winter awaits cash-strapped Afghans, 29 October 2021

“In its latest report to the United States Congress, the Special Investigator General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has detailed Washington’s decision to cut off the Taliban government’s access to billions in funds and assets that has led to devastation across the cash-strapped nation. [...] After the Taliban toppled the Western-led government in the middle of August, the US, along with international bodies including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), decided to cut off Afghanistan’s access to more than \$9.5bn in assets and loans. The decision has had a devastating effect on Afghanistan’s healthcare and other sectors, all of which are struggling to continue operations amid cutbacks to international aid. According to the World Bank, approximately 14 million people – one out of three Afghans – were on the brink of starvation due to the aid cuts until the end of the last month.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Reuters, 'Just give us our money': Taliban push to unlock Afghan billions abroad, 29 October 2021

"Afghanistan's Taliban government is pressing for the release of billions of dollars of central bank reserves as the drought-stricken nation faces a cash crunch, mass starvation and a new migration crisis. Afghanistan parked billions of dollars in assets overseas with the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks in Europe, but that money has been frozen since the Islamist Taliban ousted the Western-backed government in August."

Reuters, U.N. urgently needs cash in Afghanistan, but struggles for solution, 28 October, 2021

"The United Nations cannot get enough cash into Afghanistan to deliver humanitarian aid to millions of people on the brink of starvation and is struggling to develop options to help stabilize the collapsing economy, U.N. officials said. [...] Ultimately political solutions are needed, a senior U.N. official told Reuters on condition of anonymity, an apparent reference to sanctions relief and for governments and institutions to free up billions of dollars of Afghan assets held overseas."

IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

"Remittance flows have been severely affected: The financial freeze in government assets is affecting international remittance flows, compounding reductions resulting from the lingering economic impact of COVID-19 across the world and greatly impacting those households relying on remittances. According to the World Bank, remittances account for 4% of Afghanistan's GDP or \$800M a year. According to the 2021 SFSA, 7.4% of households receive remittances, and 2.5% are the primary income source. Remittances are a critical buffer during shocks; the suspension of such services has had a detrimental impact on households' coping capacities. As a result, the proportion of urban dwellers in IPC Phase 3 or above increased from 36% last year to 43%. The number of people in high acute food insecurity is expected to increase in the projection period (November 2021 - March 2022) to 4.9 million people (52%) due to the expected increase in prices and the decrease in job opportunities particularly for government workers. Compared to last year's financial access, the overall situation has significantly deteriorated due to a slowdown of business and industry and food prices significantly increasing this year compared to the previous year's."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: 'the central bank as well as commercial banks are running out of dollar banknotes', 21 October 2021

"Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Here, a lawyer in Kabul offers his personal observations and perspective on recent banking and financial developments in Afghanistan. [...]"

Today, I visited a local bank to receive my USD 200 which I can receive from my account on a weekly basis. I went to the nearest branch of this bank but I was told that they do not have USD dollars. I went to the main branch of the bank which is close to the central bank.

I received the above amount but the dollar I received today is from 2006 series.[...]

I also took some time and talked to the guy at the bank on how much they receive on a weekly basis from the central bank. He told me that this week they only received USD 20,000 from the central bank. This means that the central bank as well as commercial banks are running out of dollar banknotes and soon this will adversely affect the banking system.

My friend further added that the state-owned banks as well as the commercial banks are only open provide cash to the people and nothing more than that."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: 'The commercial banks are unable to preserve their liquidity and that is leading them to failure.', 27 October 2021

"The banking system had developed a lot during the last two decades in the country. Until 2001 only state-owned banks with limited banking system were active in Afghanistan. Upon the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 the government – with foreign help – developed a system that attracted many financial institutions as well as investors to invest in the banking system. The central bank licensed up to 10 private banks and some branches of foreign banks to operate in the country.

Currently, 12 banks are active, of which three are state-owned and others private banks. The latest reports from the central bank (July 2021) indicate that the total assets of the commercial banks are 311 billion AFN of which 276 billion AFN includes debts/loans and only 36 billion AFN covers these banks net assets or shareholder shares.

AIB, Azizi, Bank Millie, and Islamic Bank total assets and capital are more than 30 billion AFN. Investments in capital notes, long-term investment, and loans to businesses are the major areas in which commercial banks have invested mostly. The total amount of loans on different businesses is about 32 billion AFN and about 45 billion AFN is invested in capital notes of the central bank. The problem with loans on businesses is that many businesses has collapsed already and/or are collapsing due to the current economic situation. Businesses are unable to pay debts and any interest. Therefore, commercial banks are losing and/or have already lost a big amount of revenue."

AVA Press, IEA won't be allowed access to Afghan central bank reserves: US, 21 October 2021

"Deputy U.S. Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo on Tuesday said he sees no situation where the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) who regained power in Afghanistan in August, would be allowed access to Afghan central bank reserves, which are largely held in the United States.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_ The IEA have called for the United States to lift a block on more than \$9 billion of Afghan reserves held outside the country as the government struggles to contain a deepening ."

United States Institute of Peace, Afghanistan's Economic and Humanitarian Crises Turn Dire, 14 October 2021

"Two months after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, the country is grappling with twin economic and humanitarian crises the response to which has been complicated by international aid cutoffs, the freezing of Afghanistan's foreign exchange reserves and sanctions on the militants. USIP's William Byrd discusses the implications of these crises and the challenges to alleviating them."

Landinfo, Afghanistan: En humanitær krise, 13 October 2021

"Afghanistan is on the brink of economic collapse. Neither the Taliban, aid organizations nor most people have access to cash (Debre 2021; Bolle & Røst 2021). At the end of September 2021, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced that humanitarian efforts were hampered by a lack of cash; there is no money to pay wages or to buy goods (OCHA 2021b). NRC has no opportunity to transfer salaries to the organization's two thousand local employees (Matre 2021).

Long queues are reported outside the country's banks. Private banks do not have access to cash, which means that even Afghans with money in the bank do not have access to their own funds (UNAMA 2021). It is especially in the cities that Afghans have been dependent on foreign funding, either directly by receiving wages funded by the international community, or indirectly by offering goods and services (Duncan & Clark 2021)."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Original excerpt in Norwegian [translated using Google translate]
"Afghanistan er på randen av økonomisk sammenbrudd. Verken Taliban, bistandsorganisasjoner eller folk flest har tilgang til kontanter (Debre 2021; Bolle & Røst 2021). Ved utgangen av september 2021 meldte FNs kontor for koordinering av humanitær innsats (OCHA) at den humanitære innsatsen hindres av mangel på kontanter; det er ikke penger til å betale lønn eller å kjøpe varer (OCHA 2021b). Flyktninghjelpen har ingen mulighet til å overføre lønn til organisasjonens to tusen lokalt ansatte (Matre 2021).

Det meldes om lange køer utenfor landets banker. Private banker har ikke tilgang på kontanter, hvilket betyr at selv afghanere med penger i banken ikke får tilgang til egne midler (UNAMA 2021). Det er særlig i byene at afghanerne har vært avhengig av utenlandsk finansiering, enten direkte ved at de har mottatt lønn finansiert av det internasjonale samfunnet, eller indirekte ved at de har tilbudt varer og tjenester (Duncan & Clark 2021)."

BBC, Afghanistan crisis: G20 leaders pledge to avert economic catastrophe, 13 October 2021

"The takeover of this country has caused a massive shock to an economy that was just about surviving. Banks were closed for many days after the Taliban seized control, and while many have opened now, accessing cash is still difficult.

Many businesses shut down because their owners fled the country fearing for their lives. Many of those who had jobs haven't received salaries for months.

With no cash in the market, there has been a sharp rise in prices of day to day necessities including food. An already difficult situation created by war and drought has become much worse.

Women who had jobs and supported their families can no longer work and are now entirely dependent on handouts.

In Kabul, hundreds of people are still living in the open in tents with harsher winter months fast approaching.

Development aid given by foreign countries and agencies to Afghanistan, which helped to put cash into the economy, is all but frozen. This, on the ground, means that people who worked on development projects are out of jobs. [...]

Afghans have been describing their difficulties to the BBC.

"Nothing can be found, and even if it is available, it's too expensive and not affordable," one retired man said. "I was paid last year and am still waiting on my salary, I have nothing to eat with my children."

Another, a government employee in the northern town of Takhar, complained that officials were lying about the payment of salaries.

"I've received nothing," he said. "What type government is this? If an employee doesn't go to work, there would be complaints and an investigation. But if he's not being paid, how can he survive?"

Reuters, Afghanistan on verge of socio-economic collapse, EU's top diplomat says, 3 October 2021

"The Afghan banking system is largely paralysed, with people unable to withdraw money, while the country's health system - which was heavily dependent on foreign aid - is close to collapse, according to Borrell."

BBC News, Taliban: Afghanistan bank boss warns sector near collapse, 28 September 2021

"Syed Moosa Kaleem Al-Falahi, the Chief Executive of the Islamic Bank of Afghanistan, said the country's financial industry is in the grip of an "existential crisis" as customers panic.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“There's huge withdrawals happening at the moment”, he said, speaking from Dubai, where he is temporarily based because of the chaos in Kabul.

“Only withdrawals are happening, most of the banks are not functioning, and not providing full services,” he added.

Afghanistan's economy was already on shaky ground even before the Taliban took control in August.”

“Inflation is soaring, the Afghani, the country's currency, is plummeting and people are desperate as many have lost their jobs and are short of cash.”

TOLO News, UNDP Forecast: 97% of Afghans in Poverty by Mid-2022, 12 September 2021

“The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) warned that 97 percent of Afghans could fall below the poverty line by mid-2022 unless the country's political and economic challenges are addressed promptly.

Based on a report UNDP released on September 9th, the latest developments and uncertainties have severely affected the lives of Afghans and an economic crisis is emerging in the country.”

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

“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.”

Availability of and access to food

Afghan Voice Agency, The United Nations demanded the continuation of aid to Afghanistan, 30 August 2022

“Poverty is deepening and the population is increasing; however, the Islamic Emirate does not have a budget to invest in the future.” [quote by Martins Griffiths]

“As winter approaches, more than 600 million dollars for urgent aid such as upgrading and repairing shelters and providing warm clothes and blankets is needed.”

[...] “before the winter weather cuts off access to some parts of the country, \$154 million is needed to prepare resources, including food aid and livelihood.

The head of the United Nations aid has said that more than half of Afghanistan’s 39 million population needs humanitarian aid and 6 million people are at risk of famine. He also added that more than one million children ‘are estimated to suffer from the most severe and threatening form of malnutrition’ and may die without proper treatment.”

Aljazeera, UN says six million Afghans are at risk of famine as crises grow, 30 August 2022

“Martin Griffiths told the United Nations Security Council that Afghanistan faces multiple crises – humanitarian, economic, climate, hunger and financial – and that donors should immediately provide \$770m to help Afghans survive the coming colder months.

Conflict, poverty, climate shocks and food insecurity “have long been a sad reality” in Afghanistan, but he said what makes the current situation “so critical” is the halt to large-scale development aid.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“China’s UN Ambassador Zhang Jun also accused the US and its allies of ‘evading responsibility and abandoning the Afghan people’ and imposing ‘political isolation and blockade’.”

WFP, Global food crisis: Cash offers hope as people feel the heat, 29 August 2022

“In Afghanistan, vocational training activities to learn new skills while being paid. Their savings can help them weather the country’s crisis, and hopefully increase their independence and employment opportunities. There will always be a need for direct food provision in some contexts, such as life-saving nutrition support. But in other contexts, especially where essential goods and services are available, giving people more money can be an appropriate, cost efficient and empowering response.”

Afghanaid, PRESS RELEASE: One year since Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, Afghanaid joins a network of 32 Afghan and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) urging the International Community not to abandon Afghans, 15 August 2022

“[...] Near-record low precipitation recorded in many parts of Afghanistan this year, combined with ongoing economic collapse, existing acute food insecurity and debt means as we approach another harsh Afghan winter, the situation in the country is set to become even more dire.

Currently, 92% of Afghan families are not eating enough food, and this percentage rises to almost 100% in families headed by women. [...]

Charles Davy, Managing Director at Afghanaid said: [...] “The continuing drought and economic collapse mean the possibility of famine this coming winter is progressively likely.””

Care International, Economic and Food Crisis in Afghanistan: The Impacts on Women and Girls, 15 August 2022

“The potential for women to earn an income in Afghanistan has deteriorated considerably since August 2021. 87.2% of the women surveyed reported a considerable decrease in their household income since August 2021. In Khost, a total of 100% (38) of households reported decreased income, and in Balkh, Ghazni, Herat, and Parwan, over 90% of respondents also reported a decrease.”

“As per the policy under the current regime, women are required to be accompanied by a mahram¹ if they want to travel more 70km away from their homes. However, in some districts, the local authorities have told women that they cannot go outside of their homes, even to the local markets, without a mahram. The discrepancy in the application of the rules at the local level further inhibits women’s movement. Women who were comfortable going to the markets to buy food now rely more heavily on male household members to purchase food.”

“In order to cope with the lack of food, interviewees reported adopting the following mechanisms:... Resorting to high-risk coping mechanisms: Afghanistan has seen a high spike in the practice of early and forced child marriages, where cash-strapped families unable to feed all their children resort to selling children – most often their girls – and in some cases, their organs. 12% of households (or 41 households) indicated having to marry one of their girls under 18 due to the food crisis.”

Bloomberg, Taliban’s rule batters Afghanistan year after us departure, 15 august 2022

“Millions of women have lost basic rights while the economy’s collapse and surging food prices have prompted fears of widespread starvation.

[...]

Teenage girls can no longer attend school, few women are allowed to hold jobs, journalists are under

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

siege and the country's economy has collapsed just as a surge in global food prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine made widespread starvation a serious risk.

[...]

Women's Rights

Afghan women are -- once again -- the primary victims of Taliban rule. Not long after taking power, the group barred teenage girls from getting an education beyond the seventh grade, dismissed thousands of women from government jobs and prevented females from traveling alone unless accompanied by a male relative. Women are also again forced to wear head-to-toe burqas in public.

[...]

Economic Free-fall

An abrupt cut in international aid, which accounted for 40% of GDP, after the Taliban takeover was a crushing blow, coming at the same time as the worst drought in three decades and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UN Development Programme says Afghanistan's economy will shrink 5% in 2022 after contracting 20% last year, while the country's per capita income is projected to decline by 30% to \$360 in 2022. At the same time, the cost of essential items such as food and fuel have climbed by about 40%, it says.

[...]

Hunger

Nearly 23 million people, or more than half the country's population, face acute hunger, a 65% increase since July 2021, just before the Taliban overran the country, according to reports by the World Food Programme and aid group Mercy Corps.

The situation is so desperate that some Afghans have resorted to selling personal belongings or even their young children into marriage in order to feed the rest of the family. Many others are trying to flee the country, adding to strains in neighboring nations including Pakistan.

[...]

Terrorism and Violence

Islamic State continues to be one of the biggest threats to the Taliban, carrying out major strikes on crowded areas. Recent attacks include one targeting attendees of a cricket game and another aimed at Shias taking part in a religious ceremony in Kabul, killing and wounding tens of people.

[...]

On the domestic security front, while the UN says there was a significant reduction in armed violence between mid-August 2021 and mid-June 2022, the toll is still high. In that time the UN recorded 2,106 casualties, including 700 killed, with most of the violence carried out by Islamic State. And despite the Taliban declaring a general amnesty after the US left, the UN has reported 160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary detentions, 23 instances of incommunicado detentions and 56 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former government and military officials.

Freedom of Expression

After a blossoming of media outlets and free expression in the 20 years before the Taliban re-took power, the pendulum has swung back in the opposite direction, according to the UN.

More than 200 media outlets have ceased operations since last year, primarily due to financial difficulties, laying off over 7,000 media workers, according to Afghanistan's Tolonews channel, citing the country's federation of journalists.

Reporters and media staff are also increasingly the subject of human rights violations, the UN said in a July 20 report. That report highlighted 122 instances of journalists facing arbitrary arrest. In addition, six journalists were killed -- five by Islamic State affiliates."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Mercy Corps, News Alert: Afghanistan Faces 65% Increase in Acute Hunger Since 2021 as Global Food Crisis Deepens, 11 August 2022

“One year since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) assumed leadership in Afghanistan, over 20 million people – almost half the population – are facing acute hunger levels, a 65% increase since July 2021.

Economic stress, compounding ongoing drought, fallout from COVID-19 and grinding conflict has left 95% of Afghans without enough to eat every day.

After more than four decades of conflict and instability, 59% of Afghans need assistance – an increase of 6 million people compared to the beginning of 2021. If no action is taken, the United Nations predicts that 97% of the population will plunge below the poverty line in 2022.

Funds pledged to aid tens of millions of Afghans are failing to reach communities in need, due to an almost completely incapacitated banking system. Because of a nationwide shortage of banknotes, Afghans cannot pay for daily expenses and businesses are unable to pay salaries.

Jack Byrne, Mercy Corps’ Afghanistan Country Director, says: “The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate by the day. An inconceivable number of Afghans are experiencing acute hunger and our teams are seeing higher levels of poverty than ever before in the communities we support in Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar. Our teams have also seen an increase in teenage marriages, with families marrying away girls as young as 13 so they have one less mouth to feed.”

“The approaching winter means a strong likelihood of flash flooding due to years of drought, which have eroded fields and crops to dust. There will also be an increased need for essential winter supplies like blankets, fuel lamps, and hygiene products. While most of these items are available locally in shops, people do not have the money to purchase anything other than food and water. The almost total collapse of the economy means no cash in people’s pockets. And while there is tremendous effort being made by humanitarian responders to meet immediate needs and help families avert worsening hunger, it will not be enough to rebuild livelihoods and the economy. The international community needs to take deliberate action to restore Afghanistan’s banking system to allow funds to reach those who most need it.””

Save the Children, One Year Under Taliban Rule, Girls are More Isolated, Hungry, Sad: New Report, 10 August 2022

“The report, titled *Breaking point: Life for children one year since the Taliban takeover*, shows that 97% of families are struggling to provide enough food for their children, and that girls are eating less than boys. Almost 80% of children said they had gone to bed hungry in the past 30 days. Girls were almost twice as likely as boys to frequently go to bed hungry.

A lack of food is having devastating consequences on children’s health and threatening their future. Nine in 10 girls said their meals had reduced in the past year and that they worry because they’re losing weight and have no energy to study, play and work. [...]

Children interviewed by Save the Children said the economic situation – leaving households without enough to eat and without basic items – was driving an increase in child marriages in their communities, and that this was impacting girls more than boys. Out of the children who said they’d been asked to marry to improve their family’s financial situation in the past year, 88% were girls.”

Gandhara, Afghan Girls' Lives 'Shattered' Since Return Of Taliban, Says New Report, 10 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“A humanitarian group says that one year into the return to power of the Taliban, Afghan girls have been confronted with a grave economic crisis, a crippling drought, and new restrictions that have shattered their lives, excluding them from society and leaving them hungry. As a result, a quarter of Afghan girls are showing signs of depression, Save the Children said in a new report on August 10. The report, titled Breaking Point: Life For Children One Year Since The Taliban Takeover, found that a whopping 97 percent of families are struggling to provide enough food for their children and almost 80 percent of children said they had gone to bed hungry in the past month. Girls were almost twice as likely as boys to frequently go to bed hungry, and eat less in general.”

AVA, Afghanistan was introduced as the poorest country in the world, 10 August, 2022

“By publishing a report, the World Bank has introduced the countries with the most severe food and debt crises. According to this report, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Yemen have been declared as the poorest countries. [...] According to the World Bank report, 69% of Afghan people are unable to meet their food needs and 16% of families consume less than one meal a day.”

Gandhara, Afghanistan’s Bare Dastarkhaans Reveal Rising Poverty, Hunger Under The Taliban, 10 August 2022

“The Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 triggered the collapse of Afghanistan’s aid-dependent economy, leading to rising food prices and soaring unemployment. The economic crunch has fueled a hunger crisis in the country of some 40 million people. According to the United Nations, a staggering 95 percent of Afghans are not getting enough to eat. [...] In March, the World Food Program said that almost 100 percent of female-headed households are facing “insufficient food consumption.” Households headed by women are the most vulnerable group among the nearly 9 million Afghans, and the WFP warns they are at risk of “famine-like” conditions.”

The New Humanitarian, One year on, few options for Afghans escaping hunger and Taliban persecution, 10 August 2022

“More than 90 percent of the Afghan population is suffering from food insecurity, and each month tens of thousands of children need emergency medical treatment due to malnutrition, according to a recent report by Human Rights Watch. Households headed by women, who lost employment after the Taliban took power, have been hit the hardest. [...] “The situation is at its worst ever,” Zaman Sultani, South Asia researcher at Amnesty International, told The New Humanitarian. “People are selling their daughters to get enough money [to live]. People are also selling their body parts and organs to feed the family. That is what the humanitarian situation is like on the ground, and it keeps on getting worse.””

The New Humanitarian, Unfreeze Afghan assets or more hungry children may die, 9 August 2022

“Following decades of conflict, people in Afghanistan are now grappling with another deadly issue as almost universal poverty grips the nation: soaring hunger. The Afghan economy had been deteriorating long before the government changed, but over the course of the Taliban’s first year back in power the country has suffered an economic implosion. This has led to almost 20 million people experiencing acute levels of food insecurity and put the lives of 1.1 million children with severe acute malnutrition at risk. There is no doubt that the abrupt suspension of international development aid last year has had a knock-on effect on the economy: For 20 years, development funding provided an estimated 70-80 percent of the previous government’s budget, and its withdrawal swiftly brought the health and education sectors to their knees, affecting millions of people. The freezing of Afghanistan’s assets has also been a cause of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

this dire economic stagnation. Some \$9.1 billion of Afghanistan's national reserves have been frozen overseas, and lack of access to these reserves is effectively preventing Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) – the Central Bank of Afghanistan – from performing its core regulatory functions of managing banking system volatility, stabilising the country's currency, and, by extension, avoiding dramatic increases in the price of basic commodities such as food, fuel, and medicines.”

TOLO News, Beggars Increase on Streets of Kabul Amid Widespread Poverty, 9 August 2022

“As the level of the poverty and unemployment rises across the country, the number of beggars is growing every day in the capital city of Kabul. Some beggars in Kabul told TOLONews that they are willing to cease begging if the Islamic Emirate provides them with employment with which they can earn a living.”

Ariana News, Nine out of ten people in Afghanistan face a lack of food: WFP, 4 August, 2022

“[...] statistics from relief organizations show that this year, malnutrition threatens the lives of nearly five million children and pregnant and lactating women in Afghanistan, and currently 3.9 million children are suffering from malnutrition. Last year, after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), came to power, aid organizations and countries stopped financial aid to Afghanistan, which led to a humanitarian and economic crisis in the country. Recently, the World Food Program said that more than 24 million people in Afghanistan are food insecure and more than 90% of Afghans need food aid. Meanwhile, the head of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) office says that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan has increased by 30 percent compared to last year. A statement from this office quoted Neil Turner, NRC country director for Afghanistan, as saying that more than 24 million people in Afghanistan need humanitarian aid to survive.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Economic Crisis Underlies Mass Hunger, 4 August 2022

“[...] Acute malnutrition is entrenched across Afghanistan, even though food and basic supplies are available in markets throughout the country. An Afghan humanitarian official told Human Rights Watch in mid-July, “People have nothing to eat. You may not imagine it, but children are starving.... The situation is dire, especially if you go to the villages.” He said he knew of one family who had lost two children, ages 5 and 2, to starvation in the last two months: “This is unbelievable in 2022.” He said that he knew of no shortages in food supplies and that the causes of the crisis were economic: “A functioning banking system is an immediate and crucial need to address the humanitarian crisis.”

Almost 20 million people – half the population – are suffering either level-3 “crisis” or level-4 “emergency levels of food insecurity under the assessment system of the World Food Programmes (WFP). Over one million children under 5 – especially at risk of dying when deprived of food – are suffering from prolonged acute malnutrition, meaning that even if they survive, they face significant health problems, including stunting. Recently, the WFP reported that tens of thousands of people in one province, Ghor, had slipped into “catastrophic” level-5 acute malnutrition, a precursor to famine.

Overall, more than 90 percent of Afghans have been suffering from some form of food insecurity since last August, skipping meals or whole days of eating and engaging in extreme coping mechanisms to pay for food, including sending children to work. [...]

Afghanistan's humanitarian situation would be even worse had the United Nations and other aid providers not substantially increased their operations in 2022, Human Rights Watch said. As the World Food Programme stated in a food security assessment for June through November 2022, “The severity of the situation is only partially mitigated by the unprecedented surge of humanitarian assistance that covers 38

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

percent of the total population of Afghanistan in the current period. In the absence of such assistance, the magnitude and severity of needs would be dramatically higher.””

SIGAR, July 30, 2022 Quarterly Report to Congress, 30 July 2022

“The UN World Food Programme projects that 18.9 million Afghans will face acute food insecurity between June and November 2022, including 4.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women. Some 19.7 million Afghans faced acute malnutrition between March and May 2022.

A 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, killing at least 1,000 people and injuring 3,000. Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada made a rare plea for international help in response efforts.

The Taliban released their first annual budget since taking power, outlining 231.4 billion afghani (\$2.6 billion) in expenditures and forecasting 186.7 afghani (\$2.1 billion) in domestic revenues for 2022.

The Taliban signed an agreement with a United Arab Emirates state-run aviation company to manage ground handling and security operations at international airports in Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat”

ICRC, Multilateral efforts needed to stem rising costs of global food staples and decline of livelihood in Ukraine, 28 July 2022

“If we look at places where we operate and where we conducted these surveys, we see some stark trends. Again, this is a market price review where we look on a monthly basis at an average of 20 food and non-food commodities per country, disaggregated by location and market. These are basic commodities needed by the affected people to survive.

We have found percentages increases across the board with:

- [...]
- Afghanistan 36%
- [...]

Each of these show a crisis-level increase in the price of their respective minimum food baskets over the past year.”

[video] IRC, In Afghanistan, an IRC volunteer goes door to door to prevent child malnutrition, 27 July 2022

Khaama Press, WFP: Food Insecurity Crisis Continues to Affect More Than Half of Afghans, 24 July 2022

“Food insecurity is on the rise among female-headed households, with nearly all experiencing insufficient food intake.

According to the WFP’s report, between June and November 2022, 18.9 million Afghans, or nearly half the country’s population, will experience severe food insecurity.

According to the WFP’s most recent Food Security Update, over 90% of Afghans have consumed inadequate food for more than nine months.

WFP warned that 4.7 million Afghan children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers could experience acute malnutrition in 2022.

According to a WFP assessment, Afghanistan’s harvest is predicted to be below average due to recurrent drought and unpredictable weather shocks, which might worsen the country’s already dire food insecurity situation.

WFP has provided food, nutrition, and resilience support to more than 2 million people in July. However, to funding restrictions, WFP was compelled to lower its caseload in July to a target of only 10 million people.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Since Kabul fell in August and American troops left, the Taliban-controlled government has been cut off from the global economy, resulting in a financial catastrophe, extreme poverty, food insecurity and inflation, and the loss of essential public services, such as healthcare."

AVA, World Food Organization assistance to more than 18 million people in Afghanistan, 16 July 2022
"[...] nearly 19 million people who are facing malnutrition [...]"

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund Receives \$2.2 Million Contribution from Switzerland: OCHA, 13 July 2022

"According to the World Food Program, since the Taliban took control of the government, half of Afghanistan's population has experienced hunger.

International assistance was significantly cut back after the Taliban were re-established in Afghanistan, and the World Bank's funding for development was severely constrained."

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Ukraine war worsens food insecurity worldwide – report, 12 July 2022

"some 811 million people are going hungry worldwide, with the situation particularly extreme in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Yemen."

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), Drought affects grapes yield in Kandahar this season, 11 July 2022

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Muslims Celebrate Eid Al-Adha Amid Rising Food Prices from War In Ukraine, 10 July 2022

"In Afghanistan, there is normally a shopping rush for animals ahead of Eid al-Adha. But this year, the global food-price hikes and economic devastation since the Taliban takeover have put it beyond the reach of many Afghans."

Ariana News, India signs MoU for wheat donation to Afghanistan, 10 July 2022

"Almost half the population of 19.7 million people faces acute food insecurity and requires emergency food assistance, with needs mounting in Afghanistan, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment released in May 2022"

The Guardian, Famine: what is it, where will it strike and how should the world respond, 6 July 2022

"According to the IPC, no area meets the criteria for a phase-5 famine classification. However, several countries [...] Afghanistan – have sections of their population living with phase-5 catastrophic levels of hunger."

"More than half of the Afghan population is on the brink of famine."

Khaama News (Afghan News Agency), UNOCHA: Germany Contributes €50 Million to Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, 6 July 2022

"Afghanistan's poverty and unemployment have increased due to the country's political unrest and drought. [...] more than 22 million people, or more than half of the country's population, are experiencing extreme hunger, with the majority unable to predict when their next meal will be, according to the United Nations World Food Program."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan — Baseline Mobility Assessment and Emergency Community-Based Needs Assessment Summary Results (March—April 2022), July 2022

"Afghanistan's vulnerability to conflict and natural disasters frequently leads to high levels of food insecurity. As a result of overall food scarcity in the country, the diversity of food intake by families in the country is limited. Sixteen per cent of households consume one meal or less per day. Faryab province has the highest prevalence of households eating one meal or less per day (37% of households). "

"One in five households (18%) in urban areas eat one meal or less per day, compared with 14% of peri-urban households and 16% of rural households."

"One out of 10 households in Afghanistan relies on food aid as a source of staple food (bread). Twenty-seven per cent of households produce bread themselves, and almost two-thirds of households purchase bread in markets. Daykundi province shows high rates of purchasing bread in markets (86%), while most households in Samangan produce bread themselves (71%). The province that relies the most on food aid for bread is Badakhshan (43%). Rural areas report higher rates of producing their own staple food (35%), compared with peri-urban (24%) and urban settlements (13%). Urban areas report higher rates of purchasing staple food from markets (78%), compared to 62% in peri-urban and 56% in rural settlements. Lastly, all areas report similar levels of receiving food aid for staple food: 14% in peri-urban areas, 9% in urban areas, and 8% in rural areas."

"Over half of people in communities across Afghanistan cannot afford their basic food needs. The worst case is in Bamiyan province, where over 9 out of 10 people in communities (92%) are unable to afford their basic food needs."

"Urban settlements face slightly more difficulty achieving their basic food needs, with 71% of the people in the community being unable to afford basic food needs, compared with 68% among both peri-urban and rural settlements."

"Almost one quarter (23%) of people in communities across Afghanistan cannot access their basic food needs. Wardak province faces the worst rates of individuals being unable to access basic food needs (88%). On average, similar shares of people in rural, peri-urban, and urban settlements are unable to access basic food needs: 23%, 24%, and 22% respectively."

"In the face of these common barriers to affording and accessing basic food needs, families continue to rely on a variety of coping mechanisms. The most common coping mechanism is relying on less preferred foods, which is practiced by over two out of every five households (42%) on average across the country - Nuristan, Khost, Herat provinces reported the highest rate of this practice (67%, 64%, and 64%)."

"Eight per cent of all households borrow money for food, this is the most common in Paktika (21%), Zabul (17%), and Nimruz (15%) provinces. Ten per cent of households rely on humanitarian assistance for food, especially in Badakhshan (31%), Faryab (24%), and Nimruz (22%) provinces."

The New Humanitarian, Afghan earthquake survivors ask: How will I rebuild my home?, 29 June 2022

"In addition to inadequate funding and poor governance, a severe and prolonged drought has battered crops and livestock. Between July 2021 and March 2022, the number of Afghans facing acute hunger rose from 14 million to 23 million – more than half the population. Some 95 percent of the country does not have enough to eat."

Save the Children, Fears for 118,000 children in wake of Afghanistan's deadly earthquake, 23 June 2022

"Save the Children has grave concerns for more than 118,000 children[i] who may have been impacted by the earthquake in Afghanistan's south-east. We have reports of people sheltering out in the open under plastic sheets and many children are now most likely without clean drinking water, food and a safe place

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to sleep. "Children are among the most vulnerable in the wake of natural disasters as they are at greater risk of hunger, dying due to their injuries and contracting infectious diseases. When separated from loved ones or orphaned, they are also at further risk of exploitation and abuse."

IOM, Snapshot Report Round 4 (February to March 2022), 22 June 2022

"At the time of the interview, 82 per cent of participants said that their personal economic situation had worsened in the last six months. Similarly, 86 per cent of interviewees said that their economic situation had worsened at the household level."

"Most respondents (94%) reported that their household income was not enough to cover basic needs. Common coping mechanisms for insufficient income include borrowing money from friends or relatives (94%), reducing food expenditures (88%) and relying on humanitarian assistance (23%). It is worth noting that five respondents withdrew their children from school so that they could work and contribute to the household income"

Tolo News, MoRR Calls on UNHCR to Address Problems of Refugees, 21 June 2022

"The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) called on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to address the problems of Afghan refugees abroad. Talking to the gathering held to mark World Refugee Day, the acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Khalil Rahman Haqqani, expressed concerns over the mistreatment of Afghan refugees abroad. "The rights of refugees, their problems must be raised to the whole world and to those who are responsible for them," he said. "To support them (refugees), there is a need for the support of the international community and other organizations," said Arsalan Kharotai, deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation. Speaking at the same gathering, the head of the UNHCR's Representative, Leonard Zulu, said that around 24 million Afghans are facing acute hunger."

Ariana News, Malnutrition cases increase in north of Afghanistan by 50%, 19 June 2022

AVA, Poverty in Afghanistan / The Red Cross called for 80 million francs in emergency aid, 16 June 2022

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has released a report on Afghanistan today (Thursday, June 16) stating that due to the humanitarian situation, it has extended its emergency request from 36 million francs to 80 million francs by 31 December 2023. The Red Cross has called for help for 2 million people in 34 provinces; the figure, which the organization believes makes up 10 percent of Afghanistan's affected population. The committee went on to say that drought, severe economic and health crises have affected the entire territory of Afghanistan. According to the Red Cross, restrictions on the participation of women and minority groups, and displacement inside and outside the borders have added to this difficult situation. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) further noted that disruptions in the public service system have weakened investment in Afghanistan. "More than half of children under the age of five are expected to experience acute malnutrition," the Red Cross added. Unemployment, a weak health system, gaps in the health system, education, energy and public services are other factors that put pressure on people. This urgent call for help to the people of Afghanistan was made by the International Committee of the Red Cross at a time when Afghanistan is facing unprecedented unemployment, poverty and hunger following recent developments."

ACTED, Cash Based Transfers in Ghor, UNDATED [January 2022 – June 2022]

"Through this 6-month intervention, ACTED will provide 5 months of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to 22,774 crisis-affected HHs (159,418 individuals) and an additional 1-month of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to the most vulnerable 12,652 HHs (88,564 individuals) identified through additional data gathering during SCOPE registration. The objectives of this intervention are to distribute cash assistance to the most food insecure households, including Pregnant and Lactating women and children under 5, to prevent deterioration of their food security and nutritional status and to mitigate against negative coping strategies.”

ACTED, Cash Based Transfers in Herat, UNDATED [January 2022 – June 2022]

“Through this 6-month intervention, ACTED will provide 5 months of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to 15,000 crisis-affected HHs (105,000 individuals) and an additional 1-month of unconditional nutrition-sensitive cash food assistance to the most vulnerable to 8,477 HHs (59,339 individuals) identified through additional data gathering during SCOPE registration. The objectives of this intervention are to distribute cash assistance to food insecure HHs in Informal Settlements (ISETs) in Herat including returnees and IDPs to minimize the negative coping strategies during the months of most severe food insecurity.”

WFP, WFP at a glance, 16 June 2022

"The report confirmed fears that **Afghanistan** would face a record high number of people in critical food insecurity in the coming months, with a serious risk of starvation and death among parts of the population."

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report, 15 June 2022

"45 per cent of the population remain in crisis to emergency phases of food insecurity."

BBC News, Scraps of stale bread are keeping Afghans alive, 15 June 2022

“On a market stall in front of a blue-domed mosque in Kabul, large orange sacks are filled with stale, leftover naan bread. It's usually fed to animals, but now, according to those selling it, more Afghans than ever are eating it themselves. Shafi Mohammed has been selling stale bread for the past 30 years at Kabul's Pul-e-Kheshti market. "Before, five people used to buy this bread in a day, now it's more than 20 people," he says.”

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

“Intersecting humanitarian and economic crises continue to have a devastating impact on the lives of all Afghans. Today, with mounting unemployment rates, 93 percent of all households are facing a high level of food insecurity with differential, devastating impact on those most vulnerable –female-headed households, aged persons, people with disabilities and children. Access to basic services including healthcare is also diminishing. According to the World Health Organization, some 18.1 million people are in need of health services, including 3.19 million children under five. Compounding all of this is the glaring absence of functioning national mechanisms to monitor human rights violations, severely limiting the ability to provide basic protection for the Afghan people, especially vulnerable groups such as children, people with disabilities, internally displaced people, minorities, and LGBTQI communities.”

United Nations World Food Programme (Afghanistan), ‘Keep the world’s attention on Afghanistan’ warns EU humanitarian chief, 15 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Households face an acute lack of food and would have to resort to desperate coping measures to feed their children such as selling household items and, in the extreme cases, their own children. Immediate action is needed to prevent a further deterioration and a worsening situation in Ghor. The World Food Programme (WFP) is planning to assist 700,000 highly vulnerable people for the next two months, with distributions already under way."

Pajhwok, Soaring food prices irk Ghor, Nimroz, Badghis residents, 14 June 2022

"The residents of Ghor, Badghis and Nimroz provinces complain about the soaring prices of essential food items and ask relevant officials to control the prices. Abdul Hakim, a resident of Qala-i-Naw, the capital of northwestern Badghis province, told Pajhwok Afghan News the price of 150 grams of bread had surged from 10 afs to 15 afs which was now out of the reach of poor people. He said the price of 24.5 kilogram of rice had increased from 2,100 afs to 2,500 afs."

Aga Khan Foundation, EU grant to assist over 100,000 Afghans and their communities, 13 June 2022

"Building on its longstanding relationship with the European Union (EU) in Afghanistan, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has signed a grant agreement with its humanitarian arm. The EUR 2.8 million grant will bolster AKF's ongoing efforts to support the people of Afghanistan amidst one of the world's most dire humanitarian crises. Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan continue to rise with an estimated 24.4 million people in need and 23 million experiencing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. Mountainous areas in the northeast and central highlands faced high food insecurity pre-August 2021 due to remoteness, small landholdings, a short growing season and drought. Political and economic shocks in the aftermath of August 2021 have compounded this, leaving many without access to sufficient food or water. Through this 12-month emergency response project, AKF, alongside the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, will reach nearly 100,000 vulnerable, drought-affected people with life-saving assistance. Over 35,000 people will receive emergency food support through the provision of a basket of basic goods, sufficient to feed a family of seven. Wherever possible, this assistance will be provided in cash to support the local economy. [...] Finally, the project will support the livelihoods of rural Afghans through the protection of livestock. Due to past and ongoing drought, the shutdown of veterinarian services following August 2021 and limited or no access to inputs (feed, medicines), livestock mortality rates have risen dramatically while productivity levels have decreased. This directly impacts farmers' income. In response, the project will provide nearly 16,000 farmers with emergency animal health services and medicines, as well as supply feed to over 2,000 farmers and fodder seeds to a further 500."

AVA, The Save the Children organization emphasized continuing cooperation with Afghanistan, 13 June 2022

"In a meeting with Shir Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Nora Ingdal, Director of International Programs at the Save the Children Institute, assured that the Institute would continue its cooperation. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA): In this meeting, Ms. Nora informed the Political Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs about the plans of this institute in Afghanistan and said that this institute has been working in the fields of education, health and security for forty-five years without any political considerations. He expressed satisfaction with the relative security in Afghanistan, adding that they can now take care of children in need without any worries. The Deputy Foreign Minister also thanked the institute for its continued cooperation and added that decades of war in Afghanistan have affected children as well as adults, and now that the war is over, addressing this group will be one of the priorities of the Islamic Emirate. It is noteworthy that despite the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

support of the international community, a large number of Afghan children are currently in poor health and food security."

UN News, Afghanistan: World Bank provides \$150 million lifeline to stem rural hunger, 13 June 2022

"Some 19.7 million people – almost half of Afghanistan's population – are facing acute hunger, meaning that they are unable to feed themselves on a daily basis, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis released last month by the UN and aid partners, including FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The ripple effects from the war in Ukraine are exacerbating the food security situation, pushing food prices to new highs, increasing food production costs, especially fertilizer, and placing pressure on countries in the region supplying wheat to Afghanistan, to restrict food exports, to ensure sufficient domestic supplies."

The Guardian, 'We exist but it is not a life': Afghan women face bleak prospects under Taliban, 13 June 2022

"Afghanistan's dire food crisis is complex. At one level, Kabul's dusty markets look full with potatoes, tomatoes, ubiquitous watermelons and mangoes. Moreover, the Taliban's return to power means the UN can reach areas of the country that were formerly out of bounds, ironically because they were Taliban strongholds.

But the surface impression is deceptive, said Hsiao-Wei Lee, the WFP's deputy director in Afghanistan. The collapse in the economy means few people have jobs, and the poor simply cannot afford what is on display in the markets. Three-quarters of Afghan income is spent on food and 82% are in debt. "It's is about maxing out the calories and so tomatoes and potatoes are not right. Traders say they are having to throw away more food," Lee said.

"Donors stepped up late last autumn so we could avoid the worst of the predicted winter crisis, and we are prepositioning food for next winter, but lack of funds means we are now having to scale back." Only \$1.2m (£960,000) of the \$4.2m sought by the UN appeal for this year was offered. There have been five droughts in three years, and it normally takes three years for an area to recover from such an episode."

United Nations World Food Programme (Afghanistan), 'Every day I pray for food assistance for us': UK funding brings relief to families in Afghanistan, 10 June 2022

"According to the global standard for food insecurity (the IPC or Integrated Food Phase Classification), nearly 20 million people are facing food insecurity, with 6.6 million facing acute hunger. "

AVA, Britain shadow foreign secretary in Kabul, 9 June 2022

"Lammy is the first senior British politician to visit the country since the west's chaotic withdrawal last August. He is being accompanied by Preet Gill, the shadow minister for international development. "The UK's handling of the withdrawal from Afghanistan last summer was a total disaster," Lammy said on Twitter on Wednesday. "Today I am in Kabul to raise awareness of the millions of Afghanistan's civilians who are suffering from starvation." Lammy added that the UK ministers must "urgently set out a strategy for engaging with Afghanistan to support the millions of civilians who are starving, restore the 0.7% commitment to international aid, and lead the world by convening an emergency global food summit with the UN." Afghanistan has around 3.4 million people displaced within the country, according to UN data, and around 2.6 million refugees outside the country. The economic situation is dire in the country with roughly 23 million people experiencing acute hunger and 95% of the population not eating enough food,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

according to the U.N. In March, the UK hosted an international donor conference after the UN appealed for \$4.4 billion, but only \$2.44 billion was pledged at the meeting. "The government downgraded the UK's international reputation and made the whole world less safe with its calamitous handling of the withdrawal from Afghanistan last summer," Lammy said as quoted by the Guardian."

The Guardian, David Lammy visits Afghanistan to highlight humanitarian crisis, 8 June 2022

"Today millions of Afghanistan's civilians are suffering from starvation, with some even forced to sell body parts to feed their families."

Ariana News, UN Needs 3 billion in cash aid for Afghanistan before next winter, 6 June 2022

The United Nations estimates that 19.8 million people in Afghanistan are in urgent need of food aid. Among them, 1.1 million young children in Afghanistan are at risk of death."

AVA Press, Human Rights Watch sending immediate humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan is necessary, 4 June 2022

"According to the United Nations, more than one million children in Afghanistan are at risk of death due to famine and malnutrition this year."

AVA Press, Distribution of million aid to the people of Afghanistan, 1 June 2022

"According to the World Food Programme, 18 million people in Afghanistan will need immediate assistance and food and other basic necessities next month."

AREU, Afghanistan Covid-19 Poverty Report, 1 June 2022

"Afghanistan was not food secure before Covid-19 due to protracted years of conflict and severe droughts. The impacts of Covid-19 have worsened the situation for many rural and urban poor households. Across the country, quantitative analysis of survey data indicates that 69% of households before Covid-19 (October 2019– March 2020) had worried about not having enough food to eat, a figure which rose to 76% during the initial months of the pandemic (April–September 2020). More households during this same pandemic period compared to the preceding months also reported eating less, skipping meals, eating fewer kinds of food, and various other factors reflecting their heightened food insecurity."

"To overcome and reduce the economic hardship of Covid-19, the government of Afghanistan implemented a range of aid programmes in which they identified the vulnerable people to whom they distributed cash. With the support of other international partners like WFP, food aid like flour, bread, wheat and lentils were distributed to people at risk of economic hardship. Social networks, local traders, people in business, and other wealthy people also supported those who lost their jobs or income sources. Despite the reported prevalence of these programmes, few respondents indicated that they had received any formal support through the Covid-19 crisis other than a small number of food rations and small one-off cash transfers. Most reported that the distribution of support to households in need was very opaque and largely depended on relationships with local leaders."

Tolo News, UNHCR: Half of Afghan Population Relies on Humanitarian Aid, 28 May 2022

"The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said that more than half of Afghanistan's population is dependent on life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. According to the organization, one in two people in Afghanistan do not know where their next meal is coming from. [...] "Afghanistan's people cannot be left behind. We provide direct aid to the most vulnerable. We build

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

schools, health centers, water projects and roads to provide conditions for the voluntary return of refugees and displaced people when they feel ready,” UNHCR Canberra tweeted. But the Ministry of Economy said the numbers of this ministry show that the poverty level in the country is decreasing.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report # 5 1-30 April 2022, 26 May 2022

“• During the reporting period [1-30 April 2022], 40,758 children were treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) - a 14% increase since March.

- UNICEF-supported mobile health and nutrition teams reached around 130,000 people in remote and hard to reach areas in April.
- With UNICEF support more than 175,000 children and caregivers received life-saving child protection services including psycho-social support and case-management.”

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

“The Special Rapporteur expresses concern about humanitarian and economic crisis - seriously impacting the great majority of the 40 million people in the country. According to humanitarian assessments, over 23 million people are in need of food assistance and approximately 95 percent of the population has insufficient food consumption. Numerous Afghans, including those in the middle class, told the expert that their priority now is to have enough to eat.”

Khaama Press, Food inflation; a sack of Flour Costs 2,800 Afghanis in Kabul, 22 May 2022

"A sack of flour is now priced at 2,800 to 3,000 Afghanis, while previously, it was sold at 1,400 Afghanis, according to a number of Kabul locals. According to them, food prices have risen as a result of the lack of price regulation in the marketplaces. People stated that they used to purchase 20 liters of cooking oil at a cost of 2,000 Afghanis, but that now only 10 liters of cooking oil cost 2,200 Afghanis. Food price, they added, had declined slightly from what it was in the previous six months but, it has soared more than double in recent days. Sellers, on the other hand, blame the high inflation on rising commodities, explaining that when the Afghani depreciates against the dollar, food prices increase. The food inflation comes at a time when Afghani has devalued against the dollar in the last two days, and one dollar is now worth ninety-one (91) Afghanis."

Khaama Press, UN Warns that Over 1 Million Children in Afghanistan are at Risk of Wasting, 18 May 2022

"According to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 1.1 million Afghan children are at risk of wasting this year."

UNICEF, Afghanistan diaries: Supporting health, learning and hope: Paloma Escudero, UNICEF Director for Global Communication and Advocacy, reflects on a recent visit to Afghanistan, 12 May 2022

“16 April 2022 [...] UNICEF security specialist in Kabul, along with one of our local security officers, describe the months-long effort. Their 14-person team covered over 2,000 kilometres – from Kandahar, through Urozgan, Helmand and Nimroz, close to the border with Iran. Two thousand kilometres of villages, they tell me, now accessible to UNICEF staff who have stayed in the country to deliver nutrition, education and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

other essential services for Afghanistan's children. [...] On the outskirts of Kabul, we pass children in the streets. A young girl, seeking money for her family. A boy working at one of the market stalls that line the road. It's two weeks into the holy month of Ramadan, and tables pile high with fruits and vegetables. But there are no crowds here. [...] The empty stalls are a stark contrast from the place we're headed. It's a three-hour drive to Paktya Regional Hospital, in Gardez, where dozens of families fill the waiting room. [...] This is one of more than 2,300 health facilities across the country that UNICEF, together with WHO, is supporting. The hospital serves over 75,000 people throughout Paktya Province. As fighting in recent months has let up, more Afghans are able to seek out health care – a blessing for children and their parents. But the jump in demand is straining the health sector. To help prevent the system from collapsing, UNICEF and WHO are providing the supplies, salaries and training needed to keep services running. No sooner than we arrive, I'm guided into a treatment ward for children with severe acute malnutrition. [...] This year alone, some 3.2 million children are projected to suffer from severe malnutrition across the country. As we make our way to another part of the ward, Dr. Niamatullah Zaheer, the hospital director, tells me his staff are overwhelmed. The hospital's only paediatrician regularly screens more than 100 children a day. Even the neonatal unit is stretched: Too often, the hospital is forced to accommodate more than one infant per bed."

International Rescue Committee, From Humanitarian Response to Economic Recovery: recommendations for addressing acute needs and the root causes of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, 11 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, state failure and economic collapse are now the primary drivers of a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding at breakneck speed. Unemployment and poverty are now the greatest drivers of internal displacement. However, the crisis in Afghanistan is evolving into a catastrophe of choice as these same governments maintain policies of economic isolation that are pushing the Afghan economy to the brink and causing nearly 19m Afghans to experience high levels of acute food insecurity in the coming months."

Save the Children, ALMOST 10 MILLION CHILDREN GOING HUNGRY IN AFGHANISTAN AS FOOD AID ALONE FAILS TO MEET TIDAL WAVE OF NEED, 11 May 2022

"9.6 million children in Afghanistan are going hungry every day due to a dire combination of economic collapse, the impacts of the war in Ukraine and the ongoing drought, new figures released today show. Immediate food assistance is needed to save lives in the short-term, but aid alone is not enough to tackle the country's worst hunger crisis on record, Save the Children said. The figures [...] show that despite a significant amount of food aid reaching families in recent months, 19.7 million children and adults – almost 50% of the population – are still going hungry and need urgent support to survive. From March to May alone, 20,000 people were pushed into famine. When the Taliban took control in August last year, the international community responded largely by freezing assets and suspending development assistance to mitigate the risk of indirectly providing funds to the de-facto Taliban administration. Afghan children are now bearing the brunt of the international community's policies, which have starved the country of cash, and sent the economy into a downward spiral. Poverty, unemployment and food prices have dramatically increased, forcing parents to take desperate measures to feed their children. Save the Children's Director of Advocacy, Communications and Media, Athena Rayburn said: "Every single day our frontline health workers are treating children who are wasting away in front of our eyes because they're only eating bread once a day –and those are the lucky ones. Children in Afghanistan have never known a life without conflict and if action is not taken soon, they will not know a world without gnawing hunger and empty stomachs. Now is not the time for the world to turn its back on Afghanistan's children. "Although 18.9 million

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

children and adults are projected to need food aid from June to November this year, there is only enough funding to provide support for 3.2 million people. With the world's attention diverted to Ukraine, there is waning hope of addressing this crisis in time. Each day that passes without the funds needed sees more children lose their lives to preventable causes. "The international community must address both the gap in funds and Afghanistan's economic collapse by identifying ways to increase liquidity in the country's economy. Until the economic crisis is addressed, and rising poverty stemmed, children will continue to face catastrophic levels of hunger. Aid alone cannot save their lives." Maryam*, 26, has five children and lives in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, where many families only have one meal a day, and the public hospitals are overflowing with children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Maryam's husband is in Iran trying to find work so he can send money back to his family to help them survive. "I am worried about my children," Maryam told Save the Children. "I can only borrow cash and buy them food but mostly I don't have sufficient food for them. Sometimes we have food to eat and some days we don't." Maryam recently borrowed a large sum of money to take her baby Khal Mirza*, who has severe acute malnutrition, to hospital. Once he was discharged from hospital, Maryam took him to one of Save the Children's mobile health clinics, which provide services in her community. Following treatment with Save the Children's doctors, Khal Mirza is thankfully improving. But many severely malnourished children are not so lucky. With Afghanistan's healthcare system desperately lacking resources and staff, many children cannot access the care they need to survive. A Save the Children assessment also found that more than 50 percent of surveyed families couldn't access healthcare, mainly because they didn't have the money to pay for the services. Save the Children said the UK Government has shown leadership by co-hosting the recent Afghanistan pledging summit and committing an additional £286 million in funding. As Afghanistan faces its worst food crisis since records began, it is crucial that this money is dispersed rapidly and effectively in order to prevent further loss of life. The aid agency is calling for the UK to work with other governments to unlock financial assets and address the liquidity crisis, to prevent more and more Afghan families sinking further into poverty and debt."

ToloNews, Save the Children: Nearly 10M Afghan Children Going Hungry, 10 May 2022

"Save the Children in its latest report said that 9.6 million children in Afghanistan are going hungry every day due to a dire combination of economic collapse, the impact of the war in Ukraine and the ongoing drought, new figures released on Tuesday show."

Al Jazeera, Nearly 10 million children going hungry in Afghanistan, says NGO, 10 May 2022

"Save the Children says almost 50 percent of the population needs urgent support to survive despite continuing food aid. [...] "Every single day our front-line health workers are treating children who are wasting away in front of our eyes because they're only eating bread once a day – and those are the lucky ones," said Save the Children's director of advocacy, communications and media, Athena Rayburn. "Children in Afghanistan have never known a life without conflict and if action is not taken soon, they will not know a world without gnawing hunger and empty stomachs," she added. Rayburn explained that although 18.9 million children and adults were expected to need food aid for the latter half of this year, available funding for food aid could only provide support for 3.2 million people. She added that as the world's attention continues to be diverted to Ukraine, the situation in Afghanistan will continue to get worse."

Khaama, Nearly 20M Going Hungry in Afghanistan: UN Analysis, 10 May 2022

"Nearly 20 million people in Afghanistan – almost half of the country's population – are facing acute

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

hunger, according to a latest UN-backed report published Monday, depicting a “catastrophic” economy in the country since the Taliban takeover last August. Latest analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) also revealed a pocket of “catastrophic” levels of food insecurity in the northeast, affecting thousands other locals.”

Ariana News, Record levels of hunger persist in Afghanistan, WFP warns in latest report, 10 May 2022

"Almost half of Afghanistan’s population – 19.7 million – are facing acute hunger according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis conducted in January and February this year by food security cluster partners of the United Nations."

ToloNews. Flour and Cooking Oil Prices Rise in Kabul, 10 May 2022

"The price of 50 kg flour increased by 150 Afghanis and 16 Liters of oil increased by 200 Afghanis in less than ten days."

IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Nearly 20 million Afghans experiencing high acute food insecurity, 9 May 2022

"High acute food insecurity persists across Afghanistan, as a combination of a collapsing economy and drought is depriving nearly 20 million Afghans of food, classified in Crisis or Emergency (IPC Phases 3 or 4), between March and May 2022 (the lean season), latest data shows. Among these are about 6.6 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 13 million in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). A significant amount of Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) was provided, easing the food crisis for the most affected households. However, Afghanistan’s food security situation remains highly concerning, exacerbated by economic decline and high food prices. With 38% of the population targeted for HFA, nearly 20 million people, representing half the country's population, are still experiencing high and critical levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and above) between March and May 2022. Among these, about 6.6 million people are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), characterized by large food gaps and/or employing emergency coping strategies to access food. For the first time since the introduction of IPC in Afghanistan, Catastrophe conditions (IPC Phase 5) were detected for 20,000 people in the province of Ghor, one of the most remote, vulnerable provinces of Afghanistan and immediate action is needed to prevent further deterioration."

World Food Programme, WFP Afghanistan: Situation Report, 6 May 2022

"22.8 million people – half of the population – are projected to be acutely food insecure in 2022, including 8.7 million at risk of famine-like conditions. 4.7 million children, pregnant and lactating women at risk of acute malnutrition in 2022. All 34 provinces are facing crisis or emergency levels of acute food insecurity. Joint Assessment Teams are on the ground in 11 provinces to determine the need for emergency response, following flash floods that killed at least 22 people and destroyed hundreds of homes. WFP has already dispatched food assistance for 50 affected households in Bamyan."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Afghanistan Collective Feedback Digest - A compilation of community voices - Issue 6, 5 May 2022

"People expressed many of the same needs as in earlier months, including food, cash and shelter. Reports that some community leaders and Taliban de facto authorities are telling aid recipients they must share assistance they

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

received, or who are directly giving it to family and associates not on eligibility lists, continues to be a top feedback topic."

Khaama, According to the UN, 97 percent of Afghans are now battling food shortages, 5 May 2022

"After the prior government collapsed and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) took control in August, millions of Afghans are now facing severe food shortages. According to the United Nations, food shortages affect 97 percent of Afghans."

World Food Programme, Afghanistan: La Niña looms large over Afghanistan as one-third of Afghan population acutely food insecure today, 4 May 2022

"One-in-three Afghans are acutely food insecure, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment report released by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its partners. According to the IPC report, food insecurity in Afghanistan is attributed to the lingering impact of COVID-19, armed conflict, a jump in food prices, high unemployment rates and income loss, and the start of the complex and recurrent La Niña weather event. While the Government prepares its response to an impending drought, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) warn that current resourcing is inadequate to protect lives and livelihoods at risk. Reinforced support from the Government of Afghanistan and the international community since the previous IPC analysis (November 2020) partially explains overall improvement compared to previous projections, factoring in "minimum assistance based on the plans available at that time". However, there exist significant funding gaps for humanitarian agencies pose a challenge in meeting even the most basic humanitarian needs in the coming months. While the onset of the summer harvest may bring employment and improve access to food, the report warns the harvest is expected to be "below average" and the "food security situation is expected to deteriorate further during the 2021-2022 lean season". A further deterioration of the food security context will push more people to join one third of the population already food insecure. Monitoring prevailing food insecurity conditions will be critical, as will conducting a mid-year review of the IPC to gain a deeper understanding of the situation, adjust the response operations and prevent the situation from further worsening. La Niña drought-like effects are already evident in Afghanistan, according to FAO. Early evidence of agricultural drought has been found in 25 hotspots across the country. This weather event is expected to severely affect both agricultural and livestock production in 2021. According to FAO estimates, wheat production decreased by 16 to 27 percent in the last five drought events induced by La Niña; the potential impact on livestock production of this year's event is expected to affect 30 percent of ruminants in 18 provinces."

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification / Global Network Against Food Crises / Food Security Information Network, 2022 GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES, 4 May 2022

"Afghanistan - Numbers have risen since 2020. The number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) increased from 16.9 million in the November 2020–March 2021 lean season to 22.8 million a year later, reflecting worsening food insecurity as well as the use of higher population estimates for the October 2021 analysis. The number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) increased by 58 percent to 8.7 million (IPC, November 2020 and October 2021). The 55 percent share of the population in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in November 2021–March 2022 is the highest estimated by an IPC analysis in the country. The next highest was during the November 2018–February 2019 lean season (47 percent) largely due to the consequences of drought and conflict (IPC, November 2019). Urban acute food insecurity also worsened due to growing unemployment, falling incomes and rising food prices. From November 2021–

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

March 2022, around 5 million people in 11 cities, including 3 million in Kabul, were expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) (IPC, November 2020 and October 2021). Following years of protracted conflict, the August 2021 political transition to the Taliban prompted a halt to development assistance and freezing of national economic assets. Coupled with severe drought and the economic impact of COVID-19, these factors propelled steep increases in staple food prices, losses of income for many households, and cash shortages. Conflict-related displacement, drought and economic instability will continue to fuel widespread Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes in Afghanistan in 2022."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Saudi food baskets distributed to deserving households, 27 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The food baskets benefited 1,140 households as part of the Feeding Initiative for the 1443 Hijri year, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Tuesday.

As part of the project, the report said, 18,600 food baskets would be delivered in Afghanistan to benefit 111,600 individuals."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), WFP Distributes Cash, Food Assistance to over 10K Families in Six Provinces, 26 April 2022

"The United Nations World Food Program in a series of Twitter posts announced that they have distributed food assistance and cash in Kabul, Kandahar, Kunar, Farah, Herat, and Faryab provinces this month."

ToloNews, Families Cannot Afford Food in Ramadan: Save the Children, 25 April 2022

"Save the Children reported that many Afghan families and their children are only surviving on bread and water this Ramadan as the cost of food has doubled across Afghanistan."

BBC News, Struggling to survive in cash-starved Afghanistan, 21 April 2022

"Those grants have stopped since the Taliban came to power, though humanitarian aid has continued, and around \$9bn (£7bn) of Afghanistan's foreign reserves have been frozen, leading to a shortage of both funds and physical cash in the country.

A report from the World Bank last week warned that more than a third of the population was now no longer able to meet basic food needs."

ToloNews, World Bank to Push Ahead with Some Afghan Projects, 20 April 2022

"It said around 37% of Afghan households did not have enough money to cover food while 33% could afford food but nothing more. The World Bank has resumed work on three projects in Afghanistan focused on health, agriculture and livelihoods, but will maintain a hold on some \$150 million for education projects, two sources familiar with the decision said Tuesday. The multilateral development bank had put all four projects, valued at around \$600 million, on hold in late March, citing its deep concerns over the Islamic Emirate's ban on girls attending public high school."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), 95 Percent of the People in Afghanistan Faces Food Insecurity, Says OCHA, 19 April 2022

"OCHA reports that millions of people in Afghanistan face an unprecedented food and malnutrition crisis. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has once again voiced its deep concerns over the in Afghanistan. As reported by , 95 percent of people in Afghanistan are struggling with insecurity in the country. According to OCHA, millions of people in Afghanistan are facing an

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

unprecedented food and malnutrition crisis, adding the world must not forget the people of Afghanistan. Hunger in Afghanistan have risen sharply since the Taliban came to power. Yesterday, a man in set himself on fire in front of his four-year-old child due to poverty.”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Wheat Imports Down 20% Since August, 19 April 2022

“The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) said wheat imports have dropped by 20 percent since the political change last August. ACCI said Afghanistan imports between 1.5 to 2 million tons of wheat annually, and most of the is imported from.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Afghan Farmers Fear For Livelihoods As Taliban Bans Opium, 14 April 2022

“Standing in his blooming poppy field in Garni, an impoverished village on the outskirts of the provincial capital, Tarin Kowt, Jan is upset by the Taliban's decision this month to ban poppy cultivation. He says he will be unable to feed his wife and their eight children if the Taliban prevents him from planting a poppy crop this fall.”

DTM, Afghanistan — Emergency Event Tracking — Summary Brief: Coping Mechanisms in Response to Food Shortages (Rounds 1 and 2), 14 April 2022

“Most CFPs [Community focal points] reported that people within their communities were relying on less preferred and less expensive food in order to cope with food shortages (91% in Round 1 and 94% in Round 2). CFPs also frequently reported that people within their communities were borrowing food and relying on help from friends and relatives or were borrowing money, albeit the share of reports of these coping mechanisms slightly decreased between the two rounds. Between Round 1 and Round 2 the share of CFPs who reported child/female labour, child marriage, and selling body organs as coping mechanisms to access food increased from 47 per cent to 55 per cent, from 9 per cent to 11 per cent and from 1 per cent to 3 percent respectively.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network (Ali Mohammad Sabawoon), Crops not Watered, Fruit Rotting: Kandahar’s agriculture hit by war, drought and closed customs gates, 7 April 2022

“The Taleban takeover of Afghanistan brought an end to the fighting, but many farmers are still struggling to cope with the heavy losses sustained in 2021 and wonder how they will manage to plant and bring in a harvest in the coming year [...]

“Samiullah also said that farmers were also hedging their bets by planting opium poppies. Poppy cultivation has increased in Panjwayi this year, he said, because farmers were hoping that more water for their fields would mean a strong poppy harvest. They also think that an anticipated ban on opium cultivation by the Taleban, as they did when they were last in power in the 1990s, would increase market price and profits. In a Kabul press conference on 17 August, their first since they took power, Taleban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said: “From now on, Afghanistan will be a narcotics-free country but it needs international assistance.” [...]

“As anticipated, an official ban on opium cultivation was decreed by the Taleban on 3 April 2022.”

WFP, WFP Afghanistan Situation Report, 4 April 2022

“22.8 million people – half of the population – are projected to be acutely food insecure in 2022, including 8.7 million at risk of famine-like conditions.

4.7 million children, pregnant and lactating women at risk of acute malnutrition in 2022.

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

95 percent of the population continues to face inadequate food consumption, as household income levels and opportunities continued to decline. More than 85 percent of households previously earning income reported no income earned at all during the month of February [...] Currently 23 million people are acutely food insecure (IPC 3 and 4).”

WFP, Afghanistan Annual Country Report 2021, 31 March 2022

“After August Afghanistan became the world’s largest humanitarian crisis with 24.4 million people 58 percent of the population in need of humanitarian assistance by the end of the year. The recurrent and successive shocks the people of Afghanistan have faced were exacerbated by unprecedented levels of conflict, the worst drought in decades and a severe economic crisis. The main driver of the rise in humanitarian needs is an unprecedented increase in acute food insecurity since records began, with 23 million people 55 percent of the population estimated to be facing Emergency or Crisis levels of food insecurity, including nine million people one step away from famine [...]

In response to the sharp deterioration in food security, WFP significantly scaled-up operations, providing life-saving food and nutrition assistance to 15 million people (51 percent female and 49 percent male). The number of people assisted monthly increased more than fivefold between August and December 2021, with 7.9 million people assisted in December compared to 1.5 million people assisted in August.”

UNOCHA, Humanitarian Donors Urged To Step Up Again For Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

“Afghanistan is trapped in a humanitarian crisis with 23 million people facing acute food insecurity [...] Years of conflict have caused prolonged suffering in Afghanistan. Now the country faces economic collapse and its worst drought in 30 years, creating unprecedented levels of need. Aid organizations warn that while emergency response is necessary, it is not enough to meet the totality of needs in Afghanistan [...]

More than 24 million people – or 60 per cent of the population - need humanitarian assistance to survive. Needs are 30 per cent higher than last year and acute hunger is a daily reality for half the population. Basic health, education and other services are severely strained, livelihoods have been crushed and households are spending 80 per cent of their meagre income on food.”

UNOCHA, Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths’ opening remarks at the High-level Pledging Event for Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

“In Kabul I visited the Indira Gandhi Hospital and saw severely malnourished children and new-borns clinging to life, sharing rundown, rickety incubators. These babies were emaciated, listless and far too small. And mind you, this is in downtown Kabul, not out in rural and poorer areas of this country [...]

I met another woman who was trying her best to keep her three-month-old baby alive. She told us that she had already lost two of her children to starvation.

Hospital staff told me that three babies had already died the day we visited in that ward of about 20.”

Aljazeera, In Afghanistan, ‘people selling babies, young girls to survive’, 31 March 2022

“23 million Afghans facing starvation, in what has become a hunger crisis of “unparalleled proportions”, according to Dr Ramiz Alakbarov, deputy special representative of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

“In Afghanistan, a staggering 95 percent of the population is not eating enough food ... It is a figure so high

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

that it is almost inconceivable. Yet, devastatingly, it is the harsh reality,” Alakbarov said in a statement issued in early March, adding that almost 100 percent of women-led households were experiencing hunger.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report #3 1-28 February 2022, 22 March 2022

“UNICEF estimates 3.2 million children in Afghanistan will suffer from acute malnutrition in 2022, and a million severely malnourished children are at risk of death, if immediate action is not taken. [...] During the reporting period [1-28 February 2022], more than 31,000 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) following the screening of nearly one million children. [...] UNICEF estimates that 3.2 million children in Afghanistan will suffer from acute malnutrition in 2022 [...]. The nutrition situation is further compounded by the significant rise in measles cases.”

The UN, Afghanistan: Food insecurity and malnutrition threaten ‘an entire generation’, 15 March 2022

“Acute hunger in the country rose from 14 million in July, to 23 million in March, forcing households to resort to “desperate measures” to put food on the table.” “Unacceptable trade-offs have caused untold suffering, reduced the quality, quantity, and diversity of food available, led to high levels of wasting in children, and other harmful impacts on the physical and mental wellbeing of women, men, and children.” “A staggering 95 per cent of Afghans are not getting enough to eat, with that number rising to almost 100 percent in female-headed households.” “Acute malnutrition rates in 28 out of 34 provinces are high with more than 3.5 million children in need of nutrition treatment.” “He explained that since mid-August, over 2,500 nutrition treatment sites across all 34 provinces, both urban and rural, have been serving 800,000 acutely malnourished children, “and we plan to reach 3.2 million affected children this year”.

TOLO News, Kabul Residents Complain of High Food Prices, 13 March 2022

“The Chamber of Craftsman and Shopkeepers said Ukraine tensions are affecting prices. The price of food materials has increased in the international market since the war in Ukraine began, so its negative impacts hit Afghanistan as well,” said Abdul Haq Omari, head of the chamber.”

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

“On average, older individuals eat fewer meals per day than children do.”

WFP, With EU funding, WFP continues ramping up school feeding programme for Afghan children, 10 March 2022

“Driven by the impact of the economic crisis, decades of conflict, and drought, food insecurity in Afghanistan continues deteriorating. Over half of all Afghan people – 23 million – need emergency food assistance. So far this year, WFP has provided nearly 13 million people with life-saving food and nutrition aid. In 2021, WFP reached 15 million people.”

Prospect Magazine, The Families Losing their Loved Ones to Hunger Suicide in Afghanistan, 9 March 2022

“There is no exact figure for how many people have died because of hunger. The Taliban now has control over the Afghan media and many of the journalists who were covering these issues have been tortured. The international media is largely limited to Kabul, so tragedies in the provinces go unreported. A senior doctor at Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital in central Kabul—who spoke on the condition of anonymity—says reports of suicide had tripled since last August. He estimates that three or four

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

people have been dying daily of hunger suicides increasing from an average of 20 per month last year to between 100 and 120 per month.”

WFP, WFP Afghanistan: Situation Report 02 March 2022, 4 March 2022

“22.8 million people – half of the population – are projected to be acutely food insecure in 2022,1 including 8.7 million at risk of famine-like conditions

4.7 million children, pregnant and lactating women at risk of acute malnutrition in 2022

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

Almost 100 percent of female-headed households are facing insufficient food consumption. Female-headed households are more likely to employ crisis-level coping strategies than male-headed households. [...]

More than half of Afghanistan’s population, or 22.8 million people, are acutely food insecure, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report, while more than 24.4 people are in need of humanitarian support. A total 8.7 million people are just one step away from experiencing famine-like conditions.”

The Guardian, Afghanistan six months after the Taliban takeover- photo essay, 4 March 2022

“[...] last week Joe Biden announced that \$3.5bn of frozen Afghan funds – including the private savings of ordinary Afghans – would be distributed to 9/11 victims, even though not a single Afghan was involved in the attacks. [...]

The United Nations says at least half a million Afghans have lost their jobs since the Taliban takeover, and estimates that by mid-year up to 97% of people could be living below the poverty line. The majority of development aid – funding almost 80% of the previous government’s expenditure – has ceased, throwing the country into economic crisis. [...]

At a Kabul maternity clinic, a newborn boy lies abandoned. “His family doesn’t have the money to take care of another child,” said [L], one of the hospital’s doctors.”

IOM, CBNA R14 — Afghanistan — Community-Based Needs Assessment: Summary Results (November—December 2021), 2 March 2022

“Due to food insecurity and low access to markets, Afghans rely on eating less preferred foods and eat cereals almost every day of the week (5.6 and 6.7 days of the week respectively, on average). Lack of water for agriculture due to drought is the biggest barrier to food production nationwide. In the three months prior to this assessment, 98% of communities reported the price of cooking oil, rice, flour, and fuel increased. As a consequence, families result to coping mechanisms such as consuming less nutritious foods, borrowing money to buy food, limiting portion sizes and, in the most severe cases, skipping meals.”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘95 percent of Afghans do not have enough to eat,’ 22 February 2022

“According to the World Food Program, 95 percent of Afghans do not have enough food to eat. In a tweet on Saturday, the UN World Food Program warned that hunger in Afghanistan is on the rise, with 95 percent of the people going hungry. According to the World Food Program, out of every ten income-generating families, the income of eight families plummeted substantially in January, with the most affected families in Kabul. The World Food Program has also stated that many people went through the winter without any income and were forced to face challenges in the cold, according to their data.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Ariana News, 95% of people in Afghanistan do not have enough to eat: WFP, 21 February 2022

"The United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) says 95 percent of people in Afghanistan "do not have enough to eat," and that "hunger continues rising in Afghanistan". On Saturday [19 February 2022], the WFP Asia Pacific warned on its official Twitter account that in January, "8 in 10 income-earning households experienced a significant decrease in income, with Kabul hit the hardest. Worse still, some were forced to brave the cold month with no income at all."

TOLO News, Kabul Woman Hauls Goods by Wheelbarrow to Support Family, 19 February 2022

"[...] the World Food Programme raises alarms that around 95 percent of the Afghan population is facing starvation." Struggling with a deteriorated economy, a woman in capital Kabul is carrying goods from markets to residences with a wheelbarrow to earn money in a bid to make ends meet for her family. Sosan, whose husband has been missing for more than one year, is now taking care of her five children alone. "I go from this square to another to find a market. I carry people's materials with a wheelbarrow to their residences," she said. She said that her three children are extremely ill, but she is unable to treat them. "My kids are sick. One of them has mental problems. Another one was severely ill, I thought he might be infected by chickenpox. My third son has a problem with his tongue," Sosan said. "Hunger continues rising in Afghanistan. 95% of the population don't have enough to eat," the WFP Asia said on Twitter. In Jan., 8 in 10 income-earning households experienced a significant decrease in income, with Kabul hit the hardest. Worse still, some were forced to brave the cold month with no income at all."

Save the Children, Afghanistan: a fifth of starving families sending children to work as incomes plummet in past six months, 14 February 2022

"Up to one fifth of families in Afghanistan have been forced to send their children out to work as incomes have plummeted in the past six months with an estimated one million children now engaged in child labour, according to new Save the Children research. "A survey of 1,400 households across seven provinces of Afghanistan found that 82% of Afghans have lost income since the collapse of the former government and transition of power last August, with 18% reporting they had no choice but to send their children out to work. "According to Save the Children's analysis, if just one child in each of these families is being sent to work, then more than one million children in the country are engaged in child labour. "More than 80% of those surveyed reported a loss of income, with a third (34.8%) having lost all of their household income, and a quarter (26.6%) having lost more than half. Families living in cities were hit hardest, with half of families in Kabul saying they had lost their entire income. "The huge spike in prices caused by the economic crisis has left many families unable to afford food. About 36% of families reported that they are purchasing food in the market on credit, whereas 24% said they did previously. Thirty-nine percent are borrowing food from better-off families, compared to just 25% previously. "As families sink further into debt and poverty, 7.5% said they were begging or relying on charity to feed their families."

Khaama Press, EU to deliver €500 million to Afghan people, 16 February 2022

"Special representative of European Union for Afghanistan Thomas Niklasson said that they remain committed to Afghan people adding that the Union will deliver up to €500 million to address the humanitarian situation of the Afghan people.

Thomas Kilasson in a Twitter post on Tuesday, February 15 said that with the money, they will focus on food, health, education, and other relevant parts.

"The EU remains committed to the Afghan people and is delivering 500 million euros in assistance through

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UN and NGOs focusing on food, health, WASH and protection, education and livelihood.” Reads the Twitter post.

The announcement comes after the Taliban delegation held negotiations with European representatives in Doha. Tomas Niklasson said that the two delegations agreed to continue the dialogue through physical and virtual meetings. The EU talks about the 500 million Euros at a time when the UN and UK have agreed to hold a virtual summit on the humanitarian situation of Afghanistan next month.”

Ariana News, Britain to co-host Afghanistan aid summit, hoping to raise \$4.4 billion, 16 February 2022

“Britain said on Tuesday it would co-host an international aid conference with the United Nations next month to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, where poverty and hunger have spiraled since late last year.

The virtual pledging conference will aim to help the United Nations raise \$4.4 billion for Afghanistan, the largest amount it has ever requested for a single country.

Most foreign aid was cut off after the former government collapsed and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) came in to power in August last. The United Nations estimates 98% of Afghans are not eating enough and hospitals and schools cannot afford to pay staff.

“The scale of need is unparalleled, and consequences of inaction will be devastating,” Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said in a statement.

“The UK is determined to lead the global effort. We will bring international allies together to raise vital aid to deliver food, shelter and health services, protect women and girls and support stability in the region.”

A combination of the loss of foreign aid, a severe drought, and a currency crisis have left Afghanistan’s economy on the brink of collapse with food prices rising rapidly and causing widespread hunger, Reuters reported.

The donor conference comes as the international community continues to grapple with how to help Afghanistan without benefiting the country’s rulers.”

The New Humanitarian, Afghanistan’s crises, by the numbers, 15 February 2022

“Food: Prices are rising amid cash shortages

A severe drought was already putting food security in peril regardless of who controlled Kabul. But the economic collapse that followed the Taliban takeover has pushed the country to the edge.

Food prices are soaring. More than half the population, or 22.8 million people, will face crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity – the most ever recorded in Afghanistan, according to recent estimates.

Wheat prices are up to 50 percent higher than just before the Taliban takeover, while work opportunities for daily labourers have dropped by a similar proportion, according to monitoring by the World Food Programme.

Inflation is high. Year-on-year inflation for basic household goods reached 40 percent in January, according to World Bank calculations.”

Gandhara News, Six Months And An Eternity: Afghans Lose Hope Under Taliban Rule, 15 February 2022

“Following a lightning military advance on Kabul, Taliban militants seized power on August 15. The hard-line Islamists celebrated their victory as the end of more than four decades of war in Afghanistan, and promised a new era of peace and prosperity.

But six months later, few in the country are content with their new rulers. More than a million Afghans have fled reprisals, persecution, and a worsening humanitarian and economic crisis. Some 23 million

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

people, the majority of the country's population of 39 million, face starvation. More than 1 million children are in danger of dying by malnutrition. And despite an end to the fighting, 3.5 million Afghans remain internally displaced.

[...] Humanitarian Catastrophe

Mohammad Mansuri has been stranded in his village of Lolash for weeks because of heavy snowfall in the remote Kohistan district in the northern province of Faryab. The farmer says his family of six is starving, and he has no money to seek treatment for his two sick children.

He says that residents of Lolash and hundreds of other villages in Kohistan were already on the brink of starvation even before the Taliban takeover due to a drought that has lasted for three years.

"Without swift action to help us, we are very close to a humanitarian catastrophe," he told RFE/RL by telephone

[...] Abdul Ahad, a 30-year-old farmer in Lolash, says that many in his village will not make it through the winter without immediate emergency aid. "It is like we are in prison with no way out," he told RFE/RL by phone. "The prices have simply skyrocketed."

Ahad says that a 10-liter container of cooking oil he used to buy for \$5 now costs more than \$20. Similarly, the prices of flour and sugar have soared. [...] "The deserving people are not getting anything," says Abdullah Khan, a resident of Baraki Barak, a district in the southeastern province of Logar, which abuts the capital, Kabul."

AVA Press, India's wheat delivery to Afghanistan through Pakistan to begin in days, 15 February 2022

"INDIA TODAY has cited its sources as saying India's 50,000 tonnes of wheat shipment to Afghanistan via Pakistan to begin as soon as next week. In the meantime, diplomatic sources have also confirmed that hurdles in shipping the 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat and medicines have now been removed and India has handed over a list of trucks and contractors to Pakistan. Based on the bilateral agreement between Pakistan and India, the latter must complete the first batch of the consignment in 30 days through Waga port. The decision over the allowance of India's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan through Pakistan comes after India and WFP signed a memorandum of understanding over the wheat. Initially, Pakistan wanted to allow the shipment to Kabul in Pakistani trucks bearing UN banner but India proposed Afghan trucks and drivers that were then endorsed by Pakistan. The agreement by Pakistan took more than one month. The distribution of food grains in Afghanistan comes as the country is going through the worst humanitarian situation in its history with 97 percent of the population being under the line of poverty."

Save the Children, Afghanistan: A fifth of starving families sending children to work as incomes plummet in past six months 14 February 2022

"Up to one fifth of families in Afghanistan have been forced to send their children out to work as incomes have plummeted in the past six months with an estimated one million children now engaged in child labour, according to new Save the Children research."

Save the Children's Country Director in Afghanistan, Chris Nyamandi, said: "I've never seen anything like the desperate situation we have here in Afghanistan. We treat frighteningly ill children every day who haven't eaten anything except bread for months. Parents are having to make impossible decisions – which of their children do they feed? Do they send their children to work or let them starve? These are excruciating choices that no parent should have to make. [...]" "There is no shortage of food here - the markets are full. Yet children are starving to death because their parents can't afford to pay for food. This could, and should, have been prevented. But it is not too late to prevent further tragedy if we act

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

now.”Save the children is providing families with urgent cash assistance and winter kits with essential items to get them through the winter. Cash assistance helps to prevent families from resorting to desperate measures that adversely affect children such as child labour, early marriage and reduced meals. Since September 2021, Save the Children has reached 763,000 people, including 430,800 children, and provided more than 127,000 people with multi purposes cash transfers and cash for food.”

AVA Press, Iran’s 18th consignment of humanitarian aids arrives in Afghanistan, 14 February 2022

“Iran’s embassy in Kabul announced that the country’s 18th consignment of humanitarian aid consists of cooking oil, flour, and rice arrived in Ghazni province on Monday, February 14, 2022.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The Kabul-based embassy in a series of Twitter posts said that they have so far delivered aid to people in need in ten provinces namely , Balkh, , Kandahar, Kabul, , Kunduz, and Panjshir.

The aid comes a day after announced that the people have collected \$1 million to for aid in Afghanistan.”

AVA press, 2nd aid train on its way from Turkey to Afghanistan, 13 February 2022

“A second train with 921 tonnes of emergency assistance has left Turkey for Afghanistan, says a media report. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The first , carrying 750 tonnes of emergency items, chugged into western province on February 8.According to ANI news agency, the 45-wagon train will arrive in Afghanistan after passing through Iran and Turkmenistan.”

AVA Press, Pak-Afghan forum hands over 310 tons of emergency aid, 10 February 2022

“The Pak-Afghan Cooperation Forum has handed over 310 tons of food and winter aid to Afghan Authorities amid the worsening humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Twenty-two trucks carrying the aid arrived at crossing on Monday, the forum said Tuesday.

Done in collaboration with Hands International, this aid will bring relief to thousands of Afghans who are dealing with a severe shortage of amid the ongoing economic crisis.”

WFP Afghanistan, Situation Report, 10 February 2022

“In Numbers:

- 22.8 million people – half of the population – are projected to be acutely food insecure in 2022, including 8.7 million at risk of famine-like conditions
- 4.7 million children, pregnant and lactating women at risk of acute malnutrition in 2022
- All 34 provinces are facing crisis or emergency levels of acute food insecurity

More than half of Afghanistan’s population face crisis (IPC Phase 3) or emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity, 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 globally.

Harsh winter conditions, including freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall, continues to impede the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance across the country.”

Tolo, UNICEF in Afghanistan: 1M Children May Die Unless Action Taken, 9 February 2022

“The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Afghanistan warned that one million Afghan children could die from severe acute malnutrition if “urgent” actions were not taken. Despite the rising numbers of children affected by malnutrition, the Ministry of Public Health said no malnutrition care centers are

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

active in Afghanistan.”

Humanitarian Response of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet Afghanistan, 9 February 2022

“Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change: rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns and increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Currently, Afghanistan is experiencing its worst drought in 27 years, which, compounded with COVID-19 and the economic contraction that followed the takeover of the government by the Taliban in August 2021, has significantly increased livelihood and food insecurity and contributed to a growing humanitarian emergency.

- Climate change exacerbates the deteriorating conditions for agriculture-based livelihoods and food insecurity.
- Conflict and the effects of climate change have increased internal displacement and changed migration patterns. High levels of displacement accentuate food and livelihood insecurity and increase the vulnerability of marginalised groups, including women.
- The effects of climate change may heighten the risk of more frequent and intense local conflicts over land and water and increase tensions over transboundary resources.
- Conflict has eroded the resilience of communities and local authorities to adapt to climate change and to deal with the current humanitarian crisis. This creates opportunities for elites to manipulate and profit from land and water disputes, with elevated risks for marginalised groups.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Afghanistan: Countrywide Weekly Market Practice Bulletin, Issue 90 (Covering first week of February 2022) 07 February 2022, 8 February 2022

“Highlights

- In the first week of February 2022, the prices of food items were significantly higher than the last week of June (before the recent conflicts and political change).
- The average price of wheat, Wheat flour, cooking oil and Sugar significantly decreased this week compared to fourth week of January 2022, as the US dollar has depreciated against Afghani and the prices of food and non-food items have fallen down. Now, with the strengthening and stabilizing of the Afghani, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment has issued a statement urging traders and sellers to reduce prices.
- Both casual labour/wheat and pastoralist ToT significantly improved by 7.3% and 8.4%, respectfully as price of wheat decreased and negligibly labour wage and sheep price increased.
- The USD value devaluation by 11.6% in the 1st week of February compared to 4th week of January 2022. The USD value after drastic increase in the 2nd week of December, slightly decreased in the 3rd week and again negligibly increased in the fourth of December 2021, first, second and third weeks of January 2022 and decreased in the fourth week of January followed by decreased value this week (92.2 AFN/1 USD). The reason for such devaluation of USD against AFN is increase USD supply to the market and AFN shortfall.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Daily Noon Briefing Highlights: Madagascar, Afghanistan, Yemen, 7 February 2022

"Between 2 and 3 February, more than 123,000 families received food assistance in 10 provinces in the country [Parwan, Kapisa, Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan, Samangan, Sar-e-Pul, Jawzjan, Balkh and Laghman]."

The Guardian (Afghanistan), 'Living hell': Australia urged to ramp up Afghanistan aid as humanitarian crisis unfolds | Australian foreign policy, 2 February 2022

"Children in Afghanistan are rummaging through bins looking for plastic to sell while women sit in the middle of busy roads begging for food, spurring fresh calls for the Australian government to ramp up assistance to the poverty-hit country. Fiona McSheehy, an aid worker [and the acting country director for Afghanistan at Save the Children] currently based in Afghanistan, told Australian senators on Wednesday she had witnessed "desperately heartbreaking" scenes over the past three months, as humanitarian groups warn of rising poverty and famine. [...] "I've been here for about three months. Since I arrived, I have seen the number of children on the street increase dramatically. You see them rooting through things like rubbish bins to try to find things that they can then sell – plastic and things like that. "We see them lined up in streets begging as people try to get to the airport, and they're selling face masks one by one – that's how desperate they are for an income." McSheehy, who has also travelled to some of the provinces, said during her time in Afghanistan she had seen "more poverty and more desperation".

"Every now again you'll see a woman and her children just sitting in the middle of the road begging for food and money, while cars and lorries drive either side of them. It is desperately heartbreaking," she said. McSheehy also told the hearing that each morning the streets of Kabul were lined with men sitting in wheelbarrows waiting for a day of work. She said if she went back three hours later, most of those men were still there waiting – because there was no work. That meant it was hard for parents to feed their children, she told the Senate's foreign affairs, defence and trade references committee, which is continuing its inquiry into Australia's engagement in Afghanistan."

Ariana News, Desperate Afghans selling kidneys and children to feed their families, 29 January 2022

"Afghan parents are selling their children and their kidneys in order to buy food for their families amid an ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country. [...] the kidney transplant center in Herat told Ariana News that more than 200 people have visited the center to sell their kidneys in the past five years."

Deutsche Welle, Afghanistan: People in a 'horrific' situation, WFP chief David Beasley tells DW, 28 January 2022

"Millions of people in Afghanistan are facing a dire situation as they struggle to cover their basic needs, David Beasley, the executive director of the UN's World Food Program (WFP), told DW's Giulia Saudelli. "Afghanistan was already one of the poorest countries in the world, with 20 years, at least, of conflict with the Taliban," said Beasley. "And now what we're facing is catastrophic. The number of people that literally are knocking on starvation's door is 23 million people out of 40 million people."

The Wall Street Journal, As Hunger Spreads in Afghanistan, Hospitals Fill With Premature, Dying Babies, 28 January 2022

"The Wardak provincial hospital's director in Maidan Shahr, Muhammad Nadir Rahmani, said the hospital is seeing the birth weight of babies reduce alarmingly, as the bodies of malnourished mothers are unable

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to carry their children to full term. Babies born weighing under 1 kilogram, or about 2.2 pounds, have no better than a 30% chance of survival, he said. [...] Meanwhile, food prices have soared. Since June, the price of wheat flour jumped 53%, cooking oil is up by 39% and sugar by 36%, according to the U.N.'s World Food Program. With winter, heavy snow has blanketed the country, so there is a daily quest to find something to burn in the stove, for cooking and warmth. Unable to afford to buy wood, Mr. Muhammad forages for bushes in the nearby hills. [...]"

ToloNews, Faced With Starvation, Afghans Sell Kidneys, 28 January 2022

"A number of families in the western province of Herat are being forced to sell their kidneys amid dire poverty and starvation. The families who live in the Injil district of Herat say that they have been forced to sell their kidneys on the black market for little money due to poverty and hardship in order to survive. [...] Among those who have been selling their kidneys are children and women. According to the law of the country, selling organs or parts of the body is not lawful, but these families say that they have no other options to survive. "We are happy, the security situation is good, but prices are a bit high in the country," said a resident of Herat."

Gandhara, Afghan Children Starving To Death As Hunger 'Rapidly Spreading', 28 January 2022

"Graana walked for more than two hours to seek treatment for her starving 2-year-old son at a hospital in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand. "My son couldn't walk because he was so weak," the mother of five told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "Hunger had disfigured him to the extent that he started to look scary. I was hopeless." After weeks of treatment at Boost Hospital, which is supported by Doctors Without Borders, the Geneva-based charity, Graana's son is in stable condition. But he is among the lucky few who has received treatment. Millions of Afghan children are suffering from severe malnourishment as hunger sweeps across Afghanistan, which has been gripped by a devastating humanitarian and economic crisis since the Taliban seized power in August. [...] The United Nations has warned that nearly 23 million people -- about 55 percent of the population -- are facing extreme levels of hunger. Children are bearing the brunt of the crisis, with 14 million at risk of starvation this winter, the UN said. Foreign aid workers and Afghan medical staff estimate that dozens of children, mostly under the age of 5, are dying of starvation every week across the country. [...] Mohammad Daud Nusrat, the head of the pediatrics department at Boost Hospital, says he has witnessed a steep increase in the number of severely malnourished children being brought in for treatment. "Compared to the past year, malnourishment among children under 5 is spreading," he told Radio Azadi, adding that the hospital treated 630 last month, compared to 380 in December 2020. Sam Mort, a spokeswoman for UNICEF, the UN's children's agency, told RFE/RL that the organization was "deeply concerned about the rapidly escalating malnutrition crisis across Afghanistan." Mort said 1.1 million children under the age of 5 were in danger of dying from severe acute malnutrition. Another 3.2 million children, she said, were at risk of the malnutrition. The UN defines severe acute malnutrition as a condition in which children suffer from stunting or impaired growth and severe weight loss. "When I travel around the country, and I talk to nutrition counselors, doctors, and hospital directors, they are all recording a rise in the cases of severe acute malnutrition," said Mort, who is based in Kabul. She says doctors around the country are witnessing premature births and other complications associated with insufficient food intake. Afghanistan currently has one of the world's highest rates of arrested growth, according to UNICEF. Around 40 percent of Afghan children under 5 suffer from stunting. Wasting, defined as low weight for height, is visible in nearly 10 percent of all Afghan children. "The malnutrition rates are doubling week on week," Mary-Ellen McGroarty, Afghanistan director for the UN World Food

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Program, recently told the Washington Post. “Emaciated children are coming into the hospitals. I’ve never experienced how quickly it’s deteriorated.””

World Food Programme, ‘Our presence is hope’: Call for funds as winter spells hunger for Afghanistan, 25 January 2022

“Around 23 million people – half the population – are food insecure, with 8.7 million people at risk of starvation. They are at IPC4 – the ‘emergency’ level on the global standard for measuring food insecurity, only one step away from ‘catastrophe’.

[Shelley Thakral, the WFP’s communications chief in Afghanistan]

“There are power cuts every day and families have little or no money for food and fuel,” says Thakral. “Mothers tell us they are forced to decide who gets to eat and who doesn’t – often they themselves will miss meals to make sure there is something for their children.” [...]

[Dr Qadir Assemy, the WFP’s head of office in Herat]

WFP’s has a well-oiled a fleet of 171 trucks that manage to transport food across all of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. However, “the most important element is missing,” says Assemy – funds to make sure WFP can scale up as it must in 2022. [...]

“Every dollar we cannot raise means a child, a mother will go hungry, and someone is forced to choose who gets food and who doesn’t. If our efforts are supported, we can avoid the worst-case scenario come spring. But we don’t have a minute to waste.” Assemy, a trained physician, adds: “I haven’t seen anything this bad in my life, and I’ve worked with humanitarian organizations on and off for the last 20 years.” [...]

A hallmark of the current crisis is how it is affecting middle class people in urban centres. With salaries unpaid and many, especially women, forced out of their jobs, people’s savings are being depleted, inching them closer to the brink. For the first time this urban class of hungry people – from civil servants to teachers – are now standing in line for food and cash assistance. WFP and partners make ongoing household assessments of who needs emergency food supplies – this activity is growing as more and more people who used to have incomes now have nothing. Assemy says people from all walks of life approach him for help in the street – from university professors to people who hang around markets in the hope that someone might buy them a loaf of bread.”

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 23 January 2022

“On 13 January, describing a “nightmare unfolding in Afghanistan”, the United Nations’ Secretary-General, António Guterres, warned that the world is “in a race against time to help the Afghan people.” (Link) The UN Chief said the size of the appeal launched on 11 January “reflects the scale of the despair.” He added that there are “babies being sold to feed their siblings. Freezing health facilities overflowing with malnourished children. People burning their possessions to keep warm.” Currently, more than half the population depends on life-saving assistance but without a more concerted effort from the international community, Mr. Guterres stated that “virtually every man, woman and child in Afghanistan could face acute poverty.”

Insider, Impoverished Afghan women are receiving emergency aid in crypto as the Taliban limits cash withdrawals and millions go hungry, 23 January 2022

“Afghanistan’s economic collapse due to US sanctions and a shortage of cash as the Taliban chokes off bank withdrawals means millions of people can’t afford to buy food or medicine. But Fereshteh Forough, a New Hampshire-based Afghan social activist and founder of Code to Inspire, has devised an inventive

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

workaround to help support needy students at her Herat coding school. She's sending them cryptocurrency."

Global Shelter Cluster (Afghanistan), Afghanistan - Joint Winterization Plan 2021-22, 20 January 2022

"Winter in Afghanistan is also a peak hunger period as it provides very limited opportunities to food production and income generation more so with the drought currently experience in the country. FSAC [Food Security and Agriculture Cluster] assessment projected the period from June to November 2021, the total population in IPC [Integrated Phase Classification] Phase 3 (Crisis) and IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) is expected to decrease to 9.5 million, with 6.7 million people in Crisis and 2.7 million in Emergency. Moving from harvest towards winter, household's good stocks will get depleting. According to pre-lean season assessment, on average, households' harvest last only 5 months meaning that majority of the households will not have food to feed them during winter. Agriculture has traditionally dominated Afghanistan's economy and contributed for a large part to its growth. About 70 percent of Afghans live and work in rural areas, mostly on farms, and 61 percent of all households derive income from agriculture. From November most of the pastures are covered with snow and green fodder availability is compromised. Small farmers exhaust their production during the post-harvest summer and early winter month. Lack of agriculture interventions and demand of labor in the agriculture sector reduces significantly during the same period. Livestock production is a major source of income and food for Afghan farmers and their families. For some, such as the Kuchi nomads, animals are the only source of income. In the June to September month period, shortages of fodder and grazing areas for livestock are likely to result in below-average livestock body condition and productivity. During the winter, livestock farmers mostly rely on limited low land pastures and crop residuals for livestock rearing. As consumption requirements for both human beings and livestock increases in the winter season, prioritization of basic lifesaving food assistance and livestock protection activities is essential in enabling vulnerable households cope with the harsh weather conditions."

Deutsche Welle, Is the world doing enough to help Afghans?, 18 January 2022

"The international community faces a dilemma on how to deal with the Afghan Taliban, who seized power in August.

The United States, which ended its two-decade presence in the country last year, does not want to legitimize or strengthen the Islamic fundamentalist group. Washington froze Afghanistan's assets after the Taliban captured Kabul, and despite repeated requests by the country's rulers, there is no sign that the sanctions will be lifted.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and needs immediate financial help. [...]

But aid alone would probably not be enough to help Afghans, who are facing acute hunger combined with a severe drought and the coronavirus pandemic. Millions of Afghans are currently jobless, and their bank accounts are frozen.

Many Afghans are selling possessions to buy food, and urban communities are facing food insecurity on levels similar to rural areas for the first time.

About 8.7 million people are "one step away from starvation," Mary-Ellen McGroarty, head of the World Food Programme in Afghanistan, said in October."

Al Jazeera, Taliban seeks greater role in distribution of Afghan foreign aid, 13 January 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“An abrupt withdrawal of foreign aid last year following a hasty exit by the United States and the Taliban’s victory in August left Afghanistan’s fragile economy on the brink of collapse, with food prices rising rapidly, causing widespread hunger. Western sanctions aimed at the Taliban also prevented the passage of basic supplies of food and medicine, although this has since eased after exemptions were passed by the UN Security Council and the US in December.”

United Nations, UN chief: We are in a race against time to help the Afghan people, 13 January 2022
“Currently, more than half the population of Afghanistan depends on life-saving assistance. Without a more concerted effort from the international community, Mr. Guterres argued, “virtually every man, woman and child in Afghanistan could face acute poverty.”

World Food Programme, WFP Afghanistan Situation Report, 12 January 2022

“95 percent of the population had insufficient food consumption in December 2021. (...)

More than half of the population face crisis (IPC Phase 3) or emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity, 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 globally.”

Al Jazeera, US to give additional \$308m in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, 11 January 2022

“The United States will donate an extra \$308m in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the White House has announced, bringing the total of US aid for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in the region to nearly \$782m since October. The aid will be channelled through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to humanitarian organisations providing shelter, healthcare, and emergency food aid, among other services, White House spokesperson Emily Horne said in a statement on Tuesday [11 January 2022]”.

Qantara, Afghanistan’s humanitarian crisis: End the economic blockade, 11 January 2022

“Even before the Taliban returned to power last August, Afghanistan topped the global roster of humanitarian emergencies. Successive droughts and escalating conflict had left one-third of the country’s population facing acute food insecurity. Aid agencies warned that they were in a race against time as winter approached. Now, the United Kingdom’s Disasters Emergency Committee believes that the race is close to being lost.

The numbers are harrowing. Some 23 million people in a country of 39 million are in a state of humanitarian emergency. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that over one million Afghan children are at risk of dying from malnutrition and hunger-related disease.”

The Week, Millions in Afghanistan are facing extreme hunger, 7 January 2022

“It’s been a dire winter in Afghanistan, with 23 million people facing extreme levels of hunger amid the brutal cold.

“Shelley Thakral, spokeswoman for the World Food Program in Afghanistan, told NPR that there are several reasons why so many Afghans don’t have enough food to eat. The country is experiencing its worst drought in decades, food prices have gone up, and the Taliban government takeover last August triggered an economic crisis. Many people who are now out of work because of the new government, including teachers and construction workers, are experiencing food insecurity for the first time. “There’s a new urban class of hungry people,” Thakral said.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The New Yorker, Afghanistan has become the world's largest humanitarian crisis, 5 January 2022

"A month after the Biden Administration pulled U.S forces out of Afghanistan, only seventeen per cent of the country's more than twenty-three hundred health clinics were functional. Doctors in the hospital in Kabul told me that they hadn't been paid since the Taliban seized power, in August, and that medicine is in short supply. The new government is struggling to feed the country's thirty-nine million people, and the chance that an Afghan baby will go hungry and die is the highest in twenty years. Half of the country's population needs humanitarian assistance to survive, double the number from 2020. More than twenty million people are on the brink of famine. The United Nations Development Programme projects that by the middle of this year Afghanistan could face "universal poverty," with ninety-seven per cent of Afghans living below the World Bank-designated international poverty line of \$1.90 a day."

NPR, Parents selling children shows desperation in Afghanistan, 31 December 2021

"Aziz Gul's husband sold the 10-year-old girl into marriage without telling his wife, taking a down-payment so he could feed his family of five children. Without that money, he told her, they would all starve. He had to sacrifice one to save the rest.

"Many of Afghanistan's growing number of destitute people are making desperate decisions such as these as their nation spirals into a vortex of poverty.

"The aid-dependent country's economy was already teetering when the Taliban seized power in mid-August amid a chaotic withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops. The international community froze Afghanistan's assets abroad and halted all funding, unwilling to work with a Taliban government given its reputation for brutality during its previous rule 20 years ago."

The Guardian, 'On the brink': drought and politics leave Afghans fighting famine, 30 December 2021

"Hunger is stalking Afghanistan, caused by a devastating confluence of political and environmental crises. The UN estimates that only 2% of the population are getting enough to eat.

"The Taliban victory brought an overnight end to foreign aid that had propped up the economy of the fallen republic for 20 years. In the countryside, where more than two-thirds of Afghans live, the worst drought in 30 years had already left farmers destitute and desperate."

The Gazette, '2021 has been catastrophic': Food insecurity rising in Afghanistan, 24 December 2021

"Tens of millions of Afghans do not have access to food, and that number is expected to increase during the winter months as the economic situation exacerbates the crisis.

"Roughly 22.8 million Afghans, more than half the country's population, are expected to face "acute food insecurity" from last month through March 2022, according to projections from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. That would mark a 35% increase from the same time period a year earlier. It would also be the highest ever for the country, with 8.7 million people facing emergency-level food insecurity."

AP News, Changing climate parches Afghanistan, exacerbating poverty, 23 December 2021

"I remember from my childhood ... there was a lot of snow in the winters, in spring we had a lot of rain," said 53-year-old Abdul Ghani, a local community leader in the village of Sang-e-Atash, in the hard-struck province of Badghis.

"But since a few years ago there has been drought, there is no snow, there is much less rain. It is not even possible to get one bowl of water from drainpipes to use," he said, as he observed the Red Crescent Society handing out emergency winter food supplies to farmers whose crops have completely failed."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

OCHA, Afghanistan Countrywide Weekly Market Price Bulletin, Covering Fourth week of December 2021

- In the week 4 of December 2021, the prices of food items were significantly higher than the last week of June (before the recent conflicts and political change).
- The average price of all food items except wheat grain, negligibly decreased in the 4th week, after it peak price in 3rd week of Dec 2021, mainly due to exchange rate fluctuations.
- Average weekly price of diesel negligibly decreased by 0.7% and reached 77.4 AFN/L, due to exchange rate fluctuations. • Work opportunities slightly improved by 2.4% compared to last week.
- Both casual labour/wheat and pastoralist/wheat ToT negligibly improved by 0.3% and 0.9%, respectively due to changes in price of wheat and negligibly increase in price of sheep.
- Exchange rate (USD to AFN) after drastic increase in the 2nd week of December, slightly decreased in the 3rd week and again negligibly increased this week and reached 103.2 AFN/USD and still lack of cash (USD) in markets & Banks and high demand for it exists in the market.

Save the Children, Hunger and Heartbreak - Why we must act now to support Afghanistan's children, 19 December 2021

"Without enough money to feed their children, they gave up one of the newborn twins to a childless couple."

[...]

"The family was displaced from their farm about seven months ago due to prolonged drought, which has devastated crops contributed to pushing millions to the brink of famine. It has been difficult for Mohammad to find work for even a couple of days a week."

[...]

"We need help, we are hungry and poor," said Mohammad. "There are no work opportunities in Afghanistan. We only have bread for the children which is not always available."

[...]

"2021 has been a desperate year for Afghanistan's children. But now, widespread hunger and the onset of freezing winter weather are making things even worse. Over the next three months, 1 million children are at risk of dying from malnutrition."

Ariana News, Number of Afghan children without enough food rises to 3.3 million, 18 December 2021

"According to data from UN World Food Programme (WFP), as of the end of November, 98% of the population do not have enough to eat — an alarming jump from 81% before 15 August. Afghanistan is facing its worst food crisis on record. This winter, 14 million children are expected to face potentially life-threatening levels of hunger, and rates of malnutrition are soaring. With Afghanistan's aid-dependent healthcare system on the brink of collapse, Save the Children warned that many severely malnourished children are unable to access the specialist treatment they need to survive."

OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Planned Response 2022, 16 December 2021

"In 2022, 24.4 million people in Afghanistan are projected to be in humanitarian need, up by over 30 percent since the start of 2021, and amounting to over 55 percent of the entire population. The main driver of this need is a massive increase in acute food insecurity, with almost 23 million people are projected to be facing acute food insecurity. Food insecurity and the potential collapse of basic health systems services would leave 1.1 million acutely malnourished children under the age of five years without

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

access to treatment services and up to 131,000 children could die in the course of the year if no action is taken.”

Development and Cooperation, Afghanistan faces the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, 16 December 2021

Afghanistan is on the brink of the world’s worst humanitarian catastrophe, the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) warns. According to the WFP, the country’s food crisis currently looks worse than what is happening in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

This alarming assessment is based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report. It was issued in October in a joint effort of the WFP and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The authors state that in September and October 2021, nearly 19 million people in Afghanistan experienced high levels of acute food insecurity. They expect this number to rise to 22.8 million in the months November 2021 to March 2022. More than half of the country’s people thus face hunger – including 3.2 million children under five, many of whom will suffer acute malnutrition by the end of this year. People all over the country are affected, including in urban areas.

Afghanistan has experienced two severe droughts in four years. The current impact on crops and livestock is significant. Food prices are rising fast. The country’s economy depended heavily on foreign aid before the Taliban seized power in Summer 2021, and things have been deteriorating since. Public services have collapsed, and so has the financial system. Unemployment is getting worse, and Covid-19 has exacerbated all other problems.

One year ago, Afghanistan already had 3.5 million internally displaced persons (IDP). They are a particularly vulnerable group. The UN reckons that at least 660,000 more people were displaced in the months January to September this year. (One of the many Afghans that fled their country is a journalist who currently lives in Cologne, Germany. Read his story on our D+C/E+Z platform)

The WFP has so far provided emergency aid to around four million Afghans in September and plans to feed nine million in December. It needs more funding, however, and is thus calling on the international community to scale up humanitarian assistance and to resume food trade with Afghanistan. WFP’s Executive Director David Beasley: “This winter, millions of Afghans will be forced to choose between migration and starvation unless we can step up our life-saving assistance, and unless the economy can be resuscitated.”

Qantara, Can the Taliban avert a food crisis without foreign aid?, 16 December 2021

“The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) are warning of a surge in the number of starving people in Afghanistan. According to one estimate, 18.8 million people are currently suffering from hunger every day, FAO representative in the Afghan capital Kabul, Richard Trenchard, said on 11 November.

That number could rise to 22.8 million by the end of the year, including more than three million children under the age of five. They urgently need aid: food, drinking water, medical care and decent shelter in winter. The total population of Afghanistan is around 39 million.”

Ariana News, Price of naan bread in Afghanistan doubles, 14 December 2021

Afghanistan’s Chamber of Craftsmen and Shopkeepers said Tuesday that the price of an average naan bread weighing 200 grams has doubled, from 10 Afghanis (AFN) to 20 AFN on the back of rising food prices.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[...]

"When we go to the bazar, they ask for dollars, because the AFG has lost its value. Selling and buying is done in dollars, said Gull Mohammad, a shopkeeper.

"People need flour, rice, oil and other necessary materials, customers are coming, but they can't afford to buy anything," said Obaidullah, another shopkeeper.

Reuters, Afghans face "avalanche of hunger and destitution" - UN agency, 14 December 2021

Almost all Afghans do not have enough to eat and a failing economy could tip Afghanistan's increasingly dire situation under Taliban rule into catastrophe next year, the U.N.'s World Food Programme (WFP) said on Tuesday.

WFP surveys showed an estimated 98% of Afghans are not eating enough, with seven in 10 families resorting to borrowing food, which pushes them deeper into poverty, a spokesperson for the agency told reporters.

[...]

"The spiralling economic crisis, the conflict and drought has meant the average family can now barely cope," Tomson Phiri told a Geneva briefing. "We have a huge amount to do to stop this crisis from becoming a catastrophe."

Ariana News, WFP survey finds about 98% of Afghans not getting enough food, 14 December 2021

Almost all Afghans do not have enough to eat and a failing economy could tip Afghanistan's increasingly dire situation under Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) rule into catastrophe next year, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said on Tuesday.

A WFP survey found an estimated 98% of Afghans are not eating enough food, with seven in 10 families resorting to borrowing food, which pushes them deeper into poverty[.]

TOLO News, ICG warns of mass starvation in Afghanistan, 9 December 2021

"The International Crisis Group (ICG) in a newly published report said that if the international community does not scale up economic support, more Afghans may die of hunger and starvation in the current crisis than from the fighting in the past 20 years.

"Hunger and destitution following the Taliban's takeover of the country seem poised to kill more Afghans than all the bombs and bullets of the past two decades," the report reads."

Khaama Press, "Kidney for sale", reads a placard stuck on a tree in Kabul, 8 December 2021

"From selling houses, home furniture, and equipment to selling daughters and now parts of the body, all tell the world the most bitter and unpleasant story of Afghanistan and its people.

With millions of people laid off, no work and no business, unprecedented prices of food ingredients and fuel, and the cold winter season of Afghanistan have made people do everything to earn money so that they feed families and heat houses.

UN has lately estimated that during the winter this year, over 24 million people of Afghanistan will starve and three million malnourished children will be on the brink of starvation."

UNICEF, Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 Overview, 6 December 2021

"Almost 23 million people will experience acute food insecurity from November 2021 until March 2022 and 1.1 million children are at risk of death due to severe acute malnutrition in 2021."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

WFP, Afghanistan: World Food Programme calls for funds as children face 'hunger and starvation', 3 December 2021

"The World Food Programme (WFP) is in a "race against time" to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan, its executive director David Beasley has warned.

A total 22.8 million people, more than half the population, face acute hunger as temperatures plummet below zero.

"What's happening in Afghanistan is just horrific," said Beasley, who has just visited. "I met families with no jobs, no cash and no food, mothers who sold one child to feed another, and the lucky children who made it to the hospital. The world cannot turn its back as the Afghan people starve." With more than 682,000 people displaced by drought, the economic crisis and conflict, WFP is calling for US\$2.6 billion in 2022 to provide life-saving support and work towards long-term resilience.

In addition to food assistance, cash grants from WFP empower people to buy food, complementing its efforts to boost the resilience of communities through activities such as providing training in agricultural techniques and irrigation projects.

Humanitarian needs have tripled, according to the organization, whose fleet of 170 trucks criss-cross the country, delivering nutritious food to remote villages and urban areas alike."

The Tribune, Pakistan agrees to let India transport wheat, life-saving drugs to Afghanistan on Afghan trucks: Foreign Office, 3 December 2021

According to UN figures from early November, almost 24 million people in Afghanistan, around 60 per cent of the population, suffer from acute hunger. That includes 8.7 million living in near-famine. Increasing numbers of malnourished children have filled hospital wards.

Business Standard, Afghanistan continues to face economic hardships under the Taliban, 3 December 2021

"Nine out of ten Afghan families are already unable to obtain sufficient food stocks and over 1 million children could face malnutrition and even death by starvation with further scares of the outbreak of diseases like measles and polio throughout the population, it added."

OCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 (Part Two), 2 December 2021

"In Afghanistan, more than 24 million people require life-saving assistance to prevent catastrophe. This represents a dramatic increase in needs, driven by a combination of conflict, COVID-19, political turmoil, recurrent economic shocks and the worst drought in 27 years. [...] A staggering 22.8 million people, or 55 per cent of the population, are expected to be in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+), a nearly 35 per cent increase from the same period last year. Some 9 million people are projected to be in IPC 4 – the highest number in the world. More than half of all children under 5 years of age are now expected to be acutely malnourished in 2022, a 21 per cent increase since the start of 2021. Twenty-seven out of 34 provinces are seeing acute malnutrition rising above emergency thresholds.

In rural areas, needs are largely driven by drought – the worst of its kind in 27 years – and the cumulative effects of over four decades of conflict. Even after the harvest, 57 per cent of households did not have food reserves that would last for three months. In urban areas, severe economic shocks and resulting income loss have contributed to the rapid deterioration in people's food security and livelihoods status. Ten out of 11 most densely populated urban areas are anticipated to be in IPC 4. In 2021, all population groups had a negative net income."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

BBC, 'It's like hell in here': The struggle to save Afghanistan's starving babies, 2 December 2021

Afghanistan was already reeling from severe drought and decades of conflict, but the Taliban's takeover hastened the country's descent towards economic collapse. The slowing trickle of international aid, which propped up the economy and its health system for decades, came to a grinding halt in August. Western donors cited serious concerns in moving money through a government which denies basic rights to women and girls, and threatens harsh Sharia punishments. This means Afghanistan is facing its worst hunger crisis since records began, according to the latest UN figures. About 14m children are expected to suffer acute levels of malnutrition this winter.

CNN, The rescue of Parwana: 9-year-old child bride is taken to safety in Afghanistan, 2 December 2021

"Afghanistan's economic lifelines have been severed since mid-August when the Taliban assumed control after American and allied forces departed. Billions of dollars in central bank assets have been frozen, banks are running out of cash and wages have gone unpaid for months.

Now, aid agencies and rights groups including Human Rights Watch are warning that the country's poorest people are facing a famine as the brutally cold winter takes hold. More than half of the country's roughly 39 million population will face emergency levels of acute hunger by March, according to a recent report by IPC, which assesses food insecurity. The report estimates that more than 3 million children under the age of five are already suffering acute malnutrition.

"The international community is turning its back as the country teeters on the precipice of man-made catastrophe," said Dominik Stillhart, director of operations for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who just returned from a six-day visit to Afghanistan."

US News, Aid Official: Afghanistan's Crises Get 'Progressively Worse', 2 December 2021

"According to U.N. figures from early November, almost 24 million people in Afghanistan, around 60% percent of the population, suffer from acute hunger. That includes 8.7 million living in near- famine. Increasing numbers of malnourished children have filled hospital wards. Afghanistan has been suffering from its worst drought in decades since last year, hitting 80% of the country. The drought has reduced crops and wrecked incomes for farming families, driving many to leave their villages. More than 700,000 people were displaced from their homes this year, whether by fighting or drought, adding to the ranks of some 3.5 million displaced from past years of fighting."

WFP Afghanistan, Situation Report, 2 December 2021
"In Numbers

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.

Situation Update

Snowfall has been reported in several provinces where families depend on humanitarian assistance to survive the freezing winter months.

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.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

An alarming 98 percent of Afghans are facing insufficient food consumption, according to WFP's latest surveys. This is a substantial increase of 17 percentage points compared to early August.⁴ The situation is especially alarming for children under five, half of whom are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition (3.2 million). 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."

United Nations, WFP appeals for greater support for Afghanistan as hunger increases, 1 December 2021
"Humanitarian needs in the country have increased, the UN agency said, with all 34 provinces facing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. As a result, some 23 million Afghans require urgent food assistance, a figure never seen before. This includes more than three million children who are at risk of severe hunger and the life-threatening consequences of malnutrition."

DTM, DTM: EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING, 29 November 2021
"CFPs were also asked to rank their community's most urgent needs. Cash and food were identified as the first priority needs, which aligns with reported community shocks in the past month. These include reduced income (94%), loss of employment (96%) and food price increase (95%) (see below). Drinking water and immediate healthcare were second and third priority needs, which is reflected in the reported risk of displacement due to water insecurity (55%) and the majority of communities without a health clinic or hospital (69%)."

OCHA, Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (15-21 November 2021), 27 November 2021
"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. In addition, 11,788 internal returnees received humanitarian assistance across the North-east."

Operational Data portal, UNHCR) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 25 November 2021
"On 17 November, the World Food Program (WFP) stated that 22.8 million Afghans – half of the population - will face acute food insecurity from November 2021, including 8.7 million at risk of faminelike conditions. 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. WFP also reported that the situation for children is increasingly alarming, with half of all children under five (3.2 million) are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, has warned that the country "is on the brink of catastrophe". "

Care, Afghan families making horrific choices so they can put food on the table, 22 November 2021
"What's it like in Afghanistan for millions of people right now? This is what it's like. They go to bed hungry. They wake up hungry. Everyone in the house wakes up hungry. There's less and less to feed them. The winter is setting in. Growing food is impossible. Buying food is getting harder, as prices have skyrocketed. [...]"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Almost 23 million people - more than half the population of Afghanistan - are facing acute hunger this winter. That’s the equivalent of almost every single person in Australia being hungry almost all the time.” [...]

Many parents in Afghanistan are being forced to make the most horrific choices to keep their family members alive, and it’s usually the girls who suffer the consequences. We have seen the reports of baby girls being sold so families have money to buy food. Young girls are being married off so there is one less mouth to feed.

UN News, Afghanistan’s farmers, herders desperate for seed, food and cash, 19 November 2021

“The UN agency said that 18.8 million Afghans are unable to feed themselves every day, and that this number is set to rise to nearly 23 million by the end of the year. What started as a drought crisis has spiralled into economic disaster, with nine in 10 major urban centres also expected to face extreme hardship, as debts pile up and savings dwindle. Worryingly, the already widespread drought looks set to worsen in Afghanistan, as farmers and herders brace for a likely second consecutive year of drought in 2022, with La Niña expected to bring drier than normal conditions to Afghanistan in the coming months. This situation will create a very real famine risk in 2022, unless immediate large-scale support to protect these people and their livelihoods arrives very soon, Food and Agricultural Organisation warned.”

The Hill, UN Envoy says Afghanistan on the brink of humanitarian catastrophe, 17 November 2021

“The United Nations envoy for Afghanistan on Wednesday said the country is on the brink of “humanitarian catastrophe,” pointing to food scarcity and the country's crumbling economy, and warned that extremism could arise due to current conditions. During a press conference, Deborah Lyons said she told the U.N. Security Council that the regional and global community must continue helping Afghanistan as it heads into the winter, where pressing issues could lead to “terrible loss of life.”

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE, Key to Afghan Relief Efforts: Financial Engineering for Private Sector, Economy, 17 November 2021

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. But if nothing is done the situation will get even worse, especially with the approach of winter.

In the absence of action, major parts of the Afghan economy will remain in free-fall and the urban sector will completely collapse. As a result, hunger and privation will increase further, already large humanitarian aid needs will multiply, and millions of desperate Afghans will be forced to try to leave the country.

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

““Due to the drought, we had to leave our farm,” Qudratullah tells RFE/RL’s Radio Azadi. “We had no other income. Our field became barren and the crops we had planted were destroyed. We had no water and nothing to eat.”

“There is nothing left of my cattle,” he says. “I had to sell them off. Even if we had one or two left, the situation is so bad that we couldn’t have kept them.”[...]

The former farmer says many people in the area have moved to the district center.

“Hunger and thirst have forced people to leave their homes,” he says. “Children are starving. People have nothing to eat.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Underscoring the acute climate conditions in Afghanistan, heavy floods have sometimes struck the same areas that are now grappling with severe drought. [...]

Climatologists predict that life for many of Afghanistan's 38 million people is likely to resemble Qudratullah's in the coming years due to changing weather patterns they link to global warming. [...]

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."

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report, October 2021, 15 November 2021

"Between November 2021 and March 2022, further deterioration in food security is expected, with the number of people in need reaching 22.8 million. This marks a 37% increase in the number of Afghans facing acute hunger since the assessment issued in April 2021. An estimated 30,000 children under-five suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were provided with lifesaving treatment services through mobile teams and Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) health facilities across the country."

QANTARA, Can the Taliban avert a food crisis without foreign aid?, 15 November 2021

"In view of the catastrophic supply situation in Afghanistan, UN authorities are sounding the alarm. Inflation and growing poverty are exacerbating the situation. The Taliban reportedly have an emergency programme to combat the crisis. [...]

No money for food

A few days ago, WFP Executive Director David Beasley named some of the reasons for the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan: sharply increased costs for fuel, food and fertilizers. At the same time, poverty is growing [...]"In the industrial area of Herat alone, 70 percent of the companies have gone out of business. There is no demand. Purchasing power has dwindled tremendously. Civil servants and employees in the public sector hardly get paid."

There is no chance of survival for smaller companies, such as silk manufactories or brickworks. The unemployment rate is rising every day, and with it the number of people who can no longer afford their daily bread."

Khaama Press, One million children suffering from malnutrition in Afghanistan: officials, 15 November 2021

"Officials of the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan said that there are three million Afghan children suffering from different diseases among them one million who are malnourished.

The officials also said that there are still 700,000 Afghan women who are suffering from malnutrition along with the children.

Deputy Minister of Public Health doctor Abdul Bari Omar who was briefing journalists about the ministry's three-month achievements said that all the hospitals and clinics have been reopened and female health workers are back to their jobs.

"All big and small clinics have been reactivated and male and female health workers are asked to return to their jobs so that they raise international aids." Said Omar.

The Deputy Minister further said that they will soon launch capacity-building programs for male and female doctors across the country."

REUTERS, A million Afghan children at risk of dying amid acute malnutrition, WHO says, 12 November

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

2021

"Around 3.2 million children are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in Afghanistan by the end of this year, with 1 million of them at risk of dying as temperatures drop, a World Health Organization spokesperson said on Friday.

Aid agencies have warned of famine as a drought coincides with a failing economy following the withdrawal of Western financial support in the aftermath of a Taliban takeover in August. The health sector has been hit especially hard, with many healthcare workers fleeing due to unpaid salaries. [...]

Measles cases are rising in the country and WHO data shows 24,000 clinical cases had so far been reported.

"For malnourished children, measles is a death sentence. We will see so many more deaths if we don't move on this quickly".

HRW, [Afghanistan Facing Famine](#), 11 November 2021

"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. [...]

Afghans in several provinces said that wages have nearly disappeared in most sectors, especially in urban areas, and that food prices are rapidly increasing. Some gave accounts of families selling their property or their children to pay traffickers so that they could flee the country.

"Farid," a pseudonym, said he recently fled to Iran, but Iranian authorities detained and then deported him. He described seeing hundreds of families, many with small children, trying to leave the country with insufficient money, food, and clothing. He said that he now has no means to support his family or purchase food:

"We don't have enough food ... we only eat once a day. With the winter approaching, the situation can get even worse than this. The Afghan [Taliban] government doesn't have any clear plan to fix the hunger issue, and I doubt if the international community has one. What I clearly see is that soon most Afghans will die just for not having food, and as always, no one will care."

He said that traffickers are taking advantage of the situation by charging US\$500 to \$700 to smuggle people to Iran. "I also saw the bodies of people who have died in the deserts leading to the border," he said. "I had to sell all I had to pay the traffickers." [...]

She said that prices were increasing every day and that she expected people to die this winter:

"The winter is very cold, and people cannot heat their houses. No one works, especially women, and even those who used to work have not been paid yet. One neighbor told me yesterday that she doesn't have anything in the house to feed the kids. Every night, she puts on her burqa and takes all her seven kids with her, and they go door-to-door to see if anyone will share their dinner with them. They only eat once a day if anybody gives them some food. One family offered to buy her one-year-old daughter for US\$600, but she refused the request, as she wanted to keep her daughter."

"This is the worst nightmare anyone in the world has ever imagined," she said.

"Sitara" described people foraging in already-harvested agricultural fields:

"One of the worst cases that I have witnessed in my life was seeing an old man with kids searching the potato fields hoping to find some remaining potatoes, to be able to feed themselves that night, although

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the crops had been harvested two months ago. If the Taliban and the international community don't pay attention and do not help people, everybody will die.””

Kabul Now, Mother puts teenage daughter up for sale in Ghazni, 11 November 2021

“A woman who has four daughters has put her eldest one, a 13 years old girl, up for sale in the southern Ghazni province to provide a living for the rest of her family.

The woman's name is Marzia and is living in Haidarabad neighborhood of Ghazni city, Mohammad Zaman Zaki, a local elder, told Kabul Now today, November 11. He added that the woman has announced this decision for two days now.

According to the local elder, the woman has decided to sell her daughter due to poverty and hunger they are suffering from. “This woman is selling her 13-year old daughter for 100,000 – 150,000 afghani in order to provide food for her other three daughters.”

Mr. Zaki added that the local residents are trying to provide food, money, and clothes for the family in a bid to prevent the girl from being sold for money.

In a video taken by Bashir Ahmad Islamzai, a local journalist, and sent to Kabul Now, the woman says she is not able to provide a living for her children. “I'm forced to sell one of my daughters in order to provide the living costs for her three siblings,” she says in the video.

While she is speaking to the camera, one of her child is repeatedly heard shouting for bread.

Years back the same girl had been put up for sale by her father – an addicted man to drugs – which caused her mother to divorce him but stopped her daughter to be sold.

The woman is an original resident of Jaghori district but moved along with her children to Ghazni city after divorcing her husband.”

United States Institute of Peace, Winter is coming in Afghanistan. Are the Taliban ready?, 11 November 2021

“Nearly three months after the Taliban's rapid takeover, Afghanistan is descending toward one of the world's worst humanitarian crises with an economy in free-fall. As the harsh winter season looms, aid agencies have warned that over half the country's population — a staggering 22.8 million people — will face acute food insecurity, including 3.2 million children under five. Now in power, the Taliban's failure to deliver basic services is exacerbating this dire humanitarian situation. But immediate relief is a distant prospect as the Taliban deliberate on how to govern the country and the international community mulls over how to engage and pressure the fledgling government.

With internal divisions leading to jockeying for power and a severe dearth of technical capacity, the Taliban are ill-equipped to address these challenges. [...]

Meanwhile, everyday Afghans are living in increasingly inhumane, squalid conditions and confronting an uncertain future. “The majority of people I know want to flee Afghanistan,” said Naheed Farid, an elected member of parliament from Herat Province. “They want to leave because they don't see a future for themselves and their family.”

WFP, Afghanistan Situation Report, 10 November 2021

“In Numbers 22.8 million people – half of the population -- will face acute food insecurity from November 2021 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.

Situation Update

- More than half of the population will be facing crisis (IPC Phase 3) or emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

acute food insecurity through the November 2021 to March 2022 lean season, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report.

- This is the highest number of acutely food insecure people ever recorded in the ten years in which IPC analyses have been conducted in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has one of 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.
- The report's findings come as Afghanistan's harsh winter looms, threatening to cut off areas of the country where families desperately depend on humanitarian assistance to survive the freezing winter months.
- Poor families' food stocks are expected to run out, and millions will be forced to choose between migration and starvation unless urgent action is taken."

Al Jazeera, UN food agency: 45 million people on the edge of famine, 8 November 2021

"The United Nations food agency has said that the number of people on the edge of famine across 43 countries had risen to 45 million, as acute hunger spikes around the world.

The jump from 42 million people earlier in the year was largely down to a food security assessment that found another three million people facing famine in Afghanistan, the World Food Programme (WFP) said on Monday.

WFP said the cost of averting famine globally now stands at \$7bn, up from \$6.6bn earlier in the year, but warned that traditional funding streams were overstretched.

Families facing acute food insecurity are being "forced to make devastating choices", marrying off children early, pulling them out of school or feeding them locusts, wild leaves, or cactus.

Multiple droughts in Afghanistan were combining with an economic meltdown to push families to the edge, while some 12.4 million people in Syria do not know where their next meal will come from – more than any time during the decade-long conflict, it said."

BBC, Afghans facing 'hell on earth' as winter looms, 8 November 2021

"Ninety-five percent of the people don't have enough food, and now we're looking at 23 million people marching towards starvation," he added. "The next six months are going to be catastrophic. It is going to be hell on Earth."

IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, October 2021

"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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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. Reduced incomes, lower international and domestic remittances and continuing obstacles to humanitarian assistance (many related to the financial crisis and limited physical access during the winter period) are expected to contribute to the deterioration of food security."

AVA Press, Agricultural free fall in Afghanistan is part of U.S. war legacy, 27 October 2021

"Promises cannot feed people" were the words of the United Nations Food Program Executive Director David Beasley as he underlined the rapid, unfortunate and alarming decline of Afghanistan's agricultural sector after decades of war. While the byproducts of the 20-year U.S. war include massive poverty, malnutrition, widespread displacement, terrorism and unemployment, the backbone of the Afghan national economy which is the agricultural sector has also taken a massive blow.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_With roughly 80 percent of Afghans relying on it for daily sustenance and livelihood, its rapid decline can be attributed to the prolongation of war in the country and sector's abandonment after the U.S. troops' withdrawal in August.

As per assessments from the United Nations World and the Food and Agricultural Organization, Afghanistan is facing a starvation crisis, with approximately 45 percent of its population or 19 million people being at risk of high levels of food insecurity."

Ariana News, Afghanistan on 'countdown to catastrophe' as winter looms, 26 October 2021

"This is the highest number of acutely food insecure people ever recorded by the UN, during 10 years of conducting IPC analyses in Afghanistan. And globally, the country is home to one of the largest number of people facing acute hunger. "Hunger is rising and children are dying", said WFP Executive Director David Beasley. "We can't feed people on promises – funding commitments must turn into hard cash, and the international community must come together to address this crisis, which is fast spinning out of control". Among those at risk are 3.2 million children under five, who are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year. Last month, WFP and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that without immediate life-saving treatment, one million children risked dying from severe acute malnutrition. And for the first time, urban residents are suffering from food insecurity at similar rates to rural communities. "Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises – if not the worst – and food security has all but collapsed", said the WFP chief."

TOLO News, Afghans Struggle with High Prices of Essential Goods, 26 October 2021

"A number of residents speaking to TOLONews complained about the high price of primary items in the markets, saying they are concerned about providing food for their families.

According to the residents, the economic downturn and the high prices have worried them as winter approaches.

"Domestic production is not enough, the prices are high because the goods are imported," said Abdul

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Maroof, a shopkeeper.

Meanwhile, a number of farmers said that the recent drought has caused a serious decrease in yield compared to past years. They say this year's drought is more severe than previous years, and the wells which were used to irrigate the farmlands have dried up. [...]

Droughts and political problems in the country are cited as the reason for an unprecedented rise in the price of primary goods, mainly food, in the country."

TOLO News, UN Urges World to Support Vulnerable Afghans, 26 October 2021

"[...] The World Food Program WFP said on Monday that more than half of Afghanistan's population will face starvation this winter unless urgent action is taken.

"Afghanistan is fighting a humanitarian crisis, the humanitarian organizations should urgently take steps and deliver their assistance to Afghanistan. The latest reports indicate that more than 22 million people face food insecurity," said Wahidullah Amani, spokesman of WFP in Kabul.

Save the Children said that an unprecedented food crisis has left at least 14 million Afghan children hungry.

The statistics show a 35% increase in the number of people facing a food crisis compared with the same time last year."

WFP, Afghanistan set to be world's worst humanitarian crisis, report warns, 25 October 2021

"Afghanistan is becoming the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with needs surpassing those in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, according to figures released today.

With a harsh winter on its way, the latest IPC assessment (the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification), a global standard for assessing food insecurity, found 22.8 million people could face acute risk, while 8.7 million face emergency levels of hunger – a record in the ten years the UN has been conducting IPC analyses in the country. [...]

Since the withdrawal of international forces in August, the fall of the Afghan government and the Taliban takeover, the country has been in freefall. Job losses, lack of cash and soaring prices have pushed the humanitarian crisis to a new high, creating a new class of hungry, the report said.

For the first time, urban residents are suffering from food insecurity at similar rates to rural communities, which have been ravaged by drought twice in the past three years. Across cities, towns and villages, virtually no family can afford sufficient food, according to recent WFP surveys. [...]

A crippling drought poses a further challenge to a political transition that has been met with international sanctions, and a financial and banking collapse. With COP26 kicking off in Glasgow on Friday (31 Oct), Bauer highlights the effects of the "double-dip" of the La Niña climate phenomenon, which is causing the worst drought the country has seen in years. [...]

"People who used to be food-secure, people who live in urban areas, people who were part of the Afghan middle class are now facing food insecurity because they're not being paid anymore, and they don't have access to their savings anymore. If they don't have money, and they don't have food assistance, it's going to be a long, dark winter."

Due to a cash liquidity crisis, people are currently restricted to withdrawing US\$200 a week. However, "in more remote locations the banks still don't have cash, so they can't even withdraw that," said Hsiao-Wei Lee, WFP deputy country director in charge of operations for Afghanistan."



WFP, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS September 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

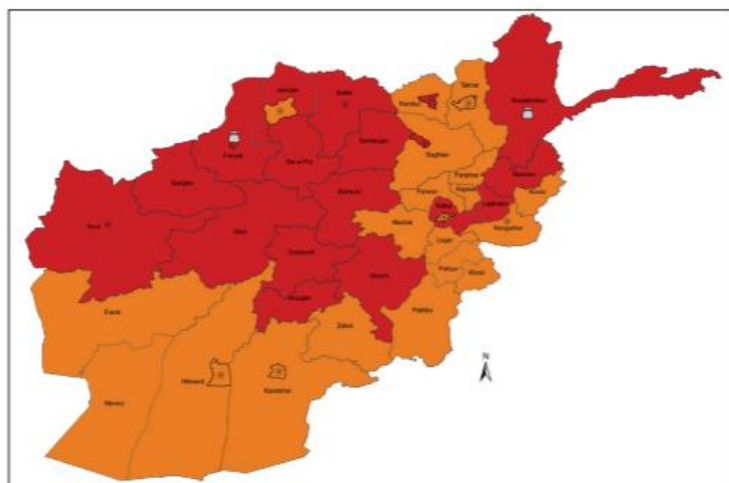
AFGHANISTAN

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

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS
September 2021 - March 2022
Issued in October 2021

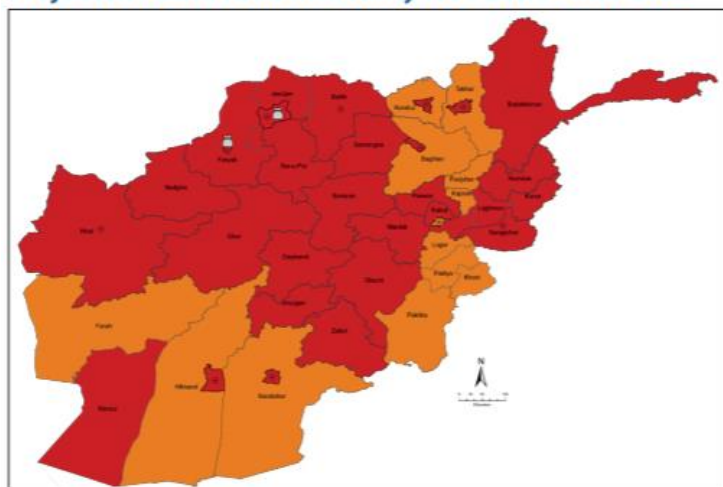
CURRENT SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2021		PROJECTED NOVEMBER 2021 – MARCH 2022	
 18.8M 47% of the population People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 5	0	People in Catastrophe
	Phase 4	6,856,000	People in Emergency
	Phase 3	11,988,000	People in Crisis
	Phase 2	13,613,000	People in Stressed
	Phase 1	7,954,000	People in food security
 22.8M 55% of the population People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 5	0	People in Catastrophe
	Phase 4	8,740,000	People in Emergency
	Phase 3	14,074,000	People in Crisis
	Phase 2	12,473,000	People in Stressed
	Phase 1	6,441,000	People in food security

Current Acute Food Insecurity Sept - Oct 2021



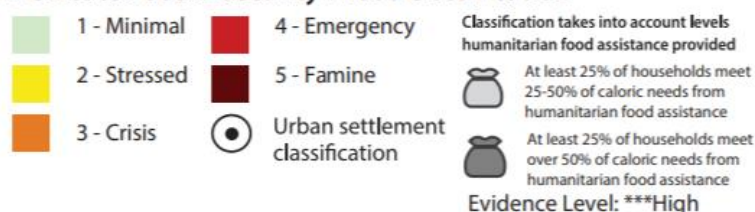
This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Projected Acute food Insecurity Nov 2021 - Mar 2022



Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification



WFP, Half of Afghanistan's population face acute hunger as humanitarian needs grow to record levels, 25 October 2021

“More than half the population of Afghanistan – a record 22.8 million people - will face acute food insecurity from November, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report issued today by the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster of Afghanistan, co-led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and the UN World Food Programme.

The combined impacts of drought, conflict, COVID-19 and the economic crisis, have severely affected lives, livelihoods, and people’s access to food. The report’s findings come as Afghanistan’s harsh winter looms, threatening to cut off areas of the country where families desperately depend on humanitarian assistance to survive the freezing winter months.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report has found that more than one in two Afghans will be facing crisis (IPC Phase 3) or emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity through the November 2021 to March 2022 lean season, requiring urgent humanitarian interventions to meet basic food needs, protect livelihoods and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe.

The report also notes that this is the highest number of acutely food insecure people ever recorded in the ten years the UN has been conducting IPC analyses in Afghanistan. Globally, Afghanistan is home to one of the largest number of people in acute food insecurity in both absolute and relative terms. [...]

“Afghanistan is now among the world’s worst humanitarian crises - if not the worst - and food security has all but collapsed. This winter, millions of Afghans will be forced to choose between migration and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

starvation unless we can step up our life-saving assistance, and unless the economy can be resuscitated. We are on a countdown to catastrophe and if we don't act now, we will have a total disaster on our hands," said David Beasley, WFP Executive Director. [...]

Hunger spreads from rural to urban areas

The IPC report reflects a 37 percent increase in the number of Afghans facing acute hunger since the last assessment issued in April 2021. Among those at risk are 3.2 million children under-five who are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year. In October, WFP and UNICEF warned that one million children were at risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition without immediate life-saving treatment.

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. Rampant unemployment and the liquidity crisis mean that all major urban centres are projected to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity, including formerly middle-class populations.

In rural areas, the severe impact of the second drought in four years continues to impact the livelihoods of 7.3 million people who rely on agriculture and livestock to survive."

Reuters, 'Children are going to die', U.N. agency warns as Afghanistan verges on collapse, 25 October 2021

"Millions of Afghans, including children, could die of starvation unless urgent action is taken to pull Afghanistan back from the brink of collapse, a senior United Nations official warned, calling for frozen funds to be freed for humanitarian efforts.

World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley told Reuters that 22.8 million people - more than half of Afghanistan's 39 million population - were facing acute food insecurity and "marching to starvation" compared to 14 million just two months ago. [...]

Afghanistan was plunged into crisis in August after Taliban fighters drove out a Western-backed government, prompting donors to hold back billions of dollars in assistance for the aid-dependent economy.

The food crisis, exacerbated by climate change, was dire in Afghanistan even before the takeover by the Taliban, whose new administration has been blocked from accessing assets held overseas as nations grapple with how to deal with the hardline Islamists. [...]

The U.N. food agency needs up to \$220 million a month to partially feed the nearly 23 million vulnerable people as winter nears.

Many Afghans are selling possessions to buy food with the Taliban unable to pay wages to civil servants, and urban communities are facing food insecurity on levels similar to rural areas for the first time."

The Guardian, 'Countdown to catastrophe': half of Afghans face hunger this winter – UN, 25 October 2021

"More than half of Afghanistan's population is facing acute hunger as the country has been thrown into one of the world's largest food crises.

Almost 23 million Afghans will be hungry due to conflict, drought and an economic downturn that is severely affecting livelihoods and people's access to food as a harsh winter looms, the UN has warned; an increase of nearly 35% compared with last year.

"Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises – if not the worst – and food security has all but collapsed. This winter, millions of Afghans will be forced to choose between migration and starvation," the World Food Programme's executive director David Beasley said, adding that "we are on a countdown to catastrophe".

The Taliban takeover in August has contributed to the economic upheaval as billions of dollars in foreign

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

aid payments – 40% of the country’s gross domestic product – have ceased and almost \$10bn (£7.3bn) of Afghan central bank assets have been frozen.

Half of all Afghans will be facing crisis or emergency levels of acute food insecurity between this November and March next year, the UN report said.

As desperation grows, the number of beggars throughout Afghanistan’s major cities – including children – has risen as urban residents, for the first time, suffer similar rates of food insecurity to rural communities; a shifting pattern of hunger in the country. [...]

Only 5% of households have enough to eat every day, the UN said. Many families who fled fighting before the Taliban takeover can’t afford to go back home, instead remaining in makeshift camps with no source of income. About 3.5 million people remain displaced within the country. [...]

Cash is largely unavailable, and many government employees are waiting for unpaid salaries.

In Kabul, beggars are visible on almost every street corner. In the city centre, small children chase after shoppers, hoping for a piece of bread.”

IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

“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. [...]

A profound economic crisis is severely restricting household access to food. [...]

Impact on Food Markets and Prices: 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). [...]

Food insecurity is growing in urban areas. Eleven major towns of selected provinces were analysed to assess the specific vulnerabilities of urban households. Across the urban areas, around 3.98 million people (43% of the analysed population) were facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), of which 1.2 million people (13%) were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Five out of 11 urban areas were classified in Emergency, and another six urban areas were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The urban area of Faryab (Maimana), with 65% of its total population classified in IPC Phase 3 or above, is the most vulnerable urban center, followed by Balkh (Mazar), Jawzjan, Helmand (Lashkergah), Hirat, Kunduz, Nangarhar, (e) Baghlan (Pul-e-Khumri), Kabul, and Kandahar, each having 40-55% of their respective populations classified in IPC Phase 3 or above. The impact of the transition of power on the functionality of key services (banks, markets, transports, communication) as well as on labour opportunities (e.g. civil

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

servants and functionality of public and private economic comparts) coupled with unseasonable inflation spikes for food products, deeply affected the capacity of most urban households to produce an income and access food."

BBC News, Afghanistan facing desperate food crisis, UN warns, 25 October 2021

"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. [...] 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."

"People are impoverished here," said a man in Kandahar. "Yesterday I saw a woman who was going through the rubbish bins at the local hotel, collecting the leftover food. I asked her why she was doing so and she said she didn't have any other solution, she was trying to find food for her children." [...] The WFP warned that the looming winter threatened to further isolate Afghans dependent on humanitarian assistance to survive. And for the first time in Afghanistan, urban residents are suffering from food insecurity at similar rates to rural communities, the organisation said.

"It is urgent that we act efficiently and effectively to speed up and scale up our delivery in Afghanistan before winter cuts off a large part of the country, with millions of people - including farmers, women, young children and the elderly - going hungry in the freezing winter," said QU Dongyu, the director of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation."

CARE, CARE warns of increased risks for women and girls as new report reveals almost half of Afghans now face acute hunger, 25 October 2021

"A new report reveals Afghanistan has descended deeper into an already alarming hunger crisis, exacerbated by drought, increasing displacement, rising food prices, the COVID-19 pandemic and economic decline, with 18.8 million people, close to half the population, now facing acute hunger - an almost 30% increase from the same time last year.

"People in many parts of Afghanistan are resorting to extreme measures just to put food on the table – they're selling the few assets they have, making tough choices about which family members miss out on meals and some are even marrying their daughters off at a young age just so there is one less mouth to feed. The dramatic rise in the price of wheat between June and September this year by 28% is hugely concerning and puts life-sustaining food out of reach for so many," said Victor Moses, CARE Afghanistan's Country Director."

Kabul Now, Eight children of a family starve to death in west Kabul, 24 October 2021

"Eight children of a family starve to death in west Kabul

As many as eight children of a single family have starved to death in Etifaq Township, a neighborhood in west part of the capital Kabul, according to the local residents and a religious scholar. The children have died from lack of food after the death of their parents who had previously lost their lives to cancer and heart disease.

The incident took place three weeks ago in PD 13 of Kabul city, Mohammad Ali Rahimi Bamiani, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

religious scholar who performed the mass funeral ceremony of the children told Kabul Now today, October 24, in Kabul.

He confirmed that all the children were members of a single family and died of starvation.”

Al Jazeera, Kabul orphanage struggles to feed its children as cash runs low, 19 October 2021

“Ahmad Khalil Mayan, programme director at a large Kabul orphanage, says he is cutting back on the amount of fruit and meat he gives the children each week because the home is running out of money. For the last two months, since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan and millions of dollars in aid suddenly dried up, he has been desperately calling and emailing donors, both foreign and local, who supported him before.”

BBC, Afghanistan crisis: G20 leaders pledge to avert economic catastrophe, 13 October 2021

“The takeover of this country has caused a massive shock to an economy that was just about surviving [...] With no cash in the market, there has been a sharp rise in prices of day to day necessities including food. An already difficult situation created by war and drought has become much worse.”

Landinfo, Afghanistan: En humanitær krise, 13 October 2021

“The prices of absolutely necessary foods such as flour and cooking oil have risen, for example a 50 kilo sack of flour has risen from 21 USD to 24 USD. Other indispensable products such as medicines and electricity have also become more expensive, while those who sell non-essential goods, such as clothing, have declined sales (Duncan & Clark 2021).

The country, which is highly dependent on imports, cannot finance the import of food, medicine, fuel and electricity (UNAMA 2021). The Taliban does not even have the means to pay the import duty to retrieve containers with food reserves from ports in Pakistan (Debre 2021). On the streets, cheap, low-quality fuel is sold, which has been smuggled into the country, probably from Iran (Jahanmal 2021).”

Original excerpt in Norwegian [translated using Google translate]

“Prisene på helt nødvendige matvarer som mel og matolje har steget, eksempelvis har en 50 kilos sekk med mel steget fra 21 USD til 24 USD. Også andre helt uunnværlige produkter som medisiner og elektrisitet har blitt dyrere, mens de som selger varer som ikke er livsnødvendige, som for eksempel klær, har nedgang i salget (Duncan & Clark 2021).

Landet, som er svært importavhengig, kan ikke finansiere import av mat, medisin, drivstoff og elektrisitet (UNAMA 2021). Taliban har ikke engang midler til å betale importavgiften for å hente ut containere med matreserver fra havner i Pakistan (Debre 2021). På gatene selges billig drivstoff av lav kvalitet, som har blitt smuglet inn i landet, antagelig fra Iran (Jahanmal 2021).”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, Death Stalks 1 Million Afghan Children Facing Malnutrition, 7 October 2021

“Dozens of malnourished children are now receiving care in the central hospital of Afghanistan's Ghor Province. Malnutrition in Ghor is expected to increase rapidly as poverty in the country grows -- driven by drought and the collapse of the economy following the Taliban takeover in August.”

Ariana News, Afghan air corridor for cargo to resume next week, 7 October 2021

“The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) deputy head said Thursday that Afghanistan's international air corridor for cargo will resume next week.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Mohammad Younis Mohmand told Ariana News the first flight will carry pine nuts. The ACCI however continues to criticize Pakistan over its treatment of Afghan businessmen and called for issues to be resolved at the Torkham and Spin Boldak land ports.”

The New Humanitarian, From rural drought to urban shortages: Afghanistan’s new hungry, 6 October 2021

“Only five percent of Afghan households reported having enough food to eat, according to recent World Food Programme surveys. For the first time, there are similar levels of food insecurity among urban Afghans as drought-hit rural ones, the UN agency said: “Job losses, lack of cash, and soaring prices are creating a new class of hungry in Afghanistan.” Food worries now stretch from the country’s remote rural corners – which often face the brunt of shortfalls caused by drought, conflict, or under-development – to its urban areas.”

TOLO News, WFP: 14 Million Face Food Insecurity in Afghanistan, 6 October 2021

“The World Food Programme (WFP) warned of the dire state of food insecurity sweeping across Afghanistan as winter approaches fast.

While visiting a food distribution center in Herat province in the west, WFP officials said that at least 14 million people in Afghanistan will face food insecurity and over 3 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition.

“We have huge concerns about the desperate choices families are being forced to take,” said Mary-Ellen McGroarty, WFP Afghanistan’s Representative and Country Director. “Unless we intervene now, malnutrition will only become more severe. The international community must release the funds they pledged weeks ago, or the impact could be irreversible.”

It is reported that WFP and UNICEF are distributing food to poor Afghan families in several provinces. A number of families who were benefited by lifesaving food packages talked about their poverty, saying they have not been able to pay for food.”

UNICEF, Half of Afghanistan’s children under five expected to suffer from acute malnutrition as hunger takes root for millions, 5 October 2021

“KABUL, 5 October 2021 –Wrapping up a two-day visit to Herat, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan, Hervé Ludovic De Lys, and WFP Afghanistan Representative and Country Director, Mary-Ellen McGroarty, sounded the alarm on the dire state of malnutrition and food insecurity sweeping across the country. Without reliable access to water, food and basic health and nutrition services, Afghan children and their families are bearing the brunt of years of conflict and the current economic crisis.

14 million people in Afghanistan are facing acute food insecurity, and an estimated 3.2 million children under the age of five expected to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year. At least 1 million of these children are at risk of dying due to severe acute malnutrition without immediate treatment.

[...]

According to WFP surveys 95 per cent of households in Afghanistan are not consuming enough food, adults are eating less and skipping meals so their children can eat more.”

Reuters, Afghanistan on verge of socio-economic collapse, EU's top diplomat says, 3 October 2021

“Afghanistan is facing a breakdown of its economic and social systems that risks turning into a humanitarian catastrophe, the European Union's foreign policy chief said on Sunday.

Avoiding the worst-case scenario would require the Taliban to comply with conditions that would enable

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

more international assistance, Josep Borrell wrote in a blog post.

"Afghanistan is experiencing a serious humanitarian crisis and a socio-economic collapse is looming, which would be dangerous for Afghans, the region and international security," Borrell wrote.

Food prices in the country have jumped more than 50% since the Taliban took power in August as the freezing of \$9 billion of Afghanistan's assets held in foreign central bank reserves and the withdrawal of foreign income stokes inflation.

The Afghan banking system is largely paralysed, with people unable to withdraw money, while the country's health system - which was heavily dependent on foreign aid - is close to collapse, according to Borrell.

"If the situation continues and with winter approaching, this risks turning into a humanitarian catastrophe," he wrote, adding that this could trigger mass migration into neighbouring states."

WFP, WFP Afghanistan Situation Report, 30 September 2021

"SITUATION UPDATE

- Winter is fast-approaching and the race is on to get food prepositioned at strategic locations before it's too late.
- Food security is deteriorating sharply: Just 5 percent of households are consuming enough food according to WFP's latest surveys.
 - Urban residents are suffering from food insecurity at similar rates to rural communities, who were ravaged by drought twice in the past three years.
 - While families with lower education levels are hardest hit by food insecurity, more than 90 percent of households with high-school or university educations are unable to afford enough food to feed their families.
- Almost no one has enough money to buy food.
 - 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.
 - 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).
- Cash shortages are hampering commercial transporters, millers and cooperating partners as they face challenges in securing cash to pay staff/drivers and procure raw materials."

ACTED, September, DROUGHT EMERGENCY APPEAL Situation analysis and proposed response, September 2021 [exact date unknown]

"The 2021 harvest for a range of crops is expected to be below average due to the effects of drought. According to the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC), total wheat production in 2021 will be 25% less than in 2020 based on initial estimates, and overall the country is facing a national shortfall of 2.46m MT of wheat due to the poor harvests, and a 62% reduction in area under cultivation compared to 2020. Additionally, decreases in rice and vegetable production are also anticipated to be high, with rice production down 20%, vegetable production down 25-30%, and fruit production expected to be down a staggering 80% in some locations. In addition, livestock mortality will further erode food security and increase risks of malnutrition, with livestock production to be down 30% across the most affected provinces.[...]

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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.[...] 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."

BBC News, [Taliban: Afghanistan bank boss warns sector near collapse](#), 28 September 2021

"The United Nations World Food Programme has warned that only 5% of households in Afghanistan have enough to eat every day.

Half of those surveyed said they have run out of food altogether at least once in the last two weeks."

NRC, [Afghanistan is on a countdown to economic collapse](#), 27 September 2021

"Statement by Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, who is currently visiting Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan's economy is spiralling out of control. The formal banking system could collapse any day now because of a lack of cash. I've spoken to families who tell me they are surviving on tea and small scraps of old bread.

"If the economy collapses, even the most basic services will no longer function, and humanitarian needs will soar even higher. Dealing with the liquidity crisis is critical as aid organisations seek to scale up to meet urgent humanitarian needs."

WFP, [In the grip of hunger: only 5 percent of Afghan families have enough to eat](#), 23 September 2021

"Due to the combined effects of unemployment, a drop in the value of the local currency and a rise in prices – cooking oil has almost doubled in price since 2020, and wheat is up by 28 percent – only 10 percent of families headed by someone with a secondary or university education can afford sufficient food."

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

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

Availability of and access to water

Tolo News, [120 People Killed by Flooding in Past Month](#), 31 July 2022

"The State Ministry for Disaster Management said that in addition to human losses, the flood caused heavy financial damage to citizens by affecting thousands of acres of agricultural land. "120 people have been martyred and 152 others were wounded in these floods," said Mohammad Naseem Haqqani, a spokesman for the State Ministry for Disaster Management. Meanwhile, the residents of Paktia province said that the recent floods have affected the drinking water in the province.

"There have been some human losses and damages in the districts. It affected the streets," said Asadullah, a resident of Paktia. "The canals and wells which the people have been using for drinking water and agricultural lands have been destroyed," said Rahmatullah Ziarmal, a resident of Paktia.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Over the last month, the flooding occurred in more than ten provinces of Afghanistan and caused damage to public construction, including highways and roads.”

Tolo News, Kabul Facing Water Shortages: AUWSSC, 24 July 2022

“The Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewage Corporation (AUWSSC) said that Kabul is facing an extreme decrease in groundwater.”

[...] “According to environmental analysts, lack of water-supplying networks and inappropriate use of groundwater are the main reason for the drop of water levels in the capital city of Kabul.”

AVA, Water shortages worsen in Kabul, 19 July 2022

“[...] the increase in population, high consumption of underground water, and climate change are among the reasons that have made Kabul city face lower water levels now than ever before.”

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), Sar-i-Pul River water toxic, polluted: Official, 11 July 2022
“Environmental Protection Department officials say the Sar-i-Pul River water is polluted and toxic due to public negligence.

Abdul Hafeez Mohammadi, spokesperson for the Environmental Protection Department, said: “Sar-i-Pul has a big river, whose water flows into canals at seven points. The water is polluted and poisoned due to the negligence of people living on both sides of the river.”

People threw their garbage into the river and allowed sewage from their homes to flow into the river, he alleged. As a result, the river water has been contaminated.

“Factories clean their machines in the river. Dirty household items are washed in Sar-i-Pul River — activities that have polluted the Sar-i-Pul River.”

He said the government was taking steps to ensure the protection of river water from pollution.”

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), Falling riverwater level worries Helmand residents, 9 July 2022

“Farmers in southern Helmand province say the water level in the main river has declined, posing a serious threat to their crops.

The water management director acknowledged the decline in the Helmand River water level, urging growers to avoid wasting the precious resource.

Abdul Ali, a farmer from Nawa district, told Pajhwok Afghan News the water level had fallen and their crops were on the verge of destruction.

Majeed Khan, a resident of the Shna village of Nawa, also complained of a water shortage and looming drought.

Mohammad YaqobQaem, director of water management, explained the water level in the Kajaki dam had also decreased.

Currently, the official said, farmers were being given water from Helmand River to prevent crops from being damaged.”

Khaama News (Afghan News Agency), UNOCHA: Germany Contributes €50 Million to Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, 6 July 2022

“Afghanistan’s poverty and unemployment have increased due to the country’s political unrest and drought. [...] more than 22 million people, or more than half of the country’s population, are experiencing

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

extreme hunger, with the majority unable to predict when their next meal will be, according to the United Nations World Food Program."

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), 30pc of Daikundi residents lack access to potable water, 6 July 2022

"At least 30 percent of residents of central Daikundi province have no access to potable water, the United Nations International Children's Emergency..."

The Khaama Press, Afghanistan and Iran Strike an Agreement Over Helmand River Water-Sharing, 21 June 2022

"According to an official from the Ministry of Energy and Water, Afghanistan and Iran have resolved their water-sharing disagreement and struck an agreement on the Helmand water pact. The Ministry of Energy and Water said that the water of the Helmand River will be shared with Iran this year, in accordance with the Helmand Water Treaty signed between the two countries in 1973. [...] Although Afghanistan is considered to be a "self-sufficient" country in terms of its waters, but the lack of water infrastructure has rendered Afghanistan to have "one of the lowest levels of water storage capacity in the world."

Ariana News, Benefits of proper water management of Salma Dam seen across Herat: Officials, 13 June 2022

"The Director General of the Harirod-Murghab River Basin, Abdul Salam Mustawafi Agha, said that about 85 dams will be built across the country in the next five years, and that some economic problems will be eased with proper management of dams. "If we have money in our development budget, it should be spent on building dams because our country is agricultural. If our water is controlled and is used safely, our many economic problems will be solved," he said. In the meantime, Herat officials said local farmers have welcomed the improved water management of Salma Dam as they have been able to irrigate their crops. "The water management has been very good this year and most of the farmers are happy because they irrigated their crops ... they benefited from this water, and are now harvesting," said Ghulam Farooq, one farmer. Experts have also said that the country's river systems need to be better managed so as to strengthen the agriculture sector in the country. They have urged the IEA to invest more in this area. "There needs to be an agreement between us and the neighboring countries that the dams should be built in the right way to control the water. We don't say that water should be cut off to the neighboring countries, the Islamic Emirate should have an agreement with the neighboring countries so that when a dam is built, it will not be destroyed by the destructive reaction of neighboring countries," said Ghulam Habib Hashimi, chief of the Water Users Association in Herat."

Aga Khan Foundation, EU grant to assist over 100,000 Afghans and their communities, 13 June 2022

"To address the acute shortage of safe drinking water due to drought and damaged water supply systems, reduce the prevalence of waterborne diseases and mitigate risks for women and girls who travel long distances to collect water, the project will rehabilitate or construct 68 wells and water piping systems to benefit over 20,000 people."

Afghanistan Analysts, The Climate Change Crisis in Afghanistan: The catastrophe worsens - what hope for action? 6 June 2022

"However, in the south, the situation is already dire: irrigation water is looking scarce. According to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

discussions with local people in Jaghatu district of Wardak province and Kandahar city, multiple wells have dried up and people are now lacking drinking water. On 5 April 2022, the Taleban announced they would release Dahla reservoir's water for twenty-two days to enable farmers irrigate pomegranate orchards, but then stopped the water early. The Dahla reservoir in Kandahar, like the Kajaki in Helmand, did not fill fully. In a normal year, at this time, these dams would be overflowing. Recently, Azadi Radio reported that a person was killed in a water dispute between two villages in the Chak district of Wardak province. Such cases are expected across the country in the future if climate change-induced droughts are not handled."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Global Annual Results Report 2021 GOAL AREA 4 Every child lives in a safe and clean environment, 3 June 2022

"In Afghanistan, where the political situation coupled with a severe drought resulted in an acute humanitarian crisis affecting much of the country, UNICEF responded with WASH interventions. This included support and supplies for water system chlorination, water trucking, the delivery of water and sanitation services in schools and hygiene promotion nationally. Nevertheless, targets were not met owing to multiple operational factors, such as border closures, supply chain disruptions and a range of monetary system issues, including the blocking of bank accounts of the country's 32,000 Community Development Councils, which have been a critical implementing partners in the WASH sector."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Kabul Pledges Commitment to Water Treaty with Iran, 23 April 2022

"The Islamic Emirate said it is ready to discuss the issues related to the Helmand river treaty between Kabul and Teheran and that it remains committed to the treaty."

DTM, Afghanistan — Emergency Event Tracking — Summary Brief: Coping Mechanisms in Response to Food Shortages (Rounds 1 and 2), 14 April 2022

"It should be noted that, in addition to problematic coping mechanisms in response to food shortages, according the EET, assessed communities also experienced vulnerabilities related to drinking water, immediate healthcare and various community shocks."

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

"Shortages and water quality are the most common barriers to accessing clean water (faced by 72% and 53% of households respectively)."

ICRC, Time is running out to save millions of lives in Afghanistan, 25 February 2022

"Work has started to ensure the uninterrupted supply of drinking water in urban centres through support to public water and electricity utilities."

Humanitarian Response of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet Afghanistan, 9 February 2022

"Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change: rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns and increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Currently, Afghanistan is experiencing its worst drought in 27 years, which, compounded with COVID-19 and the economic contraction that followed the takeover of the government by the Taliban in August 2021, has significantly increased livelihood and food insecurity and contributed to a growing humanitarian emergency."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

- Climate change exacerbates the deteriorating conditions for agriculture-based livelihoods and food insecurity.
- Conflict and the effects of climate change have increased internal displacement and changed migration patterns. High levels of displacement accentuate food and livelihood insecurity and increase the vulnerability of marginalised groups, including women.
- The effects of climate change may heighten the risk of more frequent and intense local conflicts over land and water and increase tensions over transboundary resources.
- Conflict has eroded the resilience of communities and local authorities to adapt to climate change and to deal with the current humanitarian crisis. This creates opportunities for elites to manipulate and profit from land and water disputes, with elevated risks for marginalised groups.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [UNICEF Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report #1 1-15 January 2022](#), 7 February 2022
 “UNICEF provided Humanitarian Cash Transfers (HCT) to 1,165 households (8,155 people including 4,902 children) in Samangan province, targeting districts severely affected by drought.”

OCHA, [Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022](#), 7 January 2022
 “Since the fall of Kabul in mid-August, the drinking water supply has drastically reduced in both quantitative and qualitative aspects in cities across the country. Due to financial and bureaucratic disruptions, Urban Water Supply and Sewerage State Owned Corporation (UWASS SoC) has slowed down or outright stopped the water supply to the point that less than 20 per cent of the urban population has access to piped water in cities including Kabul, Kandahar, Hirat, Mazar Jalalabad and Kunduz. The urban water networks and the basic equipment in the water pumping stations and storage systems – such as simply the chlorine dosing pumps – are in a poor repair and system water losses are high – up to 50-60 per cent in UWASS SoC’s estimate, resulting in contamination from surface drainage and untreated wastewater.”

TOLO News, [UNICEF: Afghan children face ‘acute malnutrition’](#), 23 December 2021
 “The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) highlighted the severe condition of Afghan children and estimated that “one in two children under five will be acutely malnourished in 2022 due to the food crisis and poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene services.”
 ““Children across Afghanistan are increasingly vulnerable to disease and illness due to the deadly combination of rising malnutrition, an unprecedented food crisis, drought, disruptions to vital health and nutrition centers, lack of access to and poor quality of water and sanitation services, and crippling winter weather,” UNICEF said in a recent report.”

AP News, [An Afghan village shrivels in worst drought in decades](#), 9 December 2021
 “Afghanistan’s drought, its worst in decades, is now entering its second year, exacerbated by climate change. The dry spell has hit 25 of the country’s 34 provinces, and this year’s wheat harvest is estimated to be down 20% from the year before.
 Along with fighting, the drought has contributed to driving more than 700,000 people from their homes this year, and the onset of winter will only increase the potential for disaster.”

DTM, [DTM: EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING](#), 29 November 2021
 “CFPs were also asked to rank their community’s most urgent needs. Cash and food were identified as the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

first priority needs, which aligns with reported community shocks in the past month. These include reduced income (94%), loss of employment (96%) and food price increase (95%) (see below). Drinking water and immediate healthcare were second and third priority needs, which is reflected in the reported risk of displacement due to water insecurity (55%) and the majority of communities without a health clinic or hospital (69%).”

Afghanistan Analysts Network, Global Warming and Afghanistan: Drought, hunger and thirst expected to worsen, 6 November 2021

“While the nations of the world come together at the COP26 to seek solutions to climate change, Afghanistan is already suffering from global warming. One of the worst droughts in recent years has caused rainfed wheat crops to fail, led to plummeting livestock prices and shortages in drinking water. 19 million people – nearly half of the country’s population – are severely food insecure and require urgent assistance. AAN guest author Mohammad Assem Mayar,* a water resource management expert, maps out the severity of the drought and its effect on people and agriculture, explains how climate change will make drought in Afghanistan more common and looks at what should be done to mitigate their harm.”

ACTED, September, DROUGHT EMERGENCY APPEAL Situation analysis and proposed response, September 2021 [exact date unknown]

“While Afghanistan has sufficient water for its population and production in aggregate terms, access, storage and efficiency of water use are extremely low due to mismanagement, destruction of systems, and lack of infrastructures and investment, with 88% of irrigation done through informal systems. Overall, it is estimated that 90% of Afghanistan’s water consumption is for agricultural purposes, of which over 50% is lost due to inefficient systems and management. When faced with drought conditions, these issues result in severe WASH needs and water scarcity, especially in rural areas, leading to a lack of access and availability of water.”

Availability of and access to shelter

RFE/RL's Radio Azadi, 'We Are Left With Nothing': Deadly Floods Aggravate Afghanistan's Economic, Humanitarian Crisis, 31 August 2022

“Mira Jan lost his home, crops, and livestock in the devastating floods that have struck large swaths of Afghanistan. “Our house was swept away by the raging floods,” Jan, a farmer in the eastern province of Nangarhar, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. “We were only able to save ourselves and our children. We have nothing to live off now.” Jan is among the tens of thousands of Afghans affected by the deadly floods that have swept the country in recent weeks. Over 250 people have been killed and thousands of homes have been destroyed. The floods have exacerbated the devastating economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan that has been fueled by the Taliban’s seizure of power in August 2021.”

Ariananews, Over 30 million in urgent need of help after major floods in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 31 August 2022

“Flooding in Afghanistan has also brought widespread devastation in central and eastern provinces of the country in the midst of an on-going drought and worsening humanitarian crisis. Over 180 people have been killed and upwards of 3,300 homes have been destroyed. Many of the areas impacted by this month’s flooding were hit by a devastating earthquake in June that killed over 1000 people.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

IRC Afghanistan has deployed emergency response teams to affected provinces and is providing cash support to families who have lost their livelihoods, and water and hygiene kits to flood-affected households.”

Global Shelter Cluster, AFGHANISTAN: ES-NFI CLUSTER HRP DASHBOARD (AS OF JULY 2022), 20 August 2022

“These information sheets include the following data in different regions in Afghanistan: (1) number of people receiving basic household items to meet their immediate needs; (2) number of people receiving emergency shelter assistance, including cash for rent support; (3) number of people whose shelter was upgraded allowing for safer and dignified living; (4) number of people receiving winterization standard package for insulation; (5) number of people receiving support to construct transitional shelters.”

Tolo News, At least 20 People Killed, 30 Wounded in Logar Flooding, 21 August 2022

“At least 20 people were killed and more than 30 others were injured in floods that hit the Khoshi district of Logar province.

The casualties included nine children, nine women and two men.

The provincial officials said that thousands of acres of agricultural land and hundreds of residences have been destroyed.

According to the officials, four people have disappeared.

‘Due to these floods, 20 people have been killed and 32 others wounded. Four people have disappeared and around 3,000 residences were destroyed,’ Provincial Governor Mawlawi Enayatullah Shoja said.”

IOM, IOM Afghanistan flash flood situation report | 1-12 August 2022, 16 August 2022

“On the night August 11th, heavy rainfall triggered a series of flash floods in the central and south-eastern regions of Afghanistan. Initial reports indicate that 11 districts in six provinces and two regions across Afghanistan experienced harsher rainfall causing more severe floods than other parts in the country. [...] Initial reports indicate that the impact of the flash flood affected over 7,500 persons, damaging over 1,000 houses of which 65 were completely destroyed. The floods have not spared infrastructure, impacting numerous agricultural lands in turn affecting livelihoods; water and irrigation systems, including canals Karezes, impacting also sanitation structures; as well as roads, most notably the highways to Kandahar, but also the Kabul-Bamyan sub-road, in turn increasing the already precarious access to those areas. Most tragically, the floods have already cost the life of 13 persons, and additional 09 injuries reported at the time of this report.”

TOLO News, 30 people killed, nearly 100 wounded in floods in parwan, 15 August 2022

“At least 30 people have died and more than 20 were injured in flooding in the Shinwari and Sia Gard districts of Parwan province, local officials said.

The head of the provincial department of Information and Culture, Shams Rahman Sadeqqi, said that hundreds of houses have been destroyed. Around 100 people are missing, according to officials.

The flooding happened in Shinwari and Siagard districts of the province.”

Tolo News, Flooding Causes 18 Deaths in 3 Provinces, More Heavy Rain Forecast, 30 July 2022

“At least 18 people have died and around 40 others were injured as a result of recent floods in the provinces of Ghazni, Kandahar, and Herat, according to the State Ministry for Disaster Management. A spokesman for the ministry, Mohammad Nasim Haqqani, stated that in addition to the deaths caused by

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the two days of flooding in three provinces, dozens of homes were also completely destroyed. "During the last two days of flooding, which happened in different provinces of the country, unfortunately 18 people died--10 in Ghazni, 6 in Kandahar and two people in Herat. These floods also caused financial loss to the people," he said. According to ministry figures, 10 people died in Ghazni, 6 in Kandahar, and 2 in Herat. Meanwhile, several families who were affected by the flooding said they had lost everything. "The floods hit our house at one 'clock last night. As you see, it destroyed our house and we don't have a shelter to live in," said Mujeebullah, a resident of Ghazni. "They should help us in order to rebuild our houses, we do not want anything else," Shireen, a member of the affected family told TOLONews."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), The United Nations builds new houses for the earthquake victims of Khost and Paktika, 28 July 2022

"The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has said that they will build new houses for the 11,000 people affected by last month's earthquake in Khost and Paktika provinces."

Khaama Press, Apocalyptic Flash Floods in Eastern Afghanistan Destroy Homes and Lives, 26 July 2022

"The floods in the Nurgram, Mandol, Kamdish, Berg-i-Matal, Du Ab, and Wama districts of Nooristan province have reportedly resulted in the deaths of three individuals and the total destruction of 13 homes, according to sources in Nooristan on Tuesday, the 26th of July.

Sources in this province continue to claim that more than 2,000 fruit trees, hundreds of acres of farming fields, 36 dams, and 20 animal barns were all devastated and washed away.

At the same time, sources from the eastern province of Paktia reported on Tuesday, July 26, that the flooding in this province's Zurmat district has caused the displacement of scores of people, who are currently staying in tents in Gardiz, the province's center.

According to Taliban local officials, the flood caused eight deaths, six injuries, and further casualties and damage in the Gardiz and Zurmat districts.

The flood hits different regions of Afghanistan at a time when meteorologists in Afghanistan Meteorology Department issued two warnings for the possibility of flash floods and heavy rainfall.

The affected and the displaced are said to be in dire need of immediate assistance, and more than 50 families have been made homeless by the disaster, according to sources."

Tolo News, Death Toll at 18 From Recent Flooding in Afghanistan, 25 July 2022

"In the past month, nearly 90 people have died and 120 others have been injured in at least 20 provinces due to heavy floods."

[...] "In addition to the human cost, initial reports indicate thousands of acres of agricultural land and hundreds of residential houses have been damaged."

Ariana News, Russia delivers 24 tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, 20 July 2022

"a 5.1-magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, injuring 40 people and damaging hundreds of homes in Paktika and Khost provinces."

Khaama, Flash Floods in Eastern Afghanistan Cause Deaths and Financial Loss, 19 July 2022

"There have been fatal and disastrous floods in several other provinces of Afghanistan over the past week. Data reveals that these floods have claimed the lives of almost 70 people... The flooding destroyed more than 300 homes and other structures, along with products valued at millions of Afghanis, leaving the locals with a crippling financial loss."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, At Least 30 Injured and Dozens of Houses Destroyed by Latest Earthquake in Quake-Hit Southeastern Afghanistan, 19 July 2022

"[...] at least 30 injuries and the destruction of dozens of homes [...]"

AVA, Third earthquake in Afghanistan, 19 July 2022

"[...] reports indicated dozens of homes had been damaged and at least 10 people injured."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Flash Update #1, July 2022 [Flash Flooding in eastern and central regions]

"Heavy and unseasonal rainfall across the central and eastern regions of Afghanistan on 5 and 6 July has resulted in the deaths of at least 10 people, injured a further 11, and caused severe damage to over 280 homes, as well as other critical infrastructure across nine provinces, including four bridges and 8 km of a road. Reportedly, two children were among those who lost their lives."

"The provinces where most casualties and damage were reported are Nangarhar and Nuristan provinces in the eastern region and Ghazni and Parwan in the central region."

"As of 7 July, there have been no reports of displacement across the region due to the flash floods."

"This is the second time that the eastern region has experienced flash floods in less than a month, with 19 people killed and 131 people injured in heavy rains that occurred on 22- 23 June."

"According to district officials and partners in the eastern region, five people died and 11 people were reportedly injured, while 62 families reported damaged houses. Specifically, in Kunar province, heavy rains and landslides have affected critical civilian infrastructure, including three bridges and several irrigation canals. In Nuristan province, the AsadabadParun Highway is currently blocked due to landslides, while the main bridge in the Kordar area in Nuristan province is also damaged. Consequently, UNDSS has advised that no UN road missions can currently be conducted in these locations. Additionally, in Kabul City, the Bamyan highway through Maydan Shar is also reportedly closed due to heavy floods and landslides."

"In Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, the livelihoods of people have also been affected with as many as 100 livestock killed, 52 husbandries (makeshifts for keeping livestock in the mountains), and 90 Jeribs of agriculture land with standing crops destroyed."

"In the central and central highland regions, five people reportedly died in Ghazni province (two children and three adults), with damage recorded to 160 houses in Ab Band, Andar, Deh Yak, Ghazni City, Gelan, Jaghuri, Muqur, Nawur Qara Bagh, Rashidan, and Zanakhan districts, along with 60 houses in Surkh-e-Parsa and Shekh Ali districts in Parwan province. Farmlands with standing crops and orchards, agriculture input, and livestock, as well as assets such as solar systems used for irrigation, were washed away by the heavy storm and flash floods. CARE Afghanistan and ANDMA deployed assessment teams to the affected areas in Parwan province. An inter-agency joint need assessment consisting of IRC, IOM, and ANDMA started in Logar province (Kharwar and Charkh district) on 7 July. In Ghazni, joint assessments will start on 12 July in coordination with ANDMA."

"OCHA is coordinating the emergency response on behalf of humanitarian partners with Operational Coordination Team (OCT) meetings held in Logar, Ghazni, Maydan Wardak, Paktya, and Paktika provinces on 7 July, and teams deployed to Kharwar and Charkh districts of Logar province. In the eastern region, the IOM-led assessment teams were already on the ground and able to immediately deploy to Hesarak and Wama districts in Nangarhar and Nuristan provinces"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Flash Update #2, 13 July 2022 [Flash Flooding in Central, Eastern, Southern, and South-Eastern Regions

"Since 5 July, flash floods have reportedly killed 39 people across five provinces – Uruzgan (20), Ghazni (6), Nuristan (7), Paktya (3) and Zabul (3). Nine of those killed were children, including six in Ghazni and three in Paktya provinces."

"The heavy rains have damaged or destroyed around 2,900 houses, a tenfold increase since the last reporting period, and also disrupted livelihoods. Critical civilian infrastructure such as roads and bridges have also been impacted."

"Families assessed to date report needing emergency shelter, non-food items, food and water, sanitation, and hygiene support."

"Central and South-Eastern Region: Communities in Logar, Paktya, Ghazni, Khost, and Paktika provinces in the Central and South-Eastern Region continue to experience heavy rains and flash flooding, in addition to dealing with the aftermath of the 22 June earthquake. According to local reports as of 11 July, nine children died due to flash floods (six in Ghazni and three in Paktya), 14 people were injured, and close to 2,300 houses were damaged or destroyed across the four south-eastern provinces. The heavy rains have also displaced two unexploded ordnances (UXOs) into several villages of Paktya province. Reportedly, the controlled explosions of the mines helped prevent further casualties."

"... partners have reported new flooding in Urgun district (Paktika province), which is close to the earthquake-affected areas."

"In response, two inter-agency assessment teams deployed to flood-affected areas in Ghazni on 11 July, followed by another four teams on 12 July, in coordination with the Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC). Four joint assessment teams mobilized for Paktya on 12 July and one assessment team deployed to Urgun district in Paktika."

"Eastern Region: Heavy rain caused new flash flooding in four districts and affected close to 500 families - 213 families in Nangarhar, 200 families in Laghman, 26 families in Kunar, and 14 families in Nuristan. This is the third time that the eastern region has experienced flash flooding in less than a month."

"Following the flash flooding on 5 and 6 July, rapid needs assessments were conducted on 8 July in Hesarak district (Nangarhar province) and Wama district (Nuristan province). The assessments found significant shelter, agriculture, and infrastructure destruction, with emergency shelter, NFI, food, and WASH listed as top priority needs by affected communities. More than half of all families assessed in Hesarak district reported destroyed or severely damaged homes, and another 20 per cent reported partial destruction. Additionally, 2000 jeribs (approximately 400 hectares) of agricultural land with standing crops, one big intake, two canals, 200-250 livestock, and five local flour mills were also reportedly destroyed. In Wama district alone, the flash floods damaged ten micro-hydropowers, 50 small- and medium-size intakes, 20 km of canals, 2,000 jerib (400 hectares) of agricultural land, 200 orchards, four mosques, four shops, 12 flour mills, a bridge and 19 km of road (Kordar area) and three schools. Some 250 livestock were also killed. Meanwhile, the Chapadara-Parouns road has remained closed since 7 July due to the landslide that damaged the bridge. Reportedly, existing de-facto authority capacity (means and materials) is insufficient to open the road."

"Southern Region: Three new provinces in the Southern Region - Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul – have been affected by heavy rains since the last flash update was issued on 7 July. Initial reports from partners and the ANDMA office indicate that some 600 households are affected in Uruzgan and Zabul, including damaged agricultural lands and livestock. There are unconfirmed reports of 23 deaths - three people reportedly killed in Zabul from a house that collapsed and 20 people reportedly killed in Uruzgan in a bus that was overturned."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Health teams and WASH partners have already deployed to flood-affected areas in Zabul to respond to instances of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD), which were already being OCHA Afghanistan | 3 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs www.unocha.org monitored prior to the floods. OCHA and humanitarian partners are also working with ANDMA to confirm the information received for Uruzgan and Zabul, and to collect information on Kandahar province. Humanitarian partners also deployed teams for needs assessments."

"Further damage to shelter and critical infrastructure, road closures, and contamination with UXO of populated areas due to floods or landslides can be expected in the week ahead."

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), Last week's floods leave 63 dead, 81 injured, 13 July 2022

"Recent rain-induced floods have killed more than 60 people in different parts of the country, an official says.

Last week's flooding left 63 people dead and 81 others wounded in a dozen provinces, the minister of state for disaster management told a private broadcaster.

Ariana News quoted Ghulam Ghaws Naseri as saying that 12,250 houses and 12,000 acres of agricultural land were also damaged and 2,000 livestock killed."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Nature's Fury, Flash Floods in Central Afghanistan Kills at Least 24, 12 July 2022

"The Taliban officials in Uruzgan, a central province in Afghanistan, say that turbulent and devastating flash floods in the province have resulted in the death of 24 and the injury of scores of people.

The situation appeared particularly terrible in Uruzgan province, where entire villages remained flooded on Monday, leaving people trapped in areas or forced to swim through knee-deep water on foot, navigating the floods.

According to the Taliban's spokesperson for the Uruzgan governor's office, Mawlawi Wali Jan Pohanyar, the floods have killed at least 24 and injured many people in Uruzgan's Chora, Khas Uruzgan, and Chinartoo districts.

Women and children, according to him, were no exceptions to nature's fury and the death toll included both.

At least 300 houses, in Chora district of Uruzgan province alone, were destroyed by the flash floods.

Severe flooding in Uruzgan province also inflicted financial harm, costing residents millions of Afghanis.

According to the Taliban officials, the flood-hit Uruzgan province is in dire need of humanitarian assistance, to at least meet their immediate needs.

Deluges and torrential rains have ravaged various regions in Afghanistan, killing hundreds, and injuring numerous people. Many people have also gone missing following the previous floods in Afghanistan.

Simultaneously, floods devastated Gardiz, the provincial capital of Paktia province in south-eastern Afghanistan, killing six people and injuring many more, according to the Taliban's provincial department of Culture and Information in Paktia."

Ariana News, Flash floods kill 63, injure scores in Afghanistan, 12 July 2022

"At least 63 people have died in flash floods caused by heavy rain in several provinces of Afghanistan in the past week, officials said on Tuesday.

Eighty-one others were injured in the floods which happened in 12 provinces of the country, said Ghulam Ghaws Naseri, acting minister of state for disaster management.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

According to the official, 12,250 homes were destroyed or damaged by the floods; 12,000 acres of agricultural land was damaged and 2,000 livestock killed.

"Rains and floods have damaged a lot of homes. Floods have killed people's livestock. Victims need urgent aid. They are poor people," said Syedajan, a Nangarhar resident.

"Floods have hit districts including Surkhrod, Momand Dara, Khewa," said Mir Agha, another Nangarhar resident."

[...] "The monsoon in India in June, July and August directly effects our country, causing rain in east, southeast, northeast, south and some central parts," said Mohammad Nasim Muradi, head of the Afghanistan Meteorological Department.

"Such rains bring flash floods in some parts of the country causing human and financial losses."

The official said that heavy rains and flash floods were expected in the coming days as well."

Ariana News, Sixteen killed in flash floods in Afghanistan, 8 July 2022

"Sixteen people have been killed in flash floods caused by heavy rain in Afghanistan, officials said on Friday.

Twenty-two more have been injured in the floods which happened in 11 provinces of the country, said Ghulam Ghaws Naseri, acting minister of state for disaster management.

According to the official, 611 houses were destroyed or damaged by the floods. 1,600 livestock also died, he said.

The floods destroyed crops covering 54,700 acres of land.

Naseri said that the ministry had instructed all its provincial departments to speed up surveying and responding following the floods."

Norwegian Refugee Council (Afghanistan), Eviction threats put hundreds of thousands of vulnerable families at risk of homelessness, 30 June 2022

"Up to half a million families in Afghanistan are now facing the prospect of homelessness following increasing pressure from the authorities to return internally displaced people to their areas of origin. [...] Decades of conflict, droughts, political instability and economic collapse have driven displaced Afghans into enclaves around bigger cities that over time have grown into slum-like settlements. These informal settlements provide shelter and access to humanitarian assistance to some of Afghanistan's most vulnerable populations, including internally displaced people and returning refugees."

Neil Turner, the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) Country Director in Afghanistan, said:

"Returning displaced people to remote areas, without their consent, is not possible in a country facing economic collapse, struggling with acute food insecurity and enduring natural disasters. Humanitarian agencies who have remained in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover are currently stretched to respond, and any return should be in a safe, dignified and informed way.

Unless good alternatives are secured; the closure of informal settlements puts people who are already struggling to survive at greater risk. They have nowhere to go, and many of those living in the makeshift shelters are highly dependent on humanitarian aid. We are extremely concerned that shutting down these settlements is a recipe for another catastrophe.

Almost four thousand people have been forced from their makeshift homes just in and around Kabul. If this continues, we will see tens of thousands of people on the move once again, while humanitarian agencies are ill-equipped to respond to yet another wave of displacement.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[...] Many of the people living in these areas tell NRC they have nothing to go back to in their areas of origin. Despite the harrowing conditions they dwell in, they have managed to settle in, find jobs, send their children to school, or gain access to humanitarian assistance.

[...] In Badgis Province in western Afghanistan, eight informal settlements are at imminent risk of closure, a step potentially impacting around 18,000 individuals. In Kabul, the majority of slums are to be shut down.

[...] Over 24 million people - more than half of the Afghan population - need humanitarian assistance to survive. That is an increase of 30 per cent from last year.

[...] The FAO-WFP have now listed Afghanistan in the top 6 countries that have populations identified or projected to experience starvation or death, or at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions, requiring the most urgent attention.

Tolo News, [Afghan Earthquake: Officials Say Transfer of the Wounded Challenging](#), 21 June 2022

““No house has been left in Gayan; all are destroyed,” another resident of Paktika said.”

Aga Khan Foundation, [EU grant to assist over 100,000 Afghans and their communities](#), 13 June 2022

“Further, as many latrines have been damaged or destroyed during the conflict leaving many displaced people without facilities, the project will rehabilitate 1,300 latrines, benefiting at least 9,100 people. This will help reduce communicable diseases and improve the safety and dignity of communities, particularly women and girls. To complement these activities and address a lack of access to hygiene supplies due to reduced incomes and availability in markets, hygiene kits will be delivered to 6,000 households.”

Shelter Cluster, [Winterization Response Dashboard 2021/2022](#), 5 June 2022

[Click on hyperlink for Infographic]

Global Shelter Cluster, [AFGHANISTAN : ESNFI CLUSTER REGIONAL STOCKPILE APRIL 2022](#), 22 May 2022

[Infographic showing emergency shelters regionally]

Global Shelter Cluster, [AFGHANISTAN : ES/NFI CLUSTER REGIONAL SITUATION REPORT](#), 22 May 2022

[Click on hyperlink for the regional monthly update 01-30 April 2022]

“In April 2022, ESNFI cluster partners identified 12,406 families in need of NFI assistance and shelters toolkits through joint assessment assistance”

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Localized Floods across Afghanistan, Flash Update No. 1](#), 7 May 2022

"Heavy and unseasonal rainfall across large parts of Afghanistan on Tuesday, 3 May has caused flash flooding directly affecting over 485 families (approximately 3,400 people) in Badakhshan, Badghis, Baghlan, Bamyān, Faryab, Hirat, Jawzjan, Kunar, Kunduz, Samangan and Takhar provinces. According to initial information, approximately 13 people were killed and eight people were injured by the flooding and around 1,270 houses either destroyed or damaged. An unconfirmed number of families have also been temporarily displaced and are being accommodated by relatives in neighbouring districts. Livestock was also reportedly killed and injured (nine killed and one injured in Kunar); agricultural land destroyed, and provincial roads damaged in Bamyān and Jawzjan provinces due to encroachment of gravel/land slips. Flood affected people in other provinces are currently being assessed, and affected families require assistance including food, shelter, household items, and WASH support. Longer-term shelter repairs are

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

also expected to be necessary."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Afghanistan Collective Feedback Digest - A compilation of community voices - Issue 6, 5 May 2022

"People expressed many of the same needs as in earlier months, including food, cash and shelter. Reports that

some community leaders and Taliban de facto authorities are telling aid recipients they must share assistance they

received, or who are directly giving it to family and associates not on eligibility lists, continues to be a top feedback topic."

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

"Among all provinces, Uruzgan faces the most destruction of shelter, where only 26% of shelters are not damaged."

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report #1 1-15 January 2022, 7 February 2022

"Continued rainfall and heavy snow affected access in the Northern, Western, Central and Eastern regions. Affected provinces include Badakhshan, Kabul, Ghor, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar. The Afghanistan Meteorological Department (AMD) has predicted heavy rainfall, snowfall, and the possibility of flash food in some parts of the country, according to a statement on 7 January 2022. Provinces such as Khost, Paktia, Logar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Panjshir, Nuristan, Kunar and Badakhshan are expected to be the worst hit with chances of flash floods. Measles cases continue to rise with over 1,000 cases identified during the reporting period."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Daily Noon Briefing Highlights: Madagascar, Afghanistan, Yemen, 7 February 2022

"Between 2 and 3 February [...] several hundred families, in Kabul, Badakhshan, Laghman, Kandahar and Zabul provinces, received non-food items and other assistance, including emergency shelter kits and tents, blankets and warm clothes, water and sanitation and hygiene supplies as well as cash for shelter repairs. Needs assessments continue. This year, 24.4 million people in Afghanistan – more than half of the total population – require humanitarian assistance."

UNICEF, Delivering Assistance in Afghanistan as winter sets in, 25 January 2022

"Even before the recent turmoil, more than half of Afghanistan's children were estimated to be living in poverty. Now, as winter sets in, a deadly combination of rising malnutrition, an unprecedented food crisis, drought and disruptions to vital health and nutrition centres is leaving more children vulnerable to illness and even more families at risk of falling into poverty.[...] Even when children in Parun, Nuristan Province, arrive home after doing chores, winter temperatures that can plunge to around minus 15 celsius mean that families get little respite from the cold. The severe winter conditions increase the risk of pneumonia and Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) as families struggle to heat their homes and keep their children warm. [...] Children living at high altitudes are especially vulnerable and require urgent life-saving assistance including winter clothing, blankets and fuel for heating."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNOCHA, Earthquake in Badghis Province, Afghanistan - Flash Update No. 2, 21 January 2022

"A 5.3 magnitude earthquake struck in Qadis District, Badghis Province in the Western Region of Afghanistan on 17 January 2022. Heavy rains in the area prior to the earthquake reportedly rendered mud brick houses more vulnerable to damage. [...] The preliminary estimate by the inter-agency team is that up to 1,000 houses were damaged or destroyed by the earthquake. According to the information received from the local sources, the number of deaths due to the earthquake have risen to 27 people. People in affected areas are using water wells that are unsafe. Water sources need to be repaired to prevent outbreaks of water-borne diseases."

Global Shelter Cluster (Afghanistan), Afghanistan - Joint Winterization Plan 2021-22, 20 January 2022

"As of mid-November 2021, cases of hypothermia, acute respiratory infections, and death directly and indirectly due to cold are set to increase. In many cases these will be attributable to insufficient physical shelter and lack of adequate personal insulation to preserve body core temperature. Poor shelter and unhygienic conditions, particularly in displacement, leave people vulnerable to diseases such as COVID-19, and unable to cope with Afghanistan's harsh winters. WoAA (2020) reported that ESNFI (57%) is the third priority among the displaced households the others are food (71%); protection (63%); health (51%) and WASH (42%). ESNFI as a third priority among the displaced households are due to damaged shelter, inadequate heating source and shelter with enclosure issue. In addition, 7% of IDPs reported living in inadequate shelters; 81% of IDPs reported inadequate heating source and 60% IDPs reported having less than one blanket per member. In addition, households displaced for more than 6 months (55%) are still living in makeshift shelter, poor transitional shelter, in overcrowded conditions, with little access to services, poor protection from harsh weather and in exceptionally difficult conditions during Afghanistan's freezing winters. Households report similar priorities during winter for 2021/2022; with emergency shelter improvements being a self-reported priority need at fifty-seven percent (57%) and need for insulation at thirty one percent (31%), shelter repair five percent (5%), rental support three percent (3%) and other priorities at four percent (4%). Critical needs for non-food items during winter period include fuel at eighty six percent (86%), followed by blankets and winter clothing at fifty seven percent (57%) and forty three percent (43%) respectively. Over Thirty-one percent (31%) per cent of households resorted to using waste (paper, plastic, carton board, etc.) as their main source of energy for heating, twenty three percent (23%) borrowed money to buy fuel, nineteen percent (19%) and eleven percent (11%) resorted to sending children to collect fire wood and decreasing their daily food ration to save money for fuel, respectively. This is particularly concerning as we approach another winter season."

OCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan (2022), 11 January 2022

"While conflict and insecurity were the primary drivers of displacement up until August 2021, natural disasters and environmental risks are becoming an increasing driver of underlying need. A national drought was officially declared in June 2021, the worst in more than three decades. 80 per cent of the country is now suffering from either severe or serious drought. This historic drought, brought on by exceptionally low precipitation in 2020-2021, has added to a long silent water crisis and put additional pressure on water resources already strained from population growth (for example in the densely populated cities of Kabul, Kandahar and Herat where 66 per cent of country's urban population live). Groundwater levels have progressively lowered across the country – in Kabul going from eight meters below land in 2003 to 45 meters in 2021. Even the aquifers in the central region have been affected by a water scarcity crisis currently impacting two-thirds of the country. Overall, the dwindling of the water levels is resulting in the drying up of hand-dug wells, springs, kariz, boreholes and streams. Rural areas,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and particularly farming and livestock rearing households, have been hard hit by the 2020-21 drought. The drought is driving food insecurity, and in addition to grain deficits and livestock deaths in both rainfed and irrigated areas. This is devastating to many households who are still reeling from the crippling effects of the 2018-19 drought and have not had the opportunity to recover, given the cumulative impacts of war and chronic poverty. In addition to the drought, more than 29,000 people in 13 provinces were affected by other natural disasters – mostly floods – throughout Afghanistan in 2021.

Afghanistan has an INFORM Risk Index of 6.8, the fifth highest risk country out of 190 profiled. At the same time, the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index ranks it as the 11th least prepared country against climatic shocks and the 10th most vulnerable country in the world to climate change. With its placement in a seismically active region, Afghanistan remains highly susceptible to catastrophic damage due to earthquakes – particularly across a number of densely populated urban areas along the Chaman, Hari Rud, Central Badakhshan, and Darvaz faults. Each of these faults is capable of producing 7 or 8 Magnitude earthquakes. In the last 10 years, more than 7,000 people have lost their lives because of earthquakes in Afghanistan, with an average of 560 fatalities per year. A contingency plan developed by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Team (ICCT) in late 2020 estimates that if an earthquake of 7.6 magnitude were to strike the seismically risky area between Kabul and Jalalabad, up to 7 million people would be impacted in the areas of worst shaking, throwing three million of the most vulnerable people in need of humanitarian assistance.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan)(UNOCHA), [Afghanistan Weekly Humanitarian Update \(15-21 November 2021\)](#), 26 November 2021

“Some 7,886 families (approximately 55,200 people) have been identified in need of winterization assistance.”

BBC, [Afghanistan crisis: G20 leaders pledge to avert economic catastrophe](#), 13 October 2021

“The takeover of this country has caused a massive shock to an economy that was just about surviving. [...]

In Kabul, hundreds of people are still living in the open in tents with harsher winter months fast approaching.”

Availability of and access to employment

Khaama Press, [Over 200 Media Outlets Shut Sown Since Taliban Takeover](#), 6 August 2022

“At least 7,000 media practitioners have lost their jobs since the Taliban seized power in August last year, according to sources, as over 200 media outlets have ceased operations across Afghanistan. [...] ever-increasing restrictions continue to grow under the Taliban leadership, who is pushing for the formal recognition since in power. ‘In the last year, out of 544 media outlets, 218 of them were closed, and out of 1200 media workers, 7000 of them lost their jobs,’ said Hujatullah Mujaddidi, the Head of the Free Association of Afghan Journalists said, as The Print quoted. Several officials from the media said that they are unable to pay their employees’ salaries due to the poor economy. [...] According to AFJM, more than 2,800 women were employed in the Afghan media before the Islamic Emirate came to power; more than 2,100 of them have lost their jobs.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

TOLO News, Afghans Deported From Iran Recount Hardship, 6 August 2022

"Afghans who were recently deported from Iran have spoken out about experiencing extreme hardship and mistreatment. Afghanistan's citizens say they faced threats to reach Iran but were deported after weeks. Khaled and his sister Fatima and the rest of their family were forced to come to Afghanistan by Iranian forces. They illegally went to Iran through Nimroz. "We were compelled to go to Iran, here there no working opportunities. Everyone knows that illegal trips come with problems. There, you can find difficult work with low incomes," said Khalid. "When they arrested us, we were faced with immoral and hideous threats. Some of them are good people, but many think Afghans are not human," said Fatima. [...] "Some Afghans, mainly singles, complained about the treatment of Iranian forces across the border. They claimed mistreatment and torture by Iranian forces," said Mohammad Reza Khalili, a border official. "There are problems in the ways against refugees. They sometimes expel them from Iran," said Mallawi Sediqullah Nusrat, head of the Refugees and Repatriations Directorate of Nimroz. Hundreds of Afghans daily head to Iran to seek work opportunities, but Iranian officials deport those who illegally arrive."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Coal Mining Without Regard for Safety; Three Coal Miners Die of Gas Poisoning in Northern Afghanistan, 1 August 2022

"Three coal miners who were working in a confined environment at the mine on July 31st were poisoned after breathing harmful and toxic gases. The Chenarak coal mine is situated in the Baghlan province's Nahrin and Tala-wa-Barfak districts, at the foothills of the mountains."

"Miners have long died as a result of unsafe mining practices in the northern provinces of the country."

"At least 10 coal miners in the province were killed after the Chenarak coal mine collapsed earlier this year in February as a result of heavy rain."

"Two coal miners died from gas poisoning in the Dara-e-Sauf coal mine in the northern Afghan province of Samangan in late May. They had been exposed to hazardous gases, which led to their inhalation of deadly fumes and their death inside the mine."

"In the northern provinces of the country, incidences of mine collapses, intake of contaminated, toxic, and harmful chemicals, and a lack of awareness of mining safety requirements are only a few examples, and miners pay the price for this disregard with their lives."

"Due to potential violations and lack of supervision and regulation capacity, tragic accidents frequently happen in Afghanistan's mining industry."

Khaama News (Afghan News Agency), UNOCHA: Germany Contributes €50 Million to Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, 6 July 2022

"Afghanistan's poverty and unemployment have increased due to the country's political unrest and drought. [...] more than 22 million people, or more than half of the country's population, are experiencing extreme hunger, with the majority unable to predict when their next meal will be, according to the United Nations World Food Program."

ICRC, Afghanistan: Earthquake kills more than 1,000, deepening a humanitarian emergency, 23 June 2022

"A devastating earthquake in Afghanistan's eastern province of Paktika on 22 June has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people and injured even more. [...]"

Despite the overall decrease in fighting in Afghanistan in recent months, many areas across the country remain highly contaminated by explosive remnants of war, such as landmines and unexploded

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

ordnance. Explosive ordnance in Paktika and Khost provinces that had been buried may have moved to the surface or migrated from their original location, putting people at further risk. Millions of people in Afghanistan face the combined effects of loss of income, a lack of job opportunities, the consequences of fighting and a lack of cash."

UNHCR, 2021 Multi sectorial Rapid Assessments Analysis, June 2022

"On average 72 percent of male-headed IDP households indicated not being able to work and cover daily expenses while amongst female-headed households the number leaped to 81 percent. Similarly, amongst IDP returnee households, the rates are 68 percent and 76 percent, respectively."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"According to sharia, the man is the breadwinner of the family, while the woman is responsible the daily operation of the home arena. Before the takeover it was not formal obstacles to women being able to work. Still had less than one of five women paid work (Desai & Li 2018, p. 34). After the takeover, the economy has stopped and many have lost their jobs. Women are particularly hard hit. With the exception of those who have work that can not performed by men, government-employed women were told not to show up for work. In 2019 36 percent of the country's teachers were women. The suspension of schooling for girls over 12 years has meant that many female teachers are out of work (Kumar & Noori 2022).

In order for women to be able to return to work, it is an absolute requirement gender segregation in the workplace (Human Rights Watch 2022). It have to be separate entrances, living rooms and dining rooms (Pakistani Analyst, 2022). Et hospitals in Kabul report that they have been asked to introduce total segregation of boats employees and patients (Kumar & Noori 2022).

Limited freedom of movement and low occupational participation are two sides of the same coin. Working women must get to and from work. The Taliban has instructed locals taxi drivers about not giving women access unless she wears the burka or has a male companion (mahram) (Ahad & Kumar 2022)."

Ava Press, Despite decades of war in Afghanistan, women are still stable, 14 June 2022

"Despite decades of war in Afghanistan, women remain stable," said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who led a delegation to Afghanistan, meeting with a group of businesswomen. She also noted that many children, especially girls, have been deprived of education. [...] The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Kylie T. Kliment tweeted today (Tuesday, June 14) that she met with a group of women from Herat province during her visit to Afghanistan. "Despite decades of war in Afghanistan, women are still stable," she wrote. She made the remarks during a visit to the Women's Trade Center in Herat. "Millions of children in Afghanistan have dropped out of school, a large percentage of whom are girls," he added. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) led a team to Afghanistan two days ago to closely monitor the situation of women, refugees and the human rights situation in Afghanistan."

Ava Press, Turkish organisations distribute aid to Afghan families, 5 June 2022

"SIGAR also estimated that by mid-2022, the overall number of unemployed Afghans will be between 700,000 and 900,000. More than 24 million Afghans, according to the UN, are in need of receiving humanitarian aid."

AREU, Afghanistan Covid-19 Poverty Report, 1 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Market closures and disruptions to transportation due to Covid-19 have resulted in a loss of income for farmers, small businesses, salaried workers and casual day labourers."

WHO, Director-General's address at the High-Level Welcome at the 75th World Health Assembly – 22 May 2022, 22 May 2022

"Following the Taliban takeover last year, I travelled to Afghanistan, where I met a group of women nurses who told me they had not been paid in three months, but would continue to serve their patients WHO paid their salaries so they could continue to deliver the care on which their communities depend [...]"

Afghan Voice Agency, Health Ministry Pledges to Hire More Midwives, 16 May 2022

"The Ministry of Public Health said it intends to increase the number of female professionals in health institutions to prevent maternal mortality. According to Mohammad Ishaq Sahebzada, deputy minister of finance and administration of the Ministry of Public Health, more than 38,000 midwives are working at health institutions in the country. The deputy stressed the importance of providing more employment opportunities for women in the health sector. "We promise the people and the international institutions that in the future we will increase midwives in the health sector to a level that is in line with international standards," Sahebzada said. Hela Gharshin, the director general of midwives at the Ministry of Public Health, said that due to the lack of higher education in the field of midwifery in the country, some midwives do not want to work in the field. "Our midwives in remote areas are working up to three days at a time because there is a shortage of midwives; Midwives are also subject to risk and their education is two years; Higher education in the field of midwifery is very rare," she said. Meanwhile, Saeed bin Mubarak Al Khayarin, Qatar's ambassador to Kabul, announced further assistance from his country to various sectors in Afghanistan, especially the health sector. "The government of the state of attaches great importance to Afghanistan in aspects of top security, stability, development and improvement of the humanitarian situation and will provide humanitarian support to the Afghan people," he said. Based on available numbers, 6,000 midwives are working within the Ministry of Public Health, and the shortage of professional midwives in remote areas of the country is considered a major challenge."

The Guardian 'We are worse off': Afghanistan further impoverished as women vanish from workforce, 16 May 2022

"From civil servants, teachers and doctors to journalists and business owners, loss of female workers under the Taliban has already cost the economy \$1bn. It is not only government positions that women have been forced out of. According to Reporters Without Borders, only 100 of Kabul's 700 female journalists were still working by the end of 2021. In 2019, 36% of teachers in the country were women, according World Bank data, the highest number for 20 years, but the Taliban's ban in March on education for girls forced many female educators out of work. But a report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) in January found that Afghan women's employment levels fell by an estimated 16% in the third quarter of 2021, compared with 6% for men. Women's employment was expected to be 21% lower than before the Taliban takeover by mid-2022 if current conditions continued, according to the ILO, though this does not take into account employees such as Nasira who are still paid without being allowed to work."

Afghan Voice Agency, Construction Planned for Over 130 Towns Nationwide, 15 May 2022

"The acting Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Hamdullah Namani, said the towns will have

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

government and private elements. "The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has made plans to form 131 towns across the country. The towns are governmental and non-governmental," he said. "The loans will be collected back from the of the employees based on their income," Noomani added. "We call on the Islamic Emirate to construct the town and distribute places to those people who don't have residences," said a resident. The Ministry of and Housing said that the construction of these towns will provide thousands of people with job opportunities."

Tolo News, Ministry: 7,000 Vacancies for Teachers, Other Staff, 14 May 2022

"The Ministry of Education announced vacancies for thousands of teachers in the country. At a press conference in Kabul, the Ministry of Education announced more than 7,000 vacancies for teachers and administrative staff in the education departments of eight provinces. Nearly 3,000 vacancies were reserved for women, they said.

Meanwhile, Abdul Salam Hanafi, second deputy PM, said he is seeking to raise the level of education, and that the education sector is a priority of the Islamic Emirate. He said that there has been an increase in educational institutions."

International Rescue Committee, From Humanitarian Response to Economic Recovery: recommendations for addressing acute needs and the root causes of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, 11 May 2022

"In Afghanistan, state failure and economic collapse are now the primary drivers of a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding at breakneck speed. Unemployment and poverty are now the greatest drivers of internal displacement."

Khaama, SIGAR: Since the Taliban Assumed Control of Afghanistan, 900,000 People Have Lost Their Jobs, 9 May 2022

"According to the International Labor Organization, more than 500,000 Afghan workers lost their jobs in the third quarter of 2021, and the number of people who will lose their jobs since the Taliban took control is expected to reach 700,000 to 900,000 people by mid-2022. Working women are disproportionately affected, according to SIGAR, with women's employment expected to fall by 21% by mid-2022. Since the Taliban took power, unemployment has skyrocketed, and poverty across many parts of the country has put millions of people in risk."

ToloNews, Afghan Brick Factories Shut Down as Demand Drops, 26 April 2022

"There are total of 700 brick factories in Deh-Sabz district, where dozens of workers have become jobless as some the factories have stopped their activities."

The Guardian, We had 4,000 policewomen in Afghanistan. Let them get back to work, 21 April 2022

"Despite being forced to flee, Ebtekar hopes to raise awareness on the issues facing policewomen in Afghanistan. When the Taliban took over, there were nearly 4,000 women police officers in the country, most of whom lost their jobs. A fraction were retained to manage women's prisons. The Ministry of Women Affairs and other women's support services were also dissolved. The Taliban has maintained a very small number of women as security officials, who have been reportedly called on during investigations and house raids"

Kaahma Press, Poverty Forces Desperate Families on Kabul Streets, 21 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The probe came at a time local residents express concern over growing poverty and unemployment rate across the country, saying only few roads could be seen without beggars these days – an unprecedented review on country’s overall economic situation.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Extreme Poverty, Trolley Man Burns Himself to Death in Kabul, 20 April 2022

“Spin Gul purportedly in his late 20s succumbed to his wounds in hospital after he burnt himself in Kabul on Monday, April 18, 2022. Spin Gul left behind his four children, his wife, and his elderly grandmother. The grandmother said his grandson committed suicide after being extremely impoverished following the transformation of the regime in the country.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Afghan Farmers Fear For Livelihoods As Taliban Bans Opium, 14 April 2022

“Standing in his blooming poppy field in Garni, an impoverished village on the outskirts of the provincial capital, Tarin Kowt, Jan is upset by the Taliban’s decision this month to ban poppy cultivation. He says he will be unable to feed his wife and their eight children if the Taliban prevents him from planting a poppy crop this fall.”

Associated Press, Taliban clamp down on drugs, announce ban on poppy harvest, 3 April 2022

“Afghanistan’s ruling Taliban on Sunday announced a ban on harvesting poppies, even as farmers in some parts of the country began extracting the opium from the plant that is needed for making heroin.

The Taliban warned farmers that their crops will be burned and that they can be jailed if they proceed with the harvest. The harvest and planting seasons vary across Afghanistan. In the Taliban heartland of southern Kandahar the harvesting has begun but in the east of the country some farmers are just beginning to plant their crop.

In desperately poor Afghanistan the ban seems certain to further impoverish its poorest citizens at a time when the country is in an economic free fall. (...)

Poppies are the main source of income for millions of small farmers and day laborers who can earn upwards of \$300 a month harvesting them and extracting the opium.”

The Khaama Press, Food security deteriorates as unemployment rises in Afghanistan: World Bank, 16 March 2022

"The World Bank has said that food security in Afghanistan has worsened with 70 percent of households in Afghanistan are unable to cover their food and non-food needs in 2022. The percentage was 35 in the previous year. The bank has said that people both in cities and villages are facing a decline in the quality and quantity of food as unemployment rises especially in rural areas. The report by World Bank was released on Tuesday, March 15 after conducting a household survey in Afghanistan in the fall of 2021 to assess changes in the basic living conditions in the early days of the Taliban rule. In general, the report indicates that while the Afghans are still able to find work and access some key public services, the situation is quite fragile, and a rapid and dramatic decline in welfare outcomes and access to services could occur unless salaries, at least for key services, can be restored and food security improved. In terms of employment, the report shows that employment has risen in urban areas but the level is quite low in urban areas of Afghanistan.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

“Four out of five (83%) Afghan nationals over 18 years old are unemployed. [...] In Paktya province, 62% of the population relies on daily, unskilled labor as their main source of income.”

IOM, CBNA R14 — Afghanistan — Community-Based Needs Assessment: Summary Results (November—December 2021), 2 March 2022

“Over four out of five individuals (83%) are unemployed in Afghanistan. Unemployment in some provinces is as high as 95%. These extremely high levels of unemployment, in combination with the fact that the economy is highly informal and agricultural, leaves very few opportunities in urban areas that are hosting high numbers of IDPs, migrants returning from abroad and other mobile populations. As a result of these increasingly dire economic circumstances, which are exacerbated by the withdrawal of international troops and changes in the government, Afghans are increasingly migrating abroad to Iran, Turkey and other destinations. [...] Four in five (83%) Afghan nationals over 18 years old and 74% of all males over 18 years old are unemployed. Provinces such as Kunar, Parwan, Khost, Paktia, Kabul and Logar witness the highest rates of unemployment. Provinces with lower numbers of unemployed individuals are mostly rural, remote and sparsely habited, such as Nuristan, Jawzjan, and Sar-e-Pul. [...]

Al Jazeera, Desperate Afghans sell kidneys amid poverty, starvation, 28 February 2022

“Jobless, debt-ridden, and struggling to feed his children, Nooruddin felt he had no choice but to sell a kidney – one of a growing number of Afghans willing to sacrifice an organ to save their families.

The practice has become so widespread in the western city of Herat that a nearby settlement is bleakly nicknamed “one-kidney village”.

“I had to do it for the sake of my children,” Nooruddin told AFP in the city, close to the border with Iran.

“I didn’t have any other option.”

[...]

The trickle-down effect has particularly hurt Afghans like Nooruddin, 32, who quit his factory job when his salary was slashed to 3,000 Afghanis (about \$30) soon after the Taliban’s return, mistakenly believing he would find something better.

But, with hundreds of thousands unemployed across the country, nothing else was available.

In desperation, he sold a kidney as a short-term fix.

“I regret it now,” he said outside his home, where faded clothes hang from a tree, and a plastic sheet serves as a windowpane.

“I can no longer work. I’m in pain and I cannot lift anything heavy.”

His family now relies for money on his 12-year-old son, who polishes shoes for 70 cents a day.

A kidney for \$1,500

Nooruddin was among eight people AFP spoke to who had sold a kidney to feed their families or pay off debt – some for as little as \$1,500.

In Afghanistan, however, the practice is unregulated.

“There is no law ... to control how the organs can be donated or sold, but the consent of the donor is necessary,” said Mohammad Wakil Matin, a former top surgeon at a hospital in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Mohamad Bassir Osmani, a surgeon at one of two hospitals where the majority of Herat’s transplants are performed, confirmed “consent” was the key.

“We take written consent and a video recording from them – especially from the donor,” he said, adding

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

hundreds of surgeries have been performed in Herat over the past five years.

“We have never investigated where the patient or donor comes from, or how. It’s not our job.”

The Taliban did not respond to requests by AFP for comment on the practice, but Osmani said the country’s new rulers have plans to clamp down on the trade and are forming a committee to regulate it. Afghans desperate for money are usually matched by brokers with wealthy patients, who travel to Herat from across the country – and sometimes even from India and Pakistan.

The recipient pays both the hospital fees and the donor.

[...]

On the outskirts of Herat lies Sayshanba Bazaar, a village made up of hundreds of people displaced by years of conflict.

Known as “one-kidney village”, it’s where dozens of residents have sold their organs after word spread among destitute families of the money to be made.”

TOLO News, Officials: 1000s of Afghans Cross Border With Iran Each Day, 27 February 2022

“Local officials in Herat and Nimroz provinces say that more than 3,000 people go to Iran every day because of unemployment in Afghanistan.

According to the officials, these numbers are of people who legally go to Iran from Herat and Nimroz to work, it does not include those crossing illegally.

[...]

Meanwhile, Afghans going to Iran say they face severe economic problems and have been forced to leave the country due to unemployment.

“I don’t have a job and it has been several months that we are unemployed, we are going to Iran,” said Farhad Sultani, a resident of Herat.

“There is no work here in Afghanistan, the weather is cold, we are going to Tehran to find work,” said Sultan Mir, a resident of Faryab.”

TOLO News, Public Works Employees Hold Protest Over Unpaid Salaries, 27 February 2022

“Dozens of employees of the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) held a demonstration in Kabul on Sunday to protest unpaid salaries, saying that they have not received their salaries for the past six months.

But the MoPW said these employees were working based on contracts in the NTA section of the ministry—which had been ended based on a decree of the former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani, who left Afghanistan. The decree was being enforced up to July 27 of 2021, according to the MoPW.

“Of course, the appointment of 180 employees has been authorized based on the new scheme of the MoPW,” said Hameedullah Musbah, a spokesman for the MoPW.

The protestors claiming to be the active employees of the MoPW said they are struggling with a deteriorated economic condition.

[...]

With the fall of the former Western-backed government, the employees of many government institutions have remained unpaid for a long period of time. However, the government has been gradually paying the overdue salaries of some employees.

Also many government employees have been dismissed within the past six months.”

The New Humanitarian, Afghanistan’s crises, by the numbers, 15 February 2022

“[...] Economy: Job losses have hit women harder

Costs are just one side of the food affordability equation. There are also corresponding drops in earnings

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and job losses.

Wages have fallen by up to 18 percent in the past year, the World Bank says. And a recent International Labour Organization briefing projects job losses of about 900,000 by mid-year – a 14 percent contraction. Key employment sectors have been “devastated”. The evaporation of foreign funding has seen the construction sector grind to a halt. The drought and rising production costs in the agricultural sector are adding to the food insecurity. Former government employees suddenly out of work (or unpaid in months, pre-dating the Taliban surge) are seeking other ways of earning money. But a traditional fallback, daily wage labour, is far less available.

There are distinct gender disparities. While employment levels have shrunk across the board, these have disproportionately hit women – a 16 percent contraction last year compared to 6 percent for men, with greater losses projected for 2022, according to the ILO. Women are heavily represented in the agricultural, manufacturing, and public sectors.

Taliban restrictions on women in the workforce will also have a clear impact on household consumption, economists say. These restrictions have been volatile, and differ by sector and location. But preventing women from working could cost the economy \$1 billion on top of the losses from freezes on aid and Afghanistan’s foreign reserves, according to a December study by the UN Development Programme. This amounts to about 5 percent of GDP.”

World Food Programme ‘Our presence is hope’: Call for funds as winter spells hunger for Afghanistan, 25 January 2022

“With construction, like so many other industries, at a standstill, there are few casual labour opportunities and people are resorting to selling their personal possessions – second-hand markets are full of such items, including furniture.”

ILO, ILO Brief - Employment prospects in Afghanistan: A rapid impact assessment, 19 January 2022

“More than half a million workers are estimated to have lost their job in the third quarter 2021, relative to a hypothetical scenario with no change in administration, which represents 8 per cent fewer working women and men.

Employment losses are expected to increase to nearly 700,000 by the second quarter 2022, as enterprises struggle to stay viable and work becomes scarce. If the situation of women deteriorates further and outmigration intensifies, employment losses could increase to more than 900,000 jobs by the second quarter 2022. [...]

The impact on female employment is severe

The economic crisis is harming women workers disproportionately. Even before the events of 15 August, women’s labour force participation was extremely low by global standards at 17 per cent nationwide, and 10 per cent in urban Afghanistan in 2020. 13 The majority of women's employment in 2020 was in agriculture, the manufacturing of textiles and clothes, as well as public administration and social services (table 1). These sectors are now severely affected (see next section). At the same time, women's economic opportunities are further limited by newly imposed restrictions on women’s economic participation in some areas. As a result, women’s employment is estimated to have decreased by 16 per cent in the third quarter 2021, relative to the hypothetical scenario without the change in administration (figure 2). By comparison, male employment is estimated to have declined by 6 per cent. Assuming a baseline scenario in which women’s labour force participation remains considerably below the rate seen before 15 August, the number of employed women could be 21 per cent lower in the second quarter 2022.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Al Jazeera, From teacher to shoe-shier: Afghan economic crisis spares few, 10 December 2021

““I turned to polishing shoes when I saw that my kids were hungry,” said Ahmadi, a mother of five who did not want to give her family name. [...] After 10 years of teaching, with a husband employed as a cook in a private company and a daughter with a job as a clerk at a government agency, they enjoyed a modest prosperity that was swept away in a matter of weeks. With girls’ schools closed indefinitely, her job was first to go, and her husband and then her daughter lost theirs soon after. A son studying computer science was forced to give up his course when the family could no longer afford the tuition fees. [...] “We are spending days in hunger right now, and for the time being, there is no one in our family who could financially support us all,” she said.”

International Crisis Group, Beyond Emergency Relief: Averting Afghanistan’s Humanitarian Catastrophe, 6 December 2021

“The World Bank notes that the collapse of public spending has had a knock-on effect on the private sector, hurting the services and construction sectors that give jobs to 2.5 million people, accounting for 77 per cent of urban employment.³² [...] 32 Crisis Group interview, World Bank official, September 2021.”

DTM, DTM: EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING, 29 November 2021

“CFPs were also asked to rank their community’s most urgent needs. Cash and food were identified as the first priority needs, which aligns with reported community shocks in the past month. These include reduced income (94%), loss of employment (96%) and food price increase (95%) (see below). Drinking water and immediate healthcare were second and third priority needs, which is reflected in the reported risk of displacement due to water insecurity (55%) and the majority of communities without a health clinic or hospital (69%).”

IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

“Impacts on Employment: The political transition in August 2021 resulted in significant disruptions to public finances, services and international assistance and had enormous impacts on employment, particularly for women. The political transition also led to over 500,000 Afghan security force members losing their jobs while civil servants, who comprise a significant proportion of the urban population, have been unpaid for over three months. Overall, the economic crisis that followed the political transition has negatively impacted the labour market in both urban and rural areas. The World Food Programme’s (WFP) market and price monitoring showed a drastic decline in the number of days work available for casual labour in urban areas: these were two days per week in July, dropping to 1.8 days in August and to only one day of work in September, a level which is 50% lower compared to both July 2021 and September 2020. According to the 2021 SFSA, 95% of the population reported reduced incomes, out of which 76% reported a significant decrease (83% for urban and 72% for rural households) compared to the previous year. The main reasons for decreased income were reduced employment (42%) and conflict (41%).”

BBC, Afghanistan crisis: G20 leaders pledge to avert economic catastrophe, 13 October 2021

“The takeover of this country has caused a massive shock to an economy that was just about surviving. [...]

Many businesses shut down because their owners fled the country fearing for their lives. Many of those who had jobs haven't received salaries for months.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

With no cash in the market, there has been a sharp rise in prices of day to day necessities including food. An already difficult situation created by war and drought has become much worse.

Women who had jobs and supported their families can no longer work and are now entirely dependent on handouts. [...] Development aid given by foreign countries and agencies to Afghanistan, which helped to put cash into the economy, is all but frozen. This, on the ground, means that people who worked on development projects are out of jobs."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Crippling economy closing Afghan media outlets, 12 October 2021

"This comes after reports emerged that at least half of all Afghan [sic] have shut down, mainly due to financial problems.

In addition, a large percentage of journalists and media workers have not been paid for at least two months.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan said the lack of financial resources has affected hundreds of journalists.

"Following the IEA takeover in Afghanistan, some media closed down while others have complained about (restrictions on) access to information," said Nasir Noori, a member of [sic].

"When we try to continue our journalistic affairs, we have few information sources. We call on the IEA to provide sources for the media," he said.

Some media outlets have continued to operate despite facing serious financial constraints.

"All journalists in Faryab province are jobless. ' activities are being restricted," said Nabil Niyash, a journalist.

"The media has financial problems in [sic]. Some media organizations have remained open but might close down because there are no advertisements," said another journalist.

Media and freedom of speech has been a major achievement in Afghanistan in the past 20 years, but the future for this sector is uncertain.

IEA officials meanwhile said they will help resolve problems regarding the financial situation in the long term.

"We will try our best to create a market for the media. It will be beneficial for the media," said , a member of the IEA's cultural committee.

Recently, Afghanistan's journalist union said that 70% of media outlets have closed down in Afghanistan in recent weeks and more face closure unless the international community provide help"

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, As Afghan Media Struggles Under Taliban, Jobless Journalists Grow Desperate, 11 October 2021

"Many media outlets across Afghanistan have shut down in the wake of the Taliban takeover, with some journalists leaving the profession or the country out of fear of reprisals. Gul Ahmad Almas is one former freelance journalist whose life has been upended by the new regime. With no income from reporting, he is dependent on hand-to-mouth work collecting brush to sell as fuel"

Khaama Press, School graduates of 2000-2020, of no use: Taliban's higher education minister, 4 October 2021

"The acting minister of the higher education of the Taliban Abdul Baqi Haqqani said that those who have graduated from high schools during the past twenty years are of no use.

The acting minister is meant by the graduates who have studied during the non-Taliban era when they were fighting the US-backed governments of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Earlier, the acting minister of higher education had said that the Master's and Ph.D. holders of modern studies are less valuable than those who have studied in madrasas and have religious studies in Afghanistan.

The statement of Haqqani comes as the period-2000-2020- is said to be one of the most important and rich eras when it comes to the level of education in Afghanistan."

BBC News, Afghanistan, There's security but no money': Afghans settle into life under Taliban rule, 17 September 2021

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

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

Medical care

Are there any challenges to accessing medical services?

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: The Taliban's War With IS-K; A Pakistani Women-Only Park Closes; Afghans Deported From Tajikistan, 26 August 2022

"Passports And Taliban Bribes Radio Azadi reports on the complaints by Afghans of the hurdles they face in getting a passport from the Taliban government. Issuing identity documents is a significant revenue stream for the militants. "We don't have any money and do not know any Taliban officials," said Shakila, who has been trying to get a passport for her family members since the Taliban takeover a year ago. "We have been knocking on the doors of the passport office every day." A Kabul resident says he has been trying to get a passport for a sick relative so he can travel outside the country for treatment. But he has been waiting for more than one month. "Only people who have \$1,000 or \$1,500 [to pay in bribes] can get passports," he said. "The rest of us just queue up with no luck."

MSF (Medecins Sans Frontieres), MSF's emergency project in Paktika province comes to a close, 25 August 2022

"During the night of 21 and 22 June, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake shook Khost and Paktika provinces in the east of Afghanistan. Spera District (Khost province), Gayan (Paktika province) and Bermal (Paktika province) were the most affected. [...] "On our arrival we saw that the situation was precarious. Families and communities had lost almost everything, and they were living under the open sky. We realised that the closest healthcare facilities were almost 150 kilometres away," says Dr Taufeeq, who was a member of the earthquake intervention team. [...] Trucks of medical, logistic, and water and sanitation materials also arrived from Kabul. After the first few days, the number of people coming to the clinic with acute watery diarrhoea started to increase and so isolation tents were also set up nearby. "Within the first 72

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

hours we were able to provide basic healthcare and trauma care to the affected population,” says Gaetan Drossart, Afghanistan Country Representative. “And the decision to close our activities after a few weeks was taken given the emergency nature of our response and the fact that other organisations were increasing their activities in Bermal.” “But, access to healthcare in the area needs to be improved in a longer-term, sustainable way,” he says.” “

Khaama Press, Afghanistan Has Highest Maternal Mortality Rate in Asia-Pacific: UNFPA, 17 August 2022
“The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has voiced concern over the rise in maternal mortality during childbirth in Afghanistan, noting that Afghanistan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the Asia-Pacific region. According to the UNFPA report released on Wednesday, August 17, without immediate and long-term efforts for maternal health, there will be 51,000 more maternal deaths by 2025. [...] According to statistics, 396 pregnant women in Afghanistan died in 2018 out of 100,000 live births, a considerable decline from previous years, which is almost half of the figures this year. Access to health care is also impeded by the Taliban’s restrictions on the mobility of women. This comes as Afghanistan is experiencing the world’s “worst” humanitarian crisis and Afghanistan is at the pinnacle of hunger, poverty, and unemployment.”

Ariana News, Afghanistan makes progress toward polio eradication, 16 August 2022
“Wild poliovirus transmission in Afghanistan is currently at its lowest level in history. Fifty six children were paralysed by wild poliovirus in 2020. In 2021, the number fell to four. This year to date, only one child has been paralysed by the virus, giving the country an extraordinary opportunity to end polio, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported.”

WHO, Afghanistan makes progress toward polio eradication but challenges remain, 15 August 2022
“One year on from Afghanistan’s transition of power in August 2021, the polio eradication programme in Afghanistan has made critical gains – but the job is far from finished. Wild poliovirus transmission in Afghanistan is currently at its lowest level in history. [...] This year to date, only one child has been paralysed by the virus, giving the country an extraordinary opportunity to end polio.
The resumption of nationwide polio vaccination campaigns targeting 9.9 million children has been a critical step. Since 2018, local-level bans on polio vaccination activities in some districts controlled by the Taliban had significantly reduced the programme’s ability to vaccinate every child across the country. With access to the entire country following the August transition, seven nationwide vaccination campaigns took place between November 2021 and June 2022, and a sub national campaign targeting 6.7 million children in 28 provinces took place in July. Of the 3.6 million children who had been inaccessible to the programme since 2018, 2.6 million were reached during the November, December and January campaigns. With improving reach to previously inaccessible children during subsequent campaigns, the number of missed children has been reduced to 0.7 million.
[...]

Although the number of children paralysed by polio has reduced significantly in Afghanistan, the threat of a resurgence remains and the programme faces significant challenges. While access has improved across the country, reaching every child remains a challenge in some of the highest risk areas leaving immunity gaps and, with them, children vulnerable to polio.

On 24 February, eight polio workers were killed in targeted attacks in the country’s north, not the first time polio workers had come under attack in the course of their life saving work. Four of those killed were

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

women. Female polio workers play a critical role in the programme, building community trust and reaching all children."

Gandhara, UN Agencies Assail Taliban For Year of Deteriorating Rights in 'all aspects' of girls', women's lives, 15 August 2022

"Women are still excluded from public life and many jobs, and girls are routinely forbidden to attend schools, in addition to strict controls on movement and attire.

"It has been a year since the Taliban takeover in #Afghanistan," the UN said in a tweet introducing the report. "During this time, women and girls have seen increasing disrespect for their #HumanRights including access to health care and education."

In May, the UN Security Council issued a statement of "deep concern" about the erosion of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan and called on the Taliban to "swiftly reverse" their policies and "to adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay."

Human Rights Watch (HRW)'s Afghanistan researcher warned recently that the Afghan people were "living a human rights nightmare, victims of both Taliban cruelty and international apathy."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Three Children in Southern Afghanistan Succumb to Cholera Disease, 14 August 2022

"According to Abdul Hakim Hakimi, the Taliban's director of the public health department for Zabul province..., three children passed away from cholera in the Akazi region of Zabul province. According to him, this tragedy occurred on Saturday night in areas of Zabul province that were remote from the province's capital since medical teams were not sent... This occurs while a number of disease outbreaks, including Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD), measles, Congo fever, cholera, dengue fever, and Covid-19, have been reported in Afghanistan recently by the World Health Organization (WHO). These outbreaks, especially cholera has contributed to the fatalities spiking the cholera-related death toll in Afghanistan."

Deutsche Welle, Afghanistan is starving and the West is partly to blame, 14 August 2022

"More than a million children are severely malnourished and half of Afghanistan's population is going hungry. The humanitarian catastrophe is being made worse by ongoing sanctions against the Taliban... According to the WFP, about 20 million people — half the population — require urgent food aid. But there is not enough money, according to the WFP country director for Afghanistan, Mary-Ellen McGroarty. At an online press conference in July, she explained that decisions on who to feed are made based on the individual's current nutritional situation or their particular vulnerability. McGroarty spoke of an "extremely difficult and often heartbreaking" decision-making process." "The health sector is collapsing, too. Samira Sayed Rahman, who works for the aid organization International Rescue Committee (IRC), told DW what she saw when she visited a hospital in the eastern province of Paktia: There were not enough doctors, not enough nurses. "The doctors we spoke with have not been paid for the past six months," she said. "The wards were full of women cradling malnourished children. In the neonatal unit, three babies had to share an incubator."'" "Humanitarian groups must therefore adopt unconventional methods. In an interview with DW, Elke Gottschalk, regional director for Asia for the German aid organization

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Welthungerhilfe, described how money transfers must be processed through alternative channels, called hawala networks. It works like this: Welthungerhilfe transfers money to the account of a hawala dealer, known as a hawaladar, in a third country. "This agent then makes sure that money arrives in Kabul — in cash. We count it, then it can be used."...However, this is "not a reliable and sustainable method."

ICRC, Afghanistan: A health care system on life support, 13 August 2022

"Access to health care remains a major concern for communities across Afghanistan. To access specialized care, patients often travel several hours, sometimes along dangerous roads in areas that are still heavily contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war."

IOM, No woman left behind: exceptional efforts increase health care access for Afghan women, 12 August 2022

"Since August 2021, accessing basic health care has been carrying more risks for women in Afghanistan. Many suffer in silence from various diseases while being prevented from seeking the necessary medical support. Women are disproportionately impacted by barriers to accessing health services due to restricted decision-making and mobility, as well as gender norms that prohibit them from interacting with anyone outside of their family members. As a result, most of the services are received by men, and women are not part of decision-making processes."

UNFPA, New midwife's first call of duty: Emergency response to earthquake 'Women were in shock, many of them were pregnant', 10 August 2022

"More than a thousand people died during the earthquake, which affected about 362,000 people and damaged or destroyed some 4,500 homes. UNFPA estimates that the affected population include almost 87,000 women of childbearing age (15-49), with more than 8,000 who are pregnant."

International Rescue Committee (IRC), One year on: How the IRC expanded our impact in Afghanistan, 8 August 2022

"In 2021, the IRC supported health facilities around the country by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to clinics to prepare them against COVID-19. We also trained health care workers on infection prevention measures and community volunteers to identify symptoms and refer people to clinics for treatment. Now, the IRC is supporting 62 health clinics in 11 provinces, and programming includes the delivery of malnutrition services, responding to deadly cholera outbreaks, and maternal and reproductive health.

We also have a network of 31 mobile health teams, who can travel to remote communities to deliver lifesaving medical assistance. After a June earthquake hit a remote area in the southeast, IRC staff formed an all-female mobile health team that was able to quickly deploy to people who had been injured and provide first aid support.

"The proudest point in my job is serving my people—the people of Afghanistan," said Amna Gul, an IRC health manager who helped create the all-female team. "Especially the women who are not able to go to health care facilities because of transportation, financial conditions and Mahram [needing a male chaperone to receive care from a male health care worker]."

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan Established a Midwifery Training Center in 4 provinces of Afghanistan, 3 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“SCA established a midwifery training center in Parwan, Nuristan, Samangan and Panjshir Provinces where the entrance examination for the Community Midwifery Education (CME) was conducted by the technical and management team of SCA in Parwan and Panjshir provinces.”

“[...] SCA recorded 1.77 million patient visits in 2021 with 973 000 of these were women, trained 25 midwives and 24 nurses and built two child and maternity health centers. SCA has taken over responsibility for all healthcare services in Nuristan province, one of Afghanistan’s poorest and most vulnerable provinces in terms of healthcare.”

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), [UNICEF Afghanistan Twitter](#), 3 August 2022

“After the recent earthquake there is an increased risk of an outbreak of diseases like Cholera in Spera District in Khost”.

NRC, [Unprecedented flash floods batter rural Afghanistan](#), 3 August 2022

“This year’s unseasonal flooding is catastrophic for impacted communities in Afghanistan. The scale of destruction is unparalleled. Flash floods have swept away entire sections of roads and other critical infrastructure - bridges, wheat mills, hospitals and schools. People have lost their businesses, and the entire families have seen their homes and acres of farmland destroyed.

“We estimate that more than 18,000 people have been affected, many of whom were already struggling to survive. Over 40 people have lost their lives to date. The disaster has hit nine of Afghanistan’s provinces, including Khost and Paktika, areas which only just witnessed a devastating earthquake in June.”

The Khaama Press News Agency, [One-Kilometer-Long Surface Fault Occurs in Central Afghanistan](#), 30 July 2022

“According to a USAID report, merely 42% of Afghans have access to clean drinking water, and only 27% of those living in rural areas have access to sanitation facilities.”

“As a result, the diarrheal disease kills an estimated 85,000 Afghan children under the age of five each year.”

Khaama Press, [Over 13 Million Afghan Children Need Humanitarian Assistance: Save the Children Report](#), 27 July 2022

“According to a study from the Save the Children organization released today, Wednesday, July 27, 18.9 million people, including 9.2 million children in Afghanistan, are anticipated to experience an emergency or critical food insecurity between June and November 2022.

Save the Children’s report cited the United Nations Development Program stating that 97% of the Afghan population faces the prospect of living in poverty and falling below the poverty line.

Acute malnutrition affects 1.1 million Afghan children under the age of five, according to the report.

Covid-19, measles, acute watery diarrhea (AWD), and dengue fever are among the numerous disease emergencies Afghanistan is currently dealing with.

A significant contraction of the economy, rising poverty, and financial instability, as well as high unemployment and high food and agricultural input prices, have been caused by the rapid drop in international grant support, loss of access to offshore assets, and disruption of financial links.

In addition, the Ukraine crisis has had a significant impact on how much food costs rise and become out of reach for many Afghans.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

With the rebels-turned-politicians behind the wheel, Afghanistan's unstable economy is impacted by the Taliban's political isolation and economic sanctions, which exacerbated the country's already-impoverished citizens' poverty, unemployment, and hunger."

Khaama Press, Over 7,000 People Contract Cholera with 12 Cholera-Related Deaths in Northern Afghanistan, 21 July 2022

"According to Jawzjan health officials quoted by Bakhtar News Agency on Thursday, cholera disease has spread in the Jangal Arigh village in the Mardyan district of this province.

7,000 cases of cholera have reportedly been confirmed in Jawzjan up to this point, according to the provincial public health officials of which only 2644 people are reportedly being attended to at the moment.

In addition, as the weather warms and floods rise, the cholera disease has spread throughout the southern regions of Afghanistan. In the three southern provinces of Afghanistan, approximately 5,000 people have contracted cholera, according to official statistics, prompting the health officials to seek aiding organizations' assistance. (...)"

AVA, 40% of pregnant women in Afghanistan do not have access to obstetric services, 20 July 2022

"CARE International Institute has published a report saying that about 40% of pregnant women in Afghanistan do not have proper access to prenatal health care. This institution added that it is estimated that 638 women die every year in every 100,000 births. According to this health organization, about 40 percent of pregnant women do not have prenatal care and there are few health workers who have training skills in this field."

Tolo News, Cases of Seasonal Diseases Surge in Kabul, Doctors Say, 17 July 2022

"Other seasonal diseases include cold, malaria and measles, said Mohammad Naeem Akbari, a physician at Infectious Diseases Hospital in Kabul. "In this season of the year, diarrhea cases have spiked. Around 1,000 to 1,500 people are brought to the (infectious diseases) hospital in Kabul and every doctor visits around 50 to 60 patients a day," said Abdulrahman Jawad, a doctor. Warm weather and inattention to personal hygiene are the main reasons for the spike in cases of seasonal diseases, doctors said."

ToloNews, Committee Formed to Address Shortage of Medicine, 14 July 2022

"The institution acknowledged the shortage of drugs in the cancer treatment sector and said that efforts to provide these drugs are ongoing...Meanwhile, some Kabul residents complained about the increase medicine's prices, saying they cannot easily find medicine with reasonable prices in the country. "I went to three to four pharmacies to buy medicine in the Da Afghanistan area of Kabul, it was too pricey and finally I bought the medicine costing 4400 Afs," said Ziaullah, a resident of Kabul. Afghanistan's Food and Drug Administration called on businesspeople to import drugs of sufficient quality to the country."

Khaama, Cholera-Related Death Toll Surges in Central and Southern Afghanistan, 14 July 2022

"[Daikundi] cited locals who claimed that 11 people had died from the disease, although he added that this number had not been officially confirmed. Furthermore, 590 people have been diagnosed with the disease in the province of Helmand's Baghran district, according to local Taliban officials."

AVA, Shortage of Medicine in Afghanistan, 14 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"[...] Kabul residents complained about the increase medicine's prices, saying they cannot easily find medicine with reasonable prices in the country."

ToloNews, Cases of Severe Diarrhea Spike in Afghanistan: Doctors, 13 July 2022

"Every day around 100 patients who are infected with severe diarrhea come to the hospital, there are men and women among the patients, we are trying to treat them all, but the number is increasing day by day," said Faridullah Omari, physicians at Kabul's Antani Hospital... "Over 100 cases of the disease have been recorded in the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar," said Sharafat Zaman, a spokesman of the Ministry of Public Health. This comes as the Ministry of Public Health said that more than 15 people have died as a result of severe cholera in Helmand province alone."

AVA, Cholera disease spreads in Zabul, 13 July 2022

"[...] other parts of Zabul witnessed the outbreak of cholera, an event in which hundreds of people were infected and some died."

"[...] health officials in Helmand reported that 20 died of the cholera disease in that province and more than 120 people were hospitalized."

AVA, The difficult situation of the displaced people of Balkhab, 13 July 2022

"As a result of the conflict between Mawlawi Mehdi and the Islamic Emirate in Balkhab district, many families have been displaced from their homes and have settled in a bad situation near the "Band Pitab" mountains. It has been said that most of these people are residents of "Glorz" region."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), 4 Cholera-Related Deaths Reported in Southern Afghanistan, 13 July 2022

"In Shahwali Kot district of Kandahar province, in southern Afghanistan, 60 people have reportedly contracted cholera, according to health officials.

Four people died among those who were ill, according to Mohammad Haqbin, head of a health facility in the Shahwali Kot district, who also told that the disease is caused by drinking contaminated water.

According to the Taliban officials, the disease has also spread in Helmand province, also in southern Afghanistan.

There are already 590 persons affected with this disease in Helmand province's Baghran district, with almost 18 deaths associated with the disease outbreak.

Officials from the Ministry of Public Health stated that the cholera outbreak has been recorded in the districts of Baghran and Shahwali Kot and has been associated with the consumption of contaminated food and unclean water.

There have also been fatalities related to the cholera outbreak in the Zabul province's Sewri and Day Chopan districts.

The situation in Helmand and Kandahar provinces appear critical as local sources say hospitals are overwhelmed with patients."

AVA, Severe Diarrhea Spike in Afghanistan, 13 July 2022

"Physicians at Kabul's Antani Hospital said that as the weather is getting warmer the number of patients infected with severe diarrhea has surged in some provinces [...] more than 100 patients come to the hospital every day [...] lack of access to clean water and healthy food are among the reasons that this disease surged."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Every day around 100 patients who are infected with severe diarrhea come to the hospital, there are men and women among the patients, we are trying to treat them all, but the number is increasing day by day," said Faridullah Omari, physicians at Kabul's Antani Hospital. "One day before Eid, we had 21 cases, on the first day of Eid 28 cases of severe diarrhea were recorded, on the second day of Eid 35 cases were recorded and on the third day of Eid 37 cases were recorded in the hospital," said Farida Qadri, a physician at Kabul's Antani Hospital. Meanwhile, a number of patients who came to the hospital for treatment said that the rise in the disease is due to economic problems. "One day before Eid, I drank a glass of sugarcane juice. The next morning, I had diarrhea. Later, I took medicine, but it did not help," said Abdul Basir, the patient. "Over 100 cases of the disease have been recorded in the provinces of Helmand and Kandahar," said Sharafat Zaman, a spokesman of the Ministry of Public Health. "This comes as the Ministry of Public Health said that more than 15 people have died as a result of severe cholera in Helmand province alone."

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), Cholera kills 20, infects dozens on Daikundi-Helmand border, 12 July 2022

"About 20 people have died of cholera which is spreading fast in Nawa Ghari village on the border between Helmand and Daikundi provinces"

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), 20 children died from cholera in Helman's Baghran district, 11 July 2022

"Twenty children have died from cholera disease in the Baghran district of southern Helmand province, an official said on Monday.

Information Department Assistant Director Mawlawi Mohammad Qasim Riyaz told Pajhwok Afghan News over 120 children infected by the cholera virus in the past two days out of which 20 died."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan) Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Emergency Earthquake Response Plan (Jul - Sep 2022), 30 June 2022

- "Staffing of female humanitarians is particularly difficult given pre-existing limited numbers of women staff and restrictions on women's movements without a Mahram."
- "Staff are further stretched with pre-existing emergency response priorities in the east, central and south eastern regions, including due to AWD outbreak, measles outbreak, and pervasive acute food insecurity."
- "In Paktika, one health facility was fully damaged, and two are partially damaged. In Khost, one health facility is partially damaged. People's access to functioning health facilities is also compromised due to roads and transportation challenges."
- "The Health facilities and Emergency Room Departments are overwhelmed with patients while operating with limited capacity."
- "There are limited stocks for medicines and a healthy supply of medicines, medical supplies and equipment is required."
- "... disruptions to health services as well as disrupted access to markets and lack of food or separation from parents, will have a detrimental impact particularly on children under 5, if not rapidly addressed. Furthermore, psychosocial risks and risks of unsolicited distribution of Breastmilk Substitute

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

(BMS) may affect appropriate infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, i.e., breastfeeding, and complementary feeding."

- "Past admission data shows that the nutrition situation in the earthquake affected areas was already concerning."
- "Sudden onset disasters affect women, girls and other vulnerable groups in terms of vulnerabilities and exposure to violence including physical injury and through compromised dignity. Decreased access to lifesaving protection and GBV services for women and girls is also expected. Exacerbated/ increased risk of GBV, and exacerbated risk of negative coping strategies are also high amidst such shocks."

ToloNews, Residents Complain of Increased Trash Across Kabul City, 10 July 2022

Residents said that some people throw the trash of the animals sacrificed in the feast in social areas instead of in the trash.

"The people are responsible for this. Instead of throwing it in trash cans, they throw it on the side of the street," said Meer Alam, a resident of Kabul.

[...]

"Meanwhile, health officials said that the increase of trash in social areas in hot weather causes severe health issues.

"Unfortunately, as part of the feast sacrifice, throwing out the remains of animals harms the environment, it causes pneumonia and skin diseases," said Ahmad Shikib Zaheer, a doctor. "

IRC, IRC provides emergency health services to families affected by Afghanistan earthquake amid ongoing economic collapse, 29 June 2022

"Estimates that between 700 - 800 families are sleeping in the open air in the worst-affected areas, having lost their homes or too fearful of further tremors to go back inside, have led to concerns that many people are vulnerable to risks such as family separation, abuse or violence. Many families are attempting to travel to the nearby Paktia region in an effort to access medical treatment, with local medical services - already under enormous strain from the ongoing economic crisis - unable to cope."

Care, CARE mobile health teams on the ground assisting earthquake survivors in Afghanistan, 23 June 2022

"Dr Anwer notes: "Alongside physical injuries, we are very worried about the immediate and longer-term psychological impacts of the earthquake on survivors and those living in the area who are processing the trauma of the event and loss of loved ones. Providing them with mental health support, alongside other medical assistance, as they deal with this trauma is crucial. Many of these people were already struggling to provide financially for their families due to soaring prices and inflation, and extreme levels of hungry before this latest crisis." Reports suggest that many of those affected have been women and children. Most are sheltering in makeshift tents or living with neighbors as homes and livelihoods have been completely destroyed. "Also of concern, is the potential spread of cholera across the affected communities as water sources are damaged or polluted and sanitation facilities destroyed. Cholera was already endemic in the Afghanistan and cases have been reported to be on the rise even before the earthquake. It is crucial we act quickly to avert a new major outbreak of waterborne diseases," adds Dr Anwer."

BBC News, Afghanistan quake: Gyan clinic with five beds for 500 injured patients, 23 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Gyan is one of the worst-hit areas. Many people remain trapped under the rubble [...]

International development agencies set up the clinic there a couple of years ago. It was meant to deal with minor health conditions and refer people to hospitals in major cities for more significant treatment. It had no accident and emergency department.

Since the hard-line Islamist Taliban took power across the country last August, many international aid agencies have left the country. The medical system has been dealing with severe shortages of supplies and staff.

When the Taliban's acting district governor toured Gyan on Tuesday, people shouted at him, telling him to leave, a volunteer from a neighbouring district told the BBC.

"The Taliban are not capable of dealing with this disaster. There is no system in place," the volunteer, who did not want to be named, said.

"And we cannot be hopeful for international help. The world has forgotten Afghanistan."

Even before the Taliban takeover, the country's emergency services in its larger towns and cities had limited capacity to respond to natural disasters. There were few aircraft and helicopters available.

According to Paktika's medical authorities, there is a severe shortage of painkillers and antibiotics in the region."

UNHCR, 2021 Multi sectorial Rapid Assessments Analysis, June 2022

"With the public healthcare system on the verge of collapse, costs related to obtaining medicines and treatment emerge as significant problems. Costs of transport to access health facilities, distance and availability of clinics are additional barriers in accessing to health care. These problems are largely similar between male and female headed households and IDPs and IDP returnees."

Tolo News, Afghan Earthquake: Officials Say Transfer of the Wounded Challenging, 21 June 2022

"The transfer of scores of those wounded in the earthquake in southwestern Afghanistan has turned challenging for the rescue teams due to the high number of the injured, health officials in Paktika said, vowing to manage the situation at their best. The officials said that many of the wounded have been sent to health centers and hospitals in Paktika and Khost provinces. Hekmatullah, the public health director for Paktika, said the casualties and the number of the wounded might increase as almost all villages in Barmal and Gayan districts of Paktika have been destroyed. "So far, all villages have been destroyed and it is not clear how many of them are wounded and how many of them have been martyred," he said. "These districts are very remote and their roads are unconstructed. It takes three to six hours for our medical teams to reach the affected areas. We also need a helicopter to ensure quick transfer of the wounded." Paktika residents said that the bumpy roads have interrupted the rescue operations for the survivors of the deadly earthquake."

UNCHR, 2021 Multisectorial Rapid Assessments Analysis, 21 June 2022

"A number of considerations arise in relation to accessing healthcare. With the public health system on the verge of collapse, costs related obtaining medicines and treatment emerge as significant problems. Costs of transport to access health facilities, distance and availability of clinics are additional barriers in accessing to healthcare. These problems are largely similar between male and female headed households and IDPs and IDP returnees."

AVA, Poverty in Afghanistan / The Red Cross called for 80 million francs in emergency aid, 16 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has released a report on Afghanistan today (Thursday, June 16) stating that due to the humanitarian situation, it has extended its emergency request from 36 million francs to 80 million francs by 31 December 2023. The Red Cross has called for help for 2 million people in 34 provinces; the figure, which the organization believes makes up 10 percent of Afghanistan's affected population. The committee went on to say that drought, severe economic and health crises have affected the entire territory of Afghanistan. According to the Red Cross, restrictions on the participation of women and minority groups, and displacement inside and outside the borders have added to this difficult situation. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) further noted that disruptions in the public service system have weakened investment in Afghanistan. "More than half of children under the age of five are expected to experience acute malnutrition," the Red Cross added. Unemployment, a weak health system, gaps in the health system, education, energy and public services are other factors that put pressure on people. This urgent call for help to the people of Afghanistan was made by the International Committee of the Red Cross at a time when Afghanistan is facing unprecedented unemployment, poverty and hunger following recent developments."

AVA, Lahore University, MoPH sign cooperation agreement, 15 June 2022

"Afghan Minister of Public Health H.E. Dr. Qalandar Ebad and a team from University of Lahore signed a Letter of Understanding for assistance in running M. A. Jinnah Hospital Kabul and upgrade its facilities to make it a teaching hospital," Ahmad Khan tweeted on Tuesday. He said: "The cost has not been estimated yet because it is an ongoing project, but Lahore University provides monthly assistance with medical equipment, technical equipment and training for the hospital's doctors." The IEA's Ministry of Public Health welcomed the university's move to increase the hospital's technical and human resources' capacity. However, Ebad said they did not sign the MoU with the ambassador of Pakistan to Kabul nor with the Pakistan government. He said the MoU was with the university. "We didn't sign this agreement with the ambassador of Pakistan but with the hospital delegation from Lahore. The delegation from Lahore wants to make the hospital professional, technical and capable," Ebad said. In addition to improving the hospital and its services, the university will also pay the salaries of staff and other expenses. The non-payment of salaries over the past few months has been a serious cause of concern for staff at the hospital. According to them, they have faced serious financial pressure due to not having received salaries, which were paid by the former government. "We are asking the (new) government to pay us our salaries because we are facing countless problems," said Abdul Ghafoor, a health worker at the hospital. According to the IEA officials, this type of cooperation will be extended to a number of other hospitals that were built and supported by Pakistan in the last few years.

Ariana News, EU signs deal with Bavarian Nordic for delivery of monkeypox vaccine, 15 June 2022

"The European Commission on Tuesday said it had signed a deal with Danish biotech firm Bavarian Nordic (BAVA.CO) for the delivery of around 110,000 doses of monkeypox vaccine. The agreement marks the first time that the EU budget is used for the direct purchase of vaccines and would make the shots rapidly available to all EU member states, Norway and Iceland, the commission said. Around 900 cases of monkeypox have been reported in 19 EU countries, Norway and Iceland since May 18."

AVA, UNAMA's outgoing head meets with Haqqani, 12 June 2022

"In a series of tweets Saturday night Lyons said that in a meeting with Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting minister of interior, she emphasized the need to fight terrorism and narcotics and to strengthen cooperation for humanitarian operations. She also said there was a need to work together to fight the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

recent cholera outbreak in the country.”

AREU, [Afghanistan Covid-19 Poverty Report](#), 1 June 2022

"Access to health facilities is widely reported, though treatment costs and transportation disruptions have had an impact on people seeking treatment. Many respondents sought treatment, though most emphasised the effect of the costs of these treatments on their households' economic security, as well as lost time in employment and day labour. One respondent reported avoiding treatment due to misinformation about the dangers of attending a health facility for Covid-19."

UNFPA, [UNFPA Afghanistan Humanitarian Updates - First Quarter 2022](#), 29 May 2022

[click on the hyperlink to see infographic and information on reproductive health services]

UNFPA, [Afghanistan's Family Health Houses: Evidence of Life-Saving Impact](#), 29 May 2022

"Through the Family Health House programme, UNFPA and its partners have developed a long needed solution for women and their children in rural Afghanistan, where they far too often die in childbirth or suffer lifelong consequences of pregnancy-related complications. The FHHs have proven their efficiency and sustainability. When Afghanistan's health system faced collapse during the post August 2021 crisis, the FHHs were the only facilities that provided health services in the remote areas of the country."

UNICEF, [Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report # 5 1-30 April 2022](#), 26 May 2022

"Measles cases continue to rise with 41,085 cases and 270 deaths since the start of the year, as do acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) cases with a heightened risk of cholera outbreaks as the weather warms.

- UNICEF continues to increase its AWD/Cholera preparedness and prevention activities reaching 299,431 people with AWD/Cholera messaging and 328,130 people with critical hygiene supplies.
- Over 4.6 million people were reached at UNICEF supported primary health care facilities including 1.52 million children under-five and 219,245 persons with disabilities.
- During the reporting period, 40,758 children were treated for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) - a 14% increase since March.
- UNICEF-supported mobile health and nutrition teams reached around 130,000 people in remote and hard to reach areas in April.
- With UNICEF support more than 175,000 children and caregivers received life-saving child protection services including psycho-social support and case-management."

WHO, [Director-General's report to Member States at the 75th World Health Assembly – 23 May 2022](#), 23 May 2022

"Our dream of a polio-free world is tantalisingly close, with four cases of wild poliovirus reported so far this year in Afghanistan and Pakistan [...]"

WHO, [Director-General's address at the High-Level Welcome at the 75th World Health Assembly – 22 May 2022](#), 22 May 2022

"Following the Taliban takeover last year, I travelled to Afghanistan, where I met a group of women nurses who told me they had not been paid in three months, but would continue to serve their patients WHO paid their salaries so they could continue to deliver the care on which their communities depend [...] It's

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

no coincidence that the final frontier for eradicating polio is in the most insecure regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan."

Ariana News, 400 confirmed cases of cholera in Zabul: Health Officials, 24 May 2022

"The lack of access to health facilities, poverty and unemployment are said to be the major causes of the increase in the number of cholera cases. [...] The cholera surge comes as Afghanistan is already grappling with the challenges of drought, poverty and an economic crisis. Afghanistan is in the grips of one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world and international organizations have warned of the collapsing healthcare system. The country is also facing multiple outbreaks of disease, including COVID-19, measles, and diarrhea, as well as acute malnutrition."

Ariana News, Eshkamish district residents voice concerns about infrastructure, service delivery problems, 17 May 2022

"Residents of Eshkamish district of Takhar province have raised concerns about the lack of facilities in the area stating there is a severe shortage of medicine at clinics, and not enough schools and a poor electricity supply. They have in turn called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to establish the facilities so as to provide basic public services. Local officials have said they are prioritizing the needs of residents and looking for ways to resolve the problems. According to locals, damaged roads, the lack of electricity, lack of medicine at clinics and a shortage of school buildings are the main problems in the district."

Afghan Voice Agency, Health Ministry Pledges to Hire More Midwives, 16 May 2022

"Hela Gharshin, the director general of midwives at the Ministry of Public Health, said that due to the lack of higher education in the field of midwifery in the country, some midwives do not want to work in the field. "Our midwives in remote areas are working up to three days at a time because there is a shortage of midwives; Midwives are also subject to risk and their education is two years; Higher education in the field of midwifery is very rare," she said.

Based on available numbers, 6,000 midwives are working within the Ministry of Public Health, and the shortage of professional midwives in remote areas of the country is considered a major challenge."

UNICEF, Afghanistan diaries: Supporting health, learning and hope: Paloma Escudero, UNICEF Director for Global Communication and Advocacy, reflects on a recent visit to Afghanistan, 12 May 2022

"16 April 2022 [...] UNICEF security specialist in Kabul, along with one of our local security officers, describe the months-long effort. Their 14-person team covered over 2,000 kilometres – from Kandahar, through Urozgan, Helmand and Nimroz, close to the border with Iran. Two thousand kilometres of villages, they tell me, now accessible to UNICEF staff who have stayed in the country to deliver nutrition, education and other essential services for Afghanistan's children. [...] On the outskirts of Kabul, we pass children in the streets. A young girl, seeking money for her family. A boy working at one of the market stalls that line the road. It's two weeks into the holy month of Ramadan, and tables pile high with fruits and vegetables. But there are no crowds here. [...] The empty stalls are a stark contrast from the place we're headed. It's a three-hour drive to Paktya Regional Hospital, in Gardez, where dozens of families fill the waiting room. [...] This is one of more than 2,300 health facilities across the country that UNICEF, together with WHO, is supporting. The hospital serves over 75,000 people throughout Paktya Province. As fighting in recent

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

months has let up, more Afghans are able to seek out health care – a blessing for children and their parents. But the jump in demand is straining the health sector. To help prevent the system from collapsing, UNICEF and WHO are providing the supplies, salaries and training needed to keep services running. No sooner than we arrive, I'm guided into a treatment ward for children with severe acute malnutrition. [...] This year alone, some 3.2 million children are projected to suffer from severe malnutrition across the country. As we make our way to another part of the ward, Dr. Niamatullah Zaheer, the hospital director, tells me his staff are overwhelmed. The hospital's only paediatrician regularly screens more than 100 children a day. Even the neonatal unit is stretched: Too often, the hospital is forced to accommodate more than one infant per bed."

United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA, With community support, Family Health House scores zero maternal death, 10 May 2022

"There are currently 172 Family Health Houses supported by UNFPA across Afghanistan, with 32 in Faryab. The FHHs have become an integral support to the Afghan health system, which suffered considerably with the withdrawal of development assistance after August 2021. This is why scaling up and strengthening existing FHHs is one of the priority areas of support for the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA). The scale up plan involves expanding the number of the FHHs from the current 172 to 1,500. Existing FHHs, such as the 32 facilities in Faryab province, are also receiving support from STFA to sustain their operations and continue serving the people in their catchment areas. Under the plan, 10 more FHHs will be built in Faryab."

The Guardian, 'The Taliban know they need us': the Afghan hospitals run by women, 9 May 2022

"Up to 100 children a day are born at the hospital where Maqsoodi works – the doctors asked for the name of the clinic to be omitted for security reasons – and at least 140 female staff take care of all operations. "I have four children myself and I miss them during the day, but I tell them I have an important job to do. When the Taliban took over, 12 of our hospital's doctors left the country. "We were all afraid and most of us wanted to leave," Maqsoodi adds, "but we're still here saving lives." It has been difficult. The women say they feel under pressure from the Taliban. After the Islamists' takeover in August, many of the medics stayed at home for weeks, too scared to go to work. Slowly, most of them returned to their jobs. "We keep pressing on," Faizli says. "Even the Taliban know that they need us."

Human Rights Watch, Afghans Dying from Lack of Medicine, 9 May 2022

"Gul Ahmad, who lives in Ghor province and whose 5-year-old son died from diarrhea last week, had a similar story: "The doctors told me that they were out of medicine, and I must take my son to a larger clinic." He didn't have the money to take his son to another clinic, and the child died. Afghanistan is in the grips of one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. More than 24.4 million people will need humanitarian health aid in 2022, roughly two-thirds of the population. Earlier this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that Afghanistan's health system was on the brink of collapse. Afghanistan's banking crisis and loss of funding has meant that most healthcare workers have not been paid for months, and clinics and hospitals are running seriously short of essential medicines and supplies. The country is facing multiple outbreaks of disease, including Covid-19, measles, and diarrhea, as well as acute malnutrition. As many Afghans fall deeper into poverty, the lines outside healthcare facilities are growing. "People come to our clinics, they bring their malnourished children, and we don't have enough medicine,"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

a healthcare worker in Bamiyan told me. “Every week I witness three or four kids dying of malnutrition, a preventable death.”

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Afghanistan Collective Feedback Digest - A compilation of community voices - Issue 6, 5 May 2022

"People also cited health services, including on Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD), as a key need."

Tolo News, 10 Children in Balkh Died of Thalassemia in Past Year: Official, 4 May 2022

"At least 10 children lost their lives to thalassemia, an inherited blood disorder, over the past year in the northern province of Balkh, a local health official said. The head of the provincial department of health, Najibulah Tawana, said they are unable to treat the disease. “We lost ten innocent children. The main way to treat the thalassemia patients ... is impossible in Afghanistan,” he said. According to him, previously patients suffering from the disease were taken to Germany and Iran. Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder that causes the body to have less hemoglobin than normal. Some of the patients struggling from the disease are brought into the provincial hospital of Abu Ali Sina Balkhi. [...] The provincial health department said it recorded 230 patients suffering from thalassemia.”

United Nations World Health Organisation (Afghanistan), UNICEF and WHO warn of perfect storm of conditions for measles outbreaks, affecting children, 27 April 2022

"An increase in measles cases in January and February 2022 is a worrying sign of a heightened risk for the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases and could trigger larger outbreaks, particularly of measles affecting millions of children in 2022, warn WHO and UNICEF. Pandemic-related disruptions, increasing inequalities in access to vaccines, and the diversion of resources from routine immunization are leaving too many children without protection against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases. The risk for large outbreaks has increased as communities relax social distancing practices and other preventive measures for COVID-19 implemented during the height of the pandemic. In addition, with millions of people being displaced due to conflicts and crises including in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Somalia and Afghanistan, disruptions in routine immunization and COVID-19 vaccination services, lack of clean water and sanitation, and overcrowding increase the risk of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks. 2020, 23 million children missed out on basic childhood vaccines through routine health services, the highest number since 2009 and 3.7 million more than in 2019.

Top 5 countries with reported measles cases in the last 12 months, until April 2022 1				
Country	Reported Measles cases	Rate per million cases	First dose measles coverage (%), 20192	First dose measles coverage (%), 20203
Afghanistan	3628	91	64	66

As of April 2022, the agencies report 21 large and disruptive measles outbreaks around the world in the last 12 months. Most of the measles cases were reported in Africa and the East Mediterranean region. The figures are likely higher as the pandemic has disrupted surveillance systems globally, with potential underreporting. Countries with the largest measles outbreaks since the past year include Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Ethiopia. Insufficient measles vaccine coverage is the major reason for outbreaks, wherever they occur. “The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted immunization services, health systems

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

have been overwhelmed, and we are now seeing a resurgence of deadly diseases including measles. For many other diseases, the impact of these disruptions to immunization services will be felt for decades to come,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. “Now is the moment to get essential immunization back on track and launch catch-up campaigns so that everybody can have access to these life-saving vaccines.””

Afghan Voice Agency, Samangan Provincial Hospital: Many Children Infected with Measles to Die, Serious Attention and Health Supports Needed, 25 April 2022

“The residents further have added that due to lack of for measles, they have to travel to neighboring provinces for treatment.

The authorities at Dr. Ikramuddin Wakilzadeh Hospital in Aybak city told Hasht-e Subh that more than 100 children with have been hospitalized at the Provincial Hospital in the past month.

According to sources, in Samangan Provincial Hospital, the highest number of infant deaths is recorded in the districts of Du Ab, Dara-i-Suf Bala, -i-Suf Paeen, Khuram, and Sarobagh.

Over the last two months, measles has increased in most provinces, killing many children.”

UNHCR, UNHCR AFGHANISTAN 2021 MULTI SECTORIAL RAPID ASSESSMENTS ANALYSIS, 21 April 2022

“A number of considerations arise in relation to accessing healthcare. With the public health system on the verge of collapse, costs related obtaining medicines and treatment emerge as significant problems. Costs of transport to access health facilities, distance and availability of clinics are additional barriers in accessing to health care. These problems are largely similar.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“LGBTQI+ persons, already disadvantaged prior to August 15, faced further barriers to accessing reproductive health resources after the Taliban takeover. [...] Access to maternal health care services was constrained by the limited number of female health practitioners, including an insufficient number of skilled birth attendants. Additionally, the conflict environment and other security concerns limited women’s safe access to health services of any kind. Since their takeover, the Taliban permitted women to continue their roles as health practitioners, but many women were afraid to return to work due to safety and security concerns related to the Taliban’s stated policies restricting women in the workplace. After August 15, the ever-smaller number of qualified female health practitioners steeply increased the risk of poor health outcomes for women.”

Afghan Voice Agency, MSF raises concern over increase in measles cases in three provinces, 6 April 2022

“Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Afghanistan has expressed concern about the rising incidence of measles in the country, saying that the provinces of Herat, Kunduz and Helmand are the most affected. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_MSF said Wednesday that in the past week alone, 90 children with measles had been admitted to a special ward in Herat province. Last week, the agency announced the opening of a special ward for patients at the provincial hospital, saying that it has now increased the ward to 60 beds. Médecins Sans Frontières said in just a few days, all the beds in this ward were full of measles patients and now there is no room for other sick children.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNFPA, PRESS RELEASE: UNFPA scaling up support to save and protect the lives of Afghan women and girls, 31 March 2022

“Interim funding at the end of 2021 prevented the total collapse of the health system in the country following the withdrawal of development assistance, but women and girls’ access to lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services has been severely diminished especially in remote parts of the country [...] In spite of the challenging context, UNFPA continues to provide essential and life-saving maternal health and protection services, with support from local communities [...] UNFPA requires US\$251.9 million in 2022 to continue and scale up the delivery of maternal health and protection services to meet the urgent needs of 9.3 million Afghans, including 2.2 million women of childbearing age, 2.3 million adolescents and 289,000 women expected to give birth this year.”

UNFPA, Emergency Response: UNFPA Afghanistan supported Mobile Health Teams & Family Health Houses, 31 March 2022

“The Family Health Houses and Mobile Health Teams play critical roles during the emergency response in Afghanistan, they provide health services for the vulnerable and deprived population in the hard to reach areas of the country...”

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan - 2021 Final Report, 31 March 2022

“Limitations on women’s freedom of movement have negatively impacted several aspects of women’s lives, including preventing them from accessing health services.”

Care International Afghanistan, CARE provides lifesaving health care to vulnerable Afghans, 29 March 2022

“In a mountainous village of 4,000 houses in Kabul province, CARE is the only organization that provides health services including medicines, maternal health and nutrition services to residents, in particular to women and girls, through its weekly mobile health clinics. Unemployment, poverty, lack of schools and mental health issues are the main challenges in the area.

Dr. Shamsur Rahman* a CARE doctor said, “Each time I come here, I see between 100 and 150 patients in a day. Flu, cough, and other winter-related diseases, like lung problems, and diarrhea, are the most common problems in this village. Women and children are the most vulnerable and are in dire need. There are no physical health centers here. CARE is the only organization that provides health services for this community.” We also provide free medicine, whereas in public health centers, medication must be paid for, and often, people simply cannot afford it.”

Over the past 6 months CARE Afghanistan has supported 61,592 people with health services, of which 65% are women and girls in Ghazni, Herat, Balkh, Kabul and Khost provinces. The services include primary health care, maternal health, nutrition support, referrals to specialized facilities for gender-based violence cases, COVID awareness-raising and psychosocial support services. In addition, CARE has distributed emergency medicines, medical supplies and equipment to health facilities.

Since the change in power in August 2021, medicine and equipment shortages, and unpaid salaries for health workers, have put enormous additional strain on an already weak health system. An estimated six million people have no access, or insufficient access, to health care in Afghanistan, and women and children pay the heaviest price. Ahead of the 31 March Afghanistan donor pledging conference, CARE is urging the international community to step-up their commitment to support the most vulnerable people in Afghanistan to access critical health services.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

WHO, WHO Director-General's Keynote address at the World TB Day Online Talk Show – 24 March 2022, 24 March 2022

“We are especially concerned for the health of people with TB in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen, where conflict is jeopardising their access to services – and their very lives.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report #3 1-28 February 2022, 22 March 2022

“There has been a sharp rise of more than 13,400 measles cases this year, bringing the total since Jan 2021 to 43,988 cases (80 per cent among children under five). UNICEF is working with partners on a measles-outbreak campaign as an immediate response.”

BBC News, Afghanistan crisis: Children malnourished as hospitals collapse, 23 March 2022

“Foreign funds given to the government of Afghanistan ran the country's healthcare system before the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Without them, public hospitals have collapsed. Malnutrition and diseases like measles and tuberculosis are causing the deaths of children - more than a million are at risk. The BBC's Yogita Limaye visits Musa Qala district hospital in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Taliban Resurrects Gender Segregation In Public Offices, Transport In Afghanistan, 16th March 2022

“The Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice earlier this month sent a letter to the Health Ministry ordering it to segregate male and female employees. “The offices for men and women should be separate,” said the letter, a copy of which was obtained by RFE/RL's Radio Azadi.” The ministry, which is the enforcer of the Taliban's radical interpretation of Islamic law, also warned that health care should be denied to female patients who do not observe the Islamic hijab. Several employees of the Health Ministry, who talked to Radio Azadi on condition of anonymity, confirmed the authenticity of the letter. The Taliban did not respond to messages from Radio Azadi seeking comment. The Taliban initially ordered women not to return to work. But it later called female health workers back to clinics and hospitals, although many were too scared to resume their work. Rights groups say gender segregation has created barriers to women and girls accessing health care. At many facilities, patients are only treated by a health professional of the same sex.”

UNFPA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Appeal 2022, 14 March 2022

“Every two hours, a mother dies from preventable childbirth and pregnancy complications and the current crisis could make the situation worse.”

The Khaama Press, 1.2 million children to be vaccinated against measles in Afghanistan, 14 March 2022

“World Health Organization in a press release announced that they have launched a nationwide vaccination of measles on March 12 that will last until March 17, 2022, covering 1.2 children across Afghanistan. The week-long campaign that is planned to be implemented in 49 districts of 24 provinces will involve 9,200 workers, volunteers, supervisors, and monitors. Measles has transformed into another headache in Afghanistan as the contiguous viral disease has infected 18,000 children and has claimed the lives of 142 minors since the beginning of 2022.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

WHO, Statement of the Thirty-first Polio IHR Emergency Committee, 11 March 2022

"The committee was very disturbed by the news that eight front line workers in Afghanistan had been attacked and killed in four different locations. These are the first attacks on polio workers since nationwide campaigns resumed in November last year and underline that major challenges remain in the country including security challenges and the adverse economic situation. [...] The unpredictable situation in Afghanistan, with looming humanitarian crises including food insecurity and risk of financial collapse disrupting eradication activities [...]"

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

"In Kandahar, the closest health centre is on average 21.4 kilometers away from the community."

VOA, Afghanistan Faces Return to Highest Maternal Mortality Rates, 7 March 2022

"Following the events of mid-August 2021, Afghanistan's health sector was close to collapse, with coverage of many lifesaving interventions for women and children falling between 20 and 30% within days," said Joe English, a UNICEF spokesperson. Such setbacks have given rise to one of Afghanistan's long-standing health crises — high maternal mortality."

OHCHR, Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

"Limitations on freedom of movement negatively impact other aspects of women's lives, including access to health services."

WHO, Afghanistan Emergency Situation Report No. 13/ Reporting Period 15 - 28 February, 6 March 2022

"During the reporting period, one of the challenges in health service delivery in the southeastern and southern regions concerned female patients who were not allowed to visit the health facilities without Mahram (an adult male companion of a female). This would seriously affect access and utilization of health services.

WHO is in communication with the de facto health authorities at the national and regional levels to find solutions for access of quality healthcare services among female patients.

During the last two-weeks, reduction in the new cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD), dengue, and malaria continues while new measles cases are being reported every day. Furthermore, one suspected outbreak of rabies was reported from Paktia province which was responded by surveillance team. WHO has deployed 111 rapid response teams (RRT) to support surveillance and response.

Trauma and post-trauma physical rehabilitation services were provided to 8,920 people through the WHO-supported Trauma Care Units (TCUs) and physical rehabilitation centers. Emergency primary healthcare services were extended to 94,893 people living in underserved and remote areas of Afghanistan through mobile health teams (MHTs) and sub health centers (SHCs). The emergency medical supplies and kits deployed by WHO to various areas in the last two weeks reached 191,700 people in various parts of the country.

On February 24, eight polio workers were killed in Kunduz and Takhar provinces during the course of their lifesaving work. The national polio vaccination campaign was suspended in both provinces following the attacks. The UN and WHO have extended its deepest condolences to the families, friends and colleagues

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of these courageous health workers.”

IOM, CBNA R14 — Afghanistan — Community-Based Needs Assessment: Summary Results (November—December 2021), 2 March 2022

“Four in five communities (81%) do not have a health clinic within the confines of the community. When healthcare is available, one in four households do not visit a healthcare provider when they are ill due to poor quality or lack of medicine, services, and staff. COVID-19 symptoms are widely reported throughout the country.”

Khaama Press, Health Workers Safety Essential to Eradicate Polio, 27 February 2022

“Still, Polio is endemic in Afghanistan yet the news of attacks on the polio vaccinators are coming in from the war-torn state. Eight polio vaccination workers in four locations in northern Afghanistan were killed on February 24 during a polio vaccination campaign in Afghanistan. One member of the vaccination transit team was killed in the Taloqan district in Takhar province. In another incident, four health care workers were killed in Kunduz city. These four polio workers were running a door-to-door polio campaign. In a separate incident in the Imam Sahib district of Kunduz province, two vaccinators and other polio workers were killed. Very similar coordinated attacks took place last year as well.

The United Nations has condemned the recent attacks on health workers and extended condolences to the families, friends, and colleagues of the skilled health workers. The Taliban will be accountable for the killings of innocent health workers. Soon after retaining power last year, the Taliban promised that they would include female workers and ensure security to the aid workers. The polio drive is a result of high-level negotiation between the Taliban and UN officials. Nationwide polio campaigns resumed in November last year. During national polio vaccination campaigns last year at least nine polio workers were killed.

[...]

The lack of a massive vaccination drive may lead to an outbreak of polio cases across the state, already suffering from several deadly diseases. The Taliban and other Islamist leaders have misled the citizens about polio immunization. They have been telling that the polio vaccine is a Western conspiracy aimed at sterilizing Muslim children.

The health workers and aid agencies have been facing severe threats from Islamic extremist organizations. Even they claim the vaccinators are the spies or informers of the CIA. This is worth mentioning that the CIA used a vaccination drive in Pakistan in 2011 to confirm the location of Osama bin Laden.”

ICRC, Time is running out to save millions of lives in Afghanistan, 25 February 2022

“Healthcare services are among those in most urgent need of support. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than at the ICRC-supported Mirwais regional hospital in the southern city of Kandahar. Serving a population of up to 9 million in the region and beyond, demand far outstrips capacity, with some 4,000 sick or wounded seeking treatment in the 650-bed facility every day. This is partly because the current crisis caused some smaller healthcare facilities to close down and many practitioners to leave the country. All the wards are overcrowded. Bed occupancy in the paediatric ward, for example, is at almost 300 per cent, with often two or three children per bed. Many are severely malnourished, and numbers are rising – not only in children but in young adults as well. Some are the victims of improvised explosive devices, like one boy whose hands were blown off when he picked up what he thought was a toy. One ward is full of children suffering from measles, a disease endemic across the country. [...] Kristiina Kumpulainen, secretary-general of the Finnish Red Cross society. “Afghanistan was already one of the most difficult places in the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

world to be a mother or an infant. Now it is harder than ever. And the people we are seeing here might be considered the lucky ones – with many health facilities not functioning at all, sick and vulnerable people are forced to travel long distances, which few can afford. Many simply don't reach the care they need." "Access to healthcare is clearly one of the most pressing humanitarian concerns in the country," said Anders Ladekarl, secretary-general of the Danish Red Cross society. "Supporting teaching hospitals and nursing schools is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to save an already-debilitated health system from collapse and help secure its future. The urgency of putting the right support in place cannot be overestimated." While there has been welcome progress on some restrictive measures that help facilitate humanitarian response, including a December 2021 UN Security Council resolution allowing some exemptions in the sanctions regime, Robert Mardini is clear that States need to go much further. [...] In March the ICRC will launch a budget extension appeal of close to 50 million Swiss francs (USD 54 million), most of which will be used to help provide assistance to the country's hospitals and medical staff."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Eight Polio Workers Killed In Attacks In Afghanistan, 24 February 2022

"Eight members of polio vaccination teams were killed in separate attacks in Afghanistan, the United Nations said on February 24.

[...]

The UN said one person was killed in Takhar Province in the far north, and seven in neighboring Kunduz Province -- including four in the provincial capital, Kunduz city.

[...]

Matiullah Rohani, head of the Taliban's Information and Culture Department in Kunduz, said security forces are working to arrest the perpetrators.

"Our security and intelligence agencies have launched an operation in connection with the incidents that took place today in Kunduz Province, and efforts are under way to apprehend the perpetrators," Rohani told Radio Azadi.

The killings were the first since UNICEF and the World Health Organization launched a nationwide polio vaccine campaign in November aimed at reaching over 3 million children, with the backing of the Taliban. Polio teams were frequently targeted by insurgent groups in Afghanistan until the Taliban's takeover of the country last year, when the hard-line Islamist group said it wanted to work with the UN to stamp out the disease.

Last year, several polio vaccinators were shot by unknown militants in eastern Nangarhar province. No group has claimed responsibility for the recent attacks."

Afghan Voice Agency, Measles Outbreak in Afghanistan - 80 People Infected in Parwan Recently, 23 February 2022

"[...] Following the increase in measles disease in Afghanistan, the number of infected in Parwan province has also increased unprecedentedly. Health officials in province expressed concerns about the rapid spread of the measles virus. According to them, in the last two weeks alone, 80 cases of the disease have been registered in Parwan province. Abdul Qasim Sangin, head of the 100-bed hospital in Parwan, said that 80 cases of measles had been registered in the village of Abdibay, in Charikar, and in the Sayed Khel, and Siahgerd districts. He added that two of them have died so far, adding that other patients are receiving medical care at the provincial hospital and their homes. [...] The head of the Provincial Hospital in Parwan said that the reason for the increase in measles was that children did not get measles vaccine due to the spread of the coronavirus in recent years. According to statistics, most of the sufferers of this disease are

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

children. Meanwhile, some doctors say that measles is a highly contagious disease that threatens young children, especially those suffering from acute malnutrition. Speaking to Hasht-e Sobh, Seyed Zabih Saifi, a pediatrician at the 100-bed hospital in Parwan, said there was no cure for the virus, stressing that the only way to prevent it was to vaccinate children. According to him, children get measles and high fever after getting measles. However, a number of patients at the 100-bed hospital in Parwan are urging residents of Parwan province to vaccinate their children to prevent measles.”

Ariana News, Pneumonia runs rampant through Afghanistan, 20 February 2022

“In the last 45 days, more than four hundred people have died of pneumonia across the country, officials said adding that most of them were children. The Ministry of Public Health says that during this period, nearly 190,000 people contracted pneumonia across the country. According to health officials, the highest number of cases were in Kabul, Nangarhar and Balkh provinces. According to the ministry:

- In 2020, more than 900,000 people were infected and 1,700 people died
- In 2021 more than 944,000 people were infected and 1,900 died
- In 2022, more than 188,000 people have so far been infected while 436 people have died

The highest number of infections recorded this year so far have been in Balkh with 23,075 cases, then Kabul with 20,990 and Nangarhar with 14,560. Nangarhar recorded the most deaths from pneumonia with 88 cases, Balkh with 75 cases and Kabul with 45. Extreme cold, a lack of fuel to heat homes, limited access to health care and hospitals is behind the rising case load officials said. A large percentage of fatalities however have been children.”

The New Humanitarian, Afghanistan’s crises, by the numbers, 15 February 2022

“Healthcare: COVID-19 is not the only epidemic

Multiple disease outbreaks are hitting a barely functioning health system simultaneously. These include a worsening measles outbreak, acute watery diarrhoea, dengue fever, and malaria – on top of endemic polio and COVID-19. The food and hunger crisis bleeds into the health emergency. Aid group Save the Children says the number of severely malnourished children at its clinics has more than doubled since August. Malnutrition and vitamin A deficiencies make measles more likely to be fatal, health experts say. Afghanistan’s healthcare system is on life support, floated for now by emergency aid and money diverted from the World Bank-managed programme that had powered 30 percent of public spending before the Taliban takeover, including health services. COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise, but funding and doctor shortages have shut down many treatment facilities. Aid groups say many Afghans who need healthcare don’t have access.”

AVA Press, Health sector faces oxygen shortage amid COVID-19 Surge. 12 February 2022

“The emergency department of the Afghan-Japan Hospital is once again full of COVID-19 patients these days, which includes youth and children. Our hospital has the capacity of 100 beds, but now we have 85 to 90 patients. Numbers are increasing day by day. The Ministry of Public Health must be prepared because we have not yet reached the peak stage of the disease. Perhaps in the coming weeks the situation will become more critical and the previous -19 private hospitals will be reactivated,” said Heshmatullah Faizi, a doctor at the -Japan Hospital. “Every day we have 120 to 180 patients, and more than 80 percent of the cases are positive,” said Ebadullah Ebad, head of the Afghan-Japan hospital's infectious diseases department. Meanwhile, the doctors at the hospital say that it has been five months since they have received their salaries. According to them, they also face severe shortages of hygienic substances [...] “Right now, we only have oxygen for our patients for just one more day, but after that we will face a lack

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of oxygen,” said Ebadullah Ebad, head of the Afghan-Japan hospital's infectious diseases department. “The oxygen generating machine has the capacity to produce oxygen for 60 patients and is not enough for us.””

WHO, Measles – Afghanistan, 10 February 2022

“Measles is endemic in Afghanistan, with almost all provinces reporting suspected cases every year. Following periods of lower transmission in 2019 and 2020, and amid the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, weekly notifications of suspected measles cases have been increasing in all provinces since the end of July 2021, with the highest weekly toll observed in the last four weeks in January 2022 (Figure 1). The number of cases and deaths increased by 18% and 40% respectively from week 4, 2022 (week commencing January 24) to week 5, 2022 (week commencing January 31). Figure 1. Weekly number of reported suspected measles cases in Afghanistan. Week 1, 2018 to week 4, 2022. Source: WHO Country Office in Afghanistan, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

[...] From 1 January 2021 to 29 January 2022, 35 319 suspected measles cases were reported in Afghanistan, of which 3221 (9%) were laboratory-confirmed by IgM-ELISA in the seven reference laboratories (one national and six regional). Most of the suspected measles cases (91%) occurred among children less than 5 years of age. During the same period, 156 measles deaths were reported among the confirmed cases (CFR=4.8%), with more than 97% of the fatalities registered among children less than 5 years of age. Although the number of deaths is relatively low, the rapid rise in cases suggests that the trend of reported deaths will continue to increase sharply in the coming weeks. The most affected provinces, with the highest number of reported cases (confirmed and suspected) are Balkh, Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Kabul, Paktika, and Paktya. Figure 2 shows the measles notification rate (confirmed and suspected cases) per million population. The highest rates were observed in Paktya (617 cases per 1 000 000), Balkh (275 cases per 1 000 000), Kunduz (204 cases per 1 000 000) Zabul (168 cases per 1 000 000), Kandahar (145 cases per 1 000 000), Logar (127 cases per 1 000 000).

Public health response

- In December 2021, a measles outbreak response immunization campaign reached 1 510 440 children aged 9 to 59 months in Balk, Ghazni, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, and Paktika provinces. The campaign was implemented at fixed sites like mosques, schools and other suitable places easily accessible for parents. The highest administrative immunization coverage was reported in Ghor province (121%) and the lowest was reported in Ghazni province (90%). The next nationwide measles immunization campaign will be conducted in the first quarter of 2022.
- In the provinces where campaigns were conducted, implementing partners are supporting case management, risk communication and community engagement in the affected villages and surrounding areas.
- Vitamin A supplementation was provided to all children aged 6 to 59 months in November 2021 during the nationwide Polio campaign.
- WHO is providing technical support on surveillance, vaccination, laboratory testing, case management, and risk communication and together with the Health Cluster, WHO is continuing to coordinate and support a multi-pronged health response.
- Since November 2021, with emergency funding, WHO is delivering essential life-saving maternal and child health services in 17 provinces through 1209 Sehatmandi health facilities.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

- As part of an emergency response to treat more than 1000 hospitalized children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, WHO supports 123 health clinics specialized in the management of severe acute malnutrition and airlifted 34.6 tons of life-saving health supplies to Afghanistan. The supplies include enough medicines to treat 15 000 people in need of medical care for three months.
- WHO provided technical and financial support for the establishment of the regional reference laboratory in Paktya province and supported 1131 health facilities to provide essential health services from November 2021 to January 2022, including medical referral facilities.

WHO risk assessment

Measles is a very highly contagious, vaccine-preventable disease caused by a virus that is transmitted by air and through direct contact with infected cases. Unvaccinated young children are at the highest risk of measles and its complications (e.g. pneumonia and encephalitis), including death. Measles outbreaks can result in epidemics with a high case fatality rate, especially among young, malnourished children.

Afghanistan is considered a fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable setting. The country has faced years of compounded crises, under-investment, instability and drought, and has now the highest number of people in emergency food insecurity in the world. According to UNICEF, 14 million people in Afghanistan are facing acute food insecurity, and an estimated 3.2 million children under five years suffer from acute malnutrition.

The large and widespread outbreaks and the increasing number of reported measles cases in Afghanistan, is due to a variety of complex factors that on the one hand have resulted in the low immunization coverage of both first dose of measles-containing vaccine (MCV1) and second dose (MCV2), on the other has exacerbated the impact of the outbreak (e.g. high levels of acute malnutrition, winter conditions and crowded domestic situation, previous displacement). The 2020 WHO/UNICEF national immunization coverage estimates were 66% for MCV1 and 43% for MCV2. At the sub-national level, administrative coverage data shows that six provinces achieved less than 50% MCV1 coverage (Kandahar 40%; Paktya 38%; Jozjan 37%; Khost 36%; Helmand 18%; Urozgan 3.1%). The internal displacement of 698 000 people in 2021 was another driver of low MCV coverage. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) frequently live in conditions that increase susceptibility to measles (e.g. through less access to immunization services) and may increase measles exposures (e.g. through over-crowding) as well as experiencing poor health outcomes (e.g. due to factors like increasing risk and rates of malnutrition, poor access to curative services). Cross-border travel due to the recent instability in Afghanistan has increased the risk of international spread, particularly in Pakistan and Iran.

Overall risk at the national level is assessed as very high due to:

1. Prolonged low measles vaccination coverage that has led to the accumulation of a large susceptible population.
2. High number of internally displaced people.
3. High rates of malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency which could result in increased mortality and expected to increase especially in remote areas during the winter.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

4. Inadequate case management due to a shortage of equipment, supplies, and skilled staff in health facilities, long and difficult access to health facilities during the winter period.
5. Barriers to access to healthcare in the rural population.

The regional risk is considered moderate due to the movement of people to Tajikistan, Iran and Pakistan, while at the global level the risk is considered low due to moderately high global MCV coverage estimates. More information is required from neighbouring countries and continued monitoring of displacement trends."

International Rescue Committee, David Miliband's Testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on Afghanistan, 9 February 2022

"Since August, our nearly 3,000 staff have resumed operations, providing lifesaving assistance and expanding our programs to reach ten provinces. Afghans make up more than 99% of IRC staff in the country and women make up half of our staff. Last year, we reached one million Afghans with vital services spanning health, emergency cash, education, water and sanitation, and economic recovery programs. The IRC is responding to the ongoing deterioration by providing emergency winterization assistance and scaling up support for 64 health facilities. We are also launching mobile health teams to travel to treat malnourished children in rural communities with no other access to healthcare. We support those displaced with cash, tents, clean water, sanitation, and other basic necessities. The IRC has expanded our women's protection and empowerment activities in recent years and has become a leading actor in the protection field. Our teams also help Afghans gain self-sufficiency, including by helping local communities plan and manage their own development projects and by providing livelihoods support like climate-smart agriculture programming. Generous US government funding has helped support our work, including ongoing programs focused on protection and economic (cash) support for women, protection services for at-risk children, and gender-based violence case management and psychosocial support."

Ariana News, Afghanistan's health system is on brink of collapse: urgent action needed, 26 January 2022

"The World Health Organization (WHO) has once again appealed to the international community to find a funding mechanism to help prevent Afghanistan's primary health care initiative from collapsing. The WHO stated this week international donors need to find a funding mechanism for the Sehatmandi program, which is Afghanistan's crucial primary health care initiative. The Sehatmandi program is the backbone of Afghanistan's health system, providing care for millions of people through 2,331 health facilities across the country. However, since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) took control, major funding for the program has been withdrawn. Previously funded by the World Bank, the European Commission, and USAID, there are now serious challenges to continuing these vital primary health care services. Over the last two decades, life expectancy has risen, and maternal, newborn and child deaths in Afghanistan have dramatically decreased, largely due to the success of the Sehatmandi program. Today, the population's health is seriously under threat and all the progress in health outcomes may be lost, the organization warned. "The recent funding pause by key donors to the country's biggest health programme (Sehatmandi) will cause the majority of the public health facilities to close. As a result, more mothers, infants and children will die of reduced access to essential health care. "WHO is determined to work with partners in identifying a sustainable solution with the support of donors to maintain and scale up the lifesaving interventions when needed in the country," said Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Afghanistan this week."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press, Afghanistan's 90% health centers may shut down by the end of 2022: IRC, 8 January 2022
"International Rescue Committee in its latest report warned that up to 90 percent of health centers in Afghanistan might shut down by the end of this year, 2022. The reports review that millions of Afghan people will be left without health services and facilities and millions more may lose lives if the current economic and political situation continues. IRC has also warned of the bleak future of the Afghan people as it estimates up to 97 percent of the country's people to face starvation by the end of 2022."

The New Yorker, Afghanistan has become the world's largest humanitarian crisis, 5 January 2022
"A month after the Biden Administration pulled U.S forces out of Afghanistan, only seventeen per cent of the country's more than twenty-three hundred health clinics were functional. Doctors in the hospital in Kabul told me that they hadn't been paid since the Taliban seized power, in August, and that medicine is in short supply. The new government is struggling to feed the country's thirty-nine million people, and the chance that an Afghan baby will go hungry and die is the highest in twenty years. Half of the country's population needs humanitarian assistance to survive, double the number from 2020. More than twenty million people are on the brink of famine. The United Nations Development Programme projects that by the middle of this year Afghanistan could face "universal poverty," with ninety-seven per cent of Afghans living below the World Bank-designated international poverty line of \$1.90 a day."

Pajhwok, The only Covid-19 hospital in Uruzgan shut down, 29 December 2021

"Officials of the Public Health Department in central Uruzgan province say the only Covid-19 hospital has been shut down to financial problems and lack of cooperation from donors.

"The 20-bed coronavirus hospital was inaugurated in Tirinkot, the provincial capital, in January 2021. Covid-19 patients from all districts, including Tirinkot, were treated here.

"The facility was run by the Ministry of Public Health, with assistance from SHDP and MOVE in terms of equipment and staff salaries."

ANI, Afghanistan: number of cancer patients rises amid deteriorating healthcare services, 28 December 2021

"Following the deterioration in healthcare services, after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, the number of cancer patients is rising in the country.

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said the number of patients diagnosed with cancer, with 60 per cent female patients have been recorded since the beginning of 2021, reported TOLO News.

Findings of the MoPH show that the most frequent cancer among Afghans is breast cancer for women and oesophagus cancer for men."

UNFPA, Emergency health kits ensure maternal and newborn care in Afghanistan, 20 December 2021

"Since Kabul fell to the Taliban in August, more and more women have been seeking maternal health care from the Malalai hospital, many of them internally displaced from the northern provinces of Afghanistan into the capital. Although the number of patients has gradually returned to normal as the displaced moved elsewhere, the hospital's supplies have been left badly depleted.

Ms. Oruzgani fears the situation could get far worse should the health care system fail completely. Preliminary estimates warn that the current humanitarian emergency and suspension of lifesaving reproductive services for women and girls could cause up to 58,000 additional maternal deaths, 5.1 million

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

unintended pregnancies and a near doubling of the unmet need for family planning over the next four years.

In a country where a woman dies every two hours from pregnancy-related complications, Ms. Oruzgani said: "The kits are critical at this time, as hospital resources are running out and the support we were receiving has dwindled. We can't be sure where our next assistance will come from."

TOLO News, 1000s of Afghan Children With Heart Problems Await Treatment, 19 December 2021

"The treatment of Afghan children with congenital heart defects--either at domestic medical centers or abroad--has been suspended for the last four months because of a lack of funds, officials at the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) said on Sunday.

Officials said that more than 1,000 children with congenital heart defects have been registered since the beginning of 2021 and are waiting to be treated inside or outside the country, but the process of treatment has been halted. Red Crescent says that as many as 6,000 Afghan children in total are waiting for treatment."

Medecin Sans Frontieres (MSF), A hospital of women, for women: Preserving maternity care in Khost, 16 December 2021

"Healthcare workers have done their best to keep providing care to pregnant women despite their facilities being deprived of much-needed funds.

"In the public system, we've heard of people pooling their money to buy medical items to keep their facilities open," says Cormack. "If a woman needs a caesarean-section they all chip in to buy enough fuel so the generator can run during the procedure. This is despite the fact that healthcare workers and other civil servants haven't been paid for months," she says."

BBC, On the front line as Afghan children battle malnutrition and measles, 15 December 2021

"There's no space inside," shouts a beleaguered hospital worker as he tries to push back a frantic crowd of mothers and babies hoping to receive nutrition packs.

"It's like this every day," he yells out to us over their heads, "it's been like this for the last four or five months... It was bad last year too, but not like this."

The war in Afghanistan is over, but its economy is collapsing and at this hospital, in the remote, central province of Ghor, they're struggling to cope with the fallout.

The Guardian, Afghan health system 'close to collapse due to sanctions on Taliban', 13 December 2021

"Large parts of Afghanistan's health system are on the brink of collapse because of western sanctions against the Taliban, international experts have warned, as the country faces outbreaks of disease and an escalating malnutrition crisis. With the country experiencing a deepening humanitarian crisis since the Taliban's seizure of power in August amid mounting levels of famine and economic collapse, many medical staff have not been paid for months and health facilities lack even the most basic items to treat patients. [...] There are six simultaneous disease outbreaks: cholera, a massive measles outbreak, polio, malaria and dengue fever, and that is in addition to the coronavirus pandemic. Some parts of the primary healthcare system were being funded through a two-decades-old scheme, Spiegel said, but large parts remained largely unsupported, even as health officials, international organisations and NGOs have been required to restart programmes on hold after the Taliban regained control of the country in August. [...] UNICEF: "The current humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is dire, especially for children. Winter has

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

already set in and, without additional funding, Unicef and partners will be unable to reach the children and families that need us the most,” said Alice Akunga, Unicef’s Afghanistan representative.”

Politico, A great suffering: starvation and the collapse of Afghan healthcare, 9 December 2021

“Nearly half of Afghanistan’s 39 million people aren’t getting enough food. One million children are at risk of dying from malnutrition as winter sets in, the WHO said last month. Those on the brink of starvation sometimes make it to the hospital, but even there, resources are scarce.

Afghanistan’s predicament could undo years of maternal health gains, said Aleksandar Bodiroza, the United Nations Population Fund’s representative in Afghanistan.

“We are risking in just two years to lose the basically 10-years-long progress in maternal health,” he said, adding that 51,000 mothers could die between 2021 and 2025. “We are looking at 4.8 million unintended pregnancies and near doubling of the unmet need for family planning between now and 2025.””

BBC, ‘It’s like hell in here’: The struggle to save Afghanistan's starving babies, 2 December 2021

“Across the country, hospitals treating the starving are on the brink of collapse, with nearly 2,300 health facilities already closed. Doctors in remote areas have reported being unable to provide basic medicines - even something as simple as paracetamol for the gravely ill who have walked 12 hours to seek treatment. In the capital Kabul, a major children's hospital is seeing some of the country's worst cases of starvation. It's currently running at 150% capacity.

The hospital's director Dr Siddiqi saw a surge in fatalities in September after funding was cut, when up to four children under the age of 10 died every week from malnutrition or related diseases, such as poisoning from poor food hygiene. He says it's the youngest who bear the brunt of the crisis, with most under the age of five arriving too late to be saved.”

UNFPA, “Press Release: Prioritize needs of women and girls in Afghanistan”, 1 December 2021

“As the health system teeters on the brink of collapse, UNFPA is also distributing emergency reproductive health kits to health facilities to keep services functioning, including for emergency obstetric care for the estimated 21,500 pregnant women who will likely experience complications or require a Caesarean section in the next three months. Dignity kits that contain items such as sanitary pads and other personal hygiene supplies are being distributed to displaced women and girls to support their psychosocial and physical wellbeing. The kits also free up money for food as hunger knocks at the door of many Afghan households.”

UN News, UN News: Mobile health teams, 25 November 2021

“The doctors were part of a mobile health team supported by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) that provides medical services to those who would otherwise have no or limited access. In the most remote parts of Afghanistan, the nearest health facility can be over two hours’ walk away, with communities in these areas accounting for most of the country’s maternal and childhood illnesses and deaths.”

International Committee of the Red Cross, Afghanistan: An infuriating, man-made catastrophe points toward massive suffering for Afghan families, 22 November 2021

“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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and medical supplies, and will ensure the continuity of nearly half a million medical consultations per month.”

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

“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.”

“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.”

UNFPA, Mobile health teams: On the road saving lives in Afghanistan’s most remote areas, 21 November 2021

While the full ramifications of recent events in Afghanistan will only become clear over time, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that humanitarian needs in the country have already risen sharply and that the health care system has been brought to its knees.

Since August this year, UNFPA has increased the number of mobile health teams it supports across Afghanistan to respond to the humanitarian health emergency. The teams have defied formidable odds to deliver essential reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health and psychosocial support services to mothers and children in hard-to-reach areas that are otherwise precariously underserved.

The Daily Telegraph, On the frontline of Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis, where malnourished babies share incubators, 20 November 2021

“The listless children in the overcrowded malnutrition ward lie two, or sometimes three, to each bed. Their wasted limbs can be glimpsed beneath layers of blankets and clothes to warm them against the oncoming winter. Before Afghanistan was tipped into near economic collapse following the Taliban takeover, the malnutrition department at Kabul's Indira Gandhi hospital treated on average four or six hungry infants at any one time. It is now home to 20 and there are another 70 registered patients being treated in their own homes, said Raziya, one of the nurses. The hospital is short of beds and staff, who have quit because wages have not been paid for months. “Our patients are very poor people. In the last three months more than 20 malnourished children have lost their lives,” she told the Telegraph. The Taliban's takeover has sent the country into spiralling crises which threaten lives and the modest gains of the past two decades of international aid.”

ABC News, Key aid group says Afghanistan's most pressing need is cash, 19 November 2021

“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 (ICRC) 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.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

MSF, Malnutrition soars in Herat as healthcare reaches breaking point, 10 November 2021

"The Afghan healthcare system has been fragile and plagued by major gaps for years now. The suspension of international aid as a result of the recent political developments has further deteriorated the situation. In Herat, in southwestern Afghanistan, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is witnessing a worrying increase in malnutrition, says Mamman Mustapha, former project coordinator in the province.

The healthcare system is at risk of collapse in the whole country, while the needs are huge. This is also reflected in what we observe in Herat. Access to care was a major issue in Afghanistan well before the Taliban takeover, but today the situation has further degraded, as most of the international aid has been suspended. This includes the World Bank funding of the World Health Organization's (WHO) basic and essential care programmes covering Herat province.

Health facilities in the area are either closing or have reduced to providing minimum services with whatever residual resources are available. We have no visibility on what is going to happen to these facilities. People are jobless and are poor; they cannot afford private care, while some of the humanitarian organisations previously working in the area are yet to resume their activities in full.

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."

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Update, 8 November 2021

"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."

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

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 United Nations' mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), along with countries including Pakistan, condemned the attack.

"Attacks targeting medical personnel and civilians seeking treatment are violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Those responsible need to be held to account," UNAMA said in a tweet.

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

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. "There is no money to pay health-care workers. There is no money to buy medicines," said Gossman, who added that the system was "already weak" under the previous government. "With former donors blocking

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

aid -- not humanitarian aid, but actual cash to pay salaries -- the health-care situation is in a free fall like the rest of the economy." Hundreds of health facilities have been shuttered in Afghanistan since the Taliban toppled the internationally recognized government in Kabul. Abdul Bari Omari, the Taliban's caretaker deputy director of public health, told RFE/RL in October that nearly 90 percent of the sector was dependent on foreign aid, which led to the closure of 2,300 health centers when that aid was cut off. Urgent appeals for more funds by NGOs and the United Nations have resulted in pledges of more than \$1 billion, and outside states and aid groups have delivered much-needed medical supplies. But there is no clear path for the distribution of the funds and supplies, and billions of dollars held by Afghanistan's previous government remain frozen in the United States.

Reuters, [In Kabul children's hospital, medics struggle with staff shortages](#), 26 October 2021

"In Kabul's main children's hospital, the crumbling of Afghanistan's health system is reflected in the eyes of exhausted staff as they eke out fast-diminishing stocks of medicines.

As crowds of mothers and sick children fill waiting rooms in the Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital, medical staff are squeezing three babies into a single incubator and doubling them up in cot-like infant warmer beds.

Nurses who once took care of three or four babies each are now having to look after 20 or more to make up for the absence of staff who fled the country when the Taliban seized power in August. [...]

Although the number of blast victims and war wounded have fallen since the fighting ended, Afghanistan's hospitals are grappling with the fallout of a rapidly spreading economic crisis that has threatened millions with hunger.

U.N. agencies say as much as 95% of the population does not regularly have enough to eat and last month, the head of the World Health Organisation warned the health system was on the brink of collapse as international aid has dried up.

Lack of support for the \$600 million Sehatmandi health service project administered by World Bank, has left thousands of facilities unable to buy supplies and pay salaries, threatening health services at all levels from village clinics to hospitals offering caesarian sections.

STAFF NOT PAID IN MONTHS

For the medical team, it is the acute staff shortage that is causing the heaviest strain. They have not been paid in months and often struggle even to pay their car fare to work."

Al Jazeera, [Afghanistan: Taliban agrees to door-to-door polio vaccine drive](#), 19 October 2021

"Health workers in Afghanistan will begin a house-to-house polio vaccination drive next month after the new Taliban government agreed to support the campaign, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund said."

"The campaign, due to start on November 8, will be the first in more than three years aimed at all children in Afghanistan, including more than 3 million in remote and previously inaccessible areas."

The Guardian, [Critically ill Afghans suffer as Taliban tighten Pakistan border](#), 13 October 2021

"Shortage of specialised doctors in Afghanistan means patients seek lifesaving care in Pakistan, but conventions have changed [...]

Doctors and family members of patients say conventions at the border have changed since the Taliban takeover, which has made it more difficult for Afghan patients to seek lifesaving care in [Pakistan](#). [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghanistan's healthcare system, which already suffered from a shortage of specialised doctors and well-equipped facilities, has been critically wounded. Funding cuts from international donors have led to a dearth of medical supplies and equipment. Some doctors left during the early days of the Taliban rule, and others lost jobs at hospitals that could no longer afford to pay them. The head of the World Health Organization said late last month that Afghanistan's health system was on the brink of collapse."

Landinfo, Afghanistan: En humanitær krise, 13 October 2021

"The Afghan health service is close to collapse. Hospitals and clinics have no money for food, medicine, oxygen or diesel for power supplies. The crisis in the health care system affects treatment capacity, but also preventive work and vaccination programs. Health workers who still go to work cannot expect to be paid - they have not been paid for several months (Bolle & Røst 2021; Mandavilli 2021)."

Original excerpt in Norwegian [translated using Google translate]

"Den afghanske helsevesenet er nær kollaps. Sykehus og klinikker har verken penger til mat, medisiner, oksygen eller diesel til strømaggregater. Krisen i helsevesenet rammer behandlingskapasitet, men også forebyggende arbeid og vaksineringsprogrammer. Helsearbeidere som fortsatt går på jobb, kan ikke forvente å få lønn – de har ikke fått lønn på flere måneder (Bolle & Røst 2021; Mandavilli 2021)."

Ariana News, UN agency to pay salaries of Afghan health care workers, 7 October 2021

"The World Bank previously gave hundreds of millions of dollars to Afghanistan to cover workers and other health care needs but cut off its support after the government in Kabul was no longer officially recognized by most countries. The U.N. agency will be taking over the program from the World Bank this week in order to provide money to health care workers and the health care system in order to avoid a looming humanitarian crisis in the country, The Washington Post reported. Global Fund, a global health organization, donated \$15 million to the program at the beginning of October."

TOLO News, Provincial Health Centres Closed, Kabul Hospitals Crowded, 04 October 2021

"Officials at the state-owned hospitals said the citizens' access to health care has significantly declined across the country, so people mostly travel to the capital for medical treatment.

According to officials, the number of patients coming to Kabul's hospitals has increased after healthcare centers faced challenges in some provinces.

The shortage of medicine and professional staff are major challenges in Kabul city as well.

"As the healthcare centers were closed in the provinces, the number of patients increased in the capital's hospitals. There will not be sufficient capacity if the situation continues," said Parwiz Noori, head of the Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan Hospital.

"Kabul's hospitals are affected as well. We face a lack of medicine and doctors," said Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Shirani. [...] Provincial healthcare centers recently closed due to lack of medicine, medical equipment and doctors. [...]

Beds are full [...] and there is no medicine or doctors."

At the same time, the World Health Organization (WHO) released an assessment and warned that Afghanistan's healthcare system is facing a crisis.

The assessment says: "Only 17% of health facilities supported by Sehatmandi remain fully functional. Two thirds are experiencing stock-out of essential medicines. Without urgent action, they are at risk of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

closure.”

International organizations have repeatedly announced that Afghanistan’s healthcare system is at risk of collapse.”

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, SCA the only health service provider in Maidan Wardak, 4 October 2021

““Currently the health service in the provincial hospital is limited; there is no medicine or food for the patients. This is a problem that our poor people cannot bear,” he said. “Despite all these problems, we thank SCA for providing health services to the people of Afghanistan, as we are aware that health services in other provinces have declined. We call on SCA and other international bodies to help us. If they don’t help, a humanitarian catastrophe could happen in Afghanistan due to the lack of public health services.” About 650 patients daily receive health services in Maidan Shahr Provincial Hospital, including around 300 children and more than 150 female patients. This hospital with a capacity of 110 beds admits 85 to 90 patients every day, including patients who need maternal and surgical care.

Maidan Shahr Provincial Hospital previously provided wider services under Sehatmandi Health Project. Sehatmandi project supported 77 health centers in Wardak under a health contract funded by the World Bank. The contract was for 30 months beginning from January 2019 to June 2021. However, after the political transition in the country, the project ended up vague without signs of extension. This has affected the supply of health services in the province.

“It would be difficult to run such a big hospital and other clinics without having a project, but we are still providing patients with only essential life-saving services using SCA’s funds only. If these insufficient services are stopped, we are afraid of a deadly catastrophe for mothers, children and needy people in the country,” explained Dr. Mohammad Nader Rahmani, director of the Maidan Wardak Provincial Hospital. The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned in a new report that halting the budget for health projects in Afghanistan will close down more than 2,000 health centers in the country. This is while the Red Cross has also warned that more than seven million people in Afghanistan do not have access to basic health care.”

WHO, Dr Maragaret Harris - Emergencies in Lebanon and Afghanistan - Virtual Press conference, 23 September 2021

“WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [...]

“Those gains are now at severe risk with the country’s health system on the brink of collapse. There has been a surge in cases of measles and diarrhoea. Almost 50% of children are at risk of malnutrition. The resurgence of polio is a major risk and 2.1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine remain unused.”

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (13-19 September 2021), 23 September 2021

“Most public health facilities and hospitals are reportedly running low on medicines and other basic supplies due to a shortage of funding [...]

Health services remain limited in hospitals due to funding shortage. A number of medical units in the Nangarhar Regional Hospital and districts’ hospitals are reportedly closed.”

The Guardian, UN frees funds to prevent Afghan health system collapse, 22 September 2021

“The UN released emergency funds on Wednesday to help prevent Afghanistan’s battered healthcare system from collapsing, with the WHO chief warning of an imminent catastrophe.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

WHO, 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, 22 September 2021

“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.

Afghanistan is one of two countries in the world where polio remains endemic. With only one case of wild poliovirus reported so far this year, compared to 56 in 2020, there has never been a better time to eradicate polio. However, the polio programme will struggle to respond if the basic immunization infrastructure begins to collapse around it. Measles outbreaks are also spreading. With access to all communities no longer impeded, WHO and partners are ready to begin a country-wide house-to-house polio vaccination campaign and include measles and COVID vaccination in an integrated campaign”

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (30 August – 5 September 2021), 13 September 2021

“South: Limited health services in Uruzgan province

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

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

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

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

The New Humanitarian, Afghan healthcare under threat from international aid freeze, 6 September 2021

“International aid suspensions could shutter most of Afghanistan’s public health facilities, essentially leaving the country without a working healthcare system, officials and aid groups say.

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

What effect does COVID-19 have on the health care system?

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Prospects for children in 2022 A Global Outlook, July 2022

"COVID-19 has dramatically increased the number of food insecure people around the world with 45 million people now on the brink of famine. Food insecurity is greatest in conflict zones such as parts of Ethiopia, Yemen and Afghanistan, where children are disproportionately affected. Ongoing supply chain disruptions and the potential for further droughts in major breadbaskets could even trigger a food crisis at a global scale."

"While children living in rich countries can expect to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis earlier than those in poor countries, children living in humanitarian situations face a more permanent crisis. Record humanitarian needs are forecast in 2022, reflecting both long-standing conflicts as well as rapidly escalating emergencies from Afghanistan to Ethiopia to Myanmar. As climate change grows in severity each year, it will trigger new disasters, fuel instability, and exacerbate communities' existing vulnerabilities in health, nutrition, sanitation and their susceptibility to displacement and violence. If the global response to COVID-19 reveals the ill-health of multilateralism, conflict and climate change serve as a reminder that the deterioration of multilateralism has occurred when it is needed more keenly than ever."

WHO, COVID-19 Epidemiological Bulletin, Afghanistan - Epidemiological Week 19 (8 – 14 May 2022), 17 May 2022 [Covering the period of 19 March 2022 – 14 May 2022, Click hyperlink for the table]

"Since the beginning of the pandemic in Feb 2020, a total of 583,722 samples have been tested for COVID-19 through the public laboratories in the country. In week19-2022, 4,356 samples were tested in public labs, of which 283 samples tested positive for COVID-19 (percent positivity 6) and 6 new death was reported. This represents 192% and 200% increase in cases and deaths, respectively, compared to week 18 2022, (Table 1). Reduction in different figures during week18 coincided with long Eid holidays following the month of Ramadan. Although all COVID-19 labs were functional during the week18 but most of the mild/moderate cases were not willing to go to the lab for testing, in addition to delayed reporting in the system due to Eid holidays. Cumulatively, 179,279 confirmed cases (overall percent positivity 30.7) of COVID-19 with 7,691 associated deaths (case fatality ratio = 4.28%) have been reported in Afghanistan since Feb 2020. As of 14th May 2022, 90.4 %, cases have recovered. In week 19, 2022, the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases were reported in the Central East and East regions (69 and 55 cases, respectively) (Table 2). The top five provinces that reported positive cases included Kabul (43 cases), Nangarhar (43 cases), Parwan (28 cases), Kunduz (19 cases), and Zabul (19 cases). The WHO supported building the in-country capacity for genome sequencing, after training of two national staff on sequencing techniques in Dubai (December 2021). The WHO supported the procurement of the Oxford Nanopore Sequencer with the reagents and consumables. Initially, the plan is to conduct genome sequencing for COVID-19, with a plan to expand it to include other high-threat pathogens. The team is currently working on processing the COVID-19 samples for sequencing, the results will be shared when available."

Ava Press, Chloroquine cannot treat Covid-19: Medical experts, 28 April 2022

"Chloroquine is for primary used for treatment of malaria, however, due to different types of malaria, the drug is used together with other medicines.

Claim: Chloroquine can treat coronavirus.

Verdict: Health experts say chloroquine cannot only treat coronavirus, but the drug is harmful to the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

infected person. [...] Ahmad Shoaib, doctor in Taimani area of Kabul, said that chloroquine, or the malaria medicine, is more commonly used in warmer regions but not used in Kabul due to its cold climate. He said that the use of the drug recently increased for treatment of coronavirus because the tests of the virus showed a sign of inflammatory disease (malaria) and it was treated with the same drug with some good results. He said that the cases of coronavirus have decreased and the weather got cold, the use of the drug is now decreased to zero. The use of these drugs was high at the time of the outbreak of the coronavirus, and people would arbitrary use it during the time even if they were healthy, he said. He said that during the outbreak of the virus, the use of the drug had increased so much that all pharmacies ran out of it and its price jumped from 50 afghanis to 1,000 afghanis.

Health experts

Dr. Abdul Bayes Ahadpur, a specialist of internal medicine, told Pajhwok that in the first days of Covid-19 virus, some researches were conducted on the effect of this drug for the treatment of the disease. [...] He said that in June 2020 announced that the use of the drug is ineffective to treat coronavirus and the latest statement by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and WHO warned about the use of chloroquine for Covid-19 patients due to severe side effects such as heart disease, liver and kidney disease. [...] Ahadpur said that majority of drugs such as Chloroquine and Remdesivir, which were initially recommended for the treatment and reduction of the virus, were found to be ineffective with serious side effects in later studies. He recommended that people should follow preventive methods to secure themselves against the virus and if anyone infected, they should not use drugs that worsen the illness."

United Nations World Health Organisation (Afghanistan), UNICEF and WHO warn of perfect storm of conditions for measles outbreaks, affecting children, 27 April 2022

"Pandemic-related disruptions, increasing inequalities in access to vaccines, and the diversion of resources from routine immunization are leaving too many children without protection against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases. "Measles is more than a dangerous and potentially deadly disease. It is also an early indication that there are gaps in our global immunization coverage, gaps vulnerable children cannot afford," said Catherine Russell, UNICEF Executive Director. "It is encouraging that people in many communities are beginning to feel protected enough from COVID-19 to return to more social activities. But doing so in places where children are not receiving routine vaccination creates the perfect storm for the spread of a disease like measles." In 2020, 23 million children missed out on basic childhood vaccines through routine health services, the highest number since 2009 and 3.7 million more than in 2019.

Top 5 countries with reported measles cases in the last 12 months, until April 2022 ¹				
Country	Reported Measles cases	Rate per million cases	First dose measles coverage (%), 2019 ²	First dose measles coverage (%), 2020 ³
Afghanistan	3628	91	64	66

Countries with the largest measles outbreaks since the past year include Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Ethiopia. Insufficient measles vaccine coverage is the major reason for outbreaks, wherever they occur.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted immunization services, health systems have been overwhelmed, and we are now seeing a resurgence of deadly diseases including measles. For many other

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

diseases, the impact of these disruptions to immunization services will be felt for decades to come,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. “Now is the moment to get essential immunization back on track and launch catch-up campaigns so that everybody can have access to these life-saving vaccines.”

Coverage at or above 95% with 2 doses of the safe and effective measles vaccine can protect children against measles. However, COVID-19 pandemic related disruptions have delayed the introduction of the second dose of the measles vaccine in many countries.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network AAN, The Fourth Wave of Covid-19 Hits Afghanistan: “According to Sharia keeping yourself healthy is a must”, 20 April 2022

“Another wave of Covid-19 struck Afghanistan early in 2022 with doctors throughout the country reporting a rise in cases from January onwards. The devastation suffered by the Afghan health system since the suspension of most foreign aid following the Taliban takeover left it wholly unprepared to deal with the wave. While cases are now tailing off, AAN’s Rohullah Soroush and Thomas Ruttig (with input from Sayed Asad Sadat and Sayeda Rahimi) examine the impact of Taliban rule on Covid-19 reporting, assess the progress of vaccination campaigns and testing, and look at the many problems facing the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) as a result of the suspension of aid.”

AVA Press, Health Sector Faces Oxygen Shortage Amid COVID-19 Surge, 12 February 2022

“Doctors at the Afghan-Japan Hospital say despite the rapid spread of COVID-19 in Afghanistan, there is no provision of world aid, nor omicron diagnostic kits, and that oxygen shortages have become a serious problem.

The emergency department of the Afghan-Japan Hospital is once again full of COVID-19 patients these days, which includes youth and children. [...] “Our hospital has the capacity of 100 beds, but now we have 85 to 90 patients. Numbers are increasing day by day. The Ministry of Public Health must be prepared because we have not yet reached the peak stage of the disease. Perhaps in the coming weeks the situation will become more critical and the previous -19 private hospitals will be reactivated,” said Heshmatullah Faizi, a doctor at the -Japan Hospital. [...] Meanwhile, the doctors at the hospital say that it has been five months since they have received their salaries. According to them, they also face severe shortages of hygienic substances. “Right now, we only have oxygen for our patients for just one more day, but after that we will face a lack of oxygen,” said Ebadullah Ebad, head of the Afghan-Japan hospital's infectious diseases department. “The oxygen generating machine has the capacity to produce oxygen for 60 patients and is not enough for us.””

TOLO News, 21 COVID-19 Centers Closed in Last 6 Months, Infections Rising, 7 February 2022

“At least 21 COVID-19 care centers have been closed across the country within the past six months due to financial issues, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said on Monday. [...] According to Hajir, 36 COVID-19 care centers were active before the fall of the former government, but at least 21 of them are closed now because of a lack of equipment and financial issues. The MoPH also reported 479 cases recorded in 16 of 34 provinces over the last 24 hours. The Afghan-Japan Hospital, the main COVID-19 treatment center, said the number of patients it recorded within the past week increased by 80 percent compared to the previous week.”

AVA Press, Health officials raise concern over sharp increase in COVID-19 cases, 7 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Ministry of Public Health officials said Sunday that in the past week 800 new cases of COVID-19 have been recorded, with Kabul, Kapisa and Maidan Wardak provinces registering the highest number of new infections.

[...] Hashmat , the head of the intensive care unit at the Afghan-Japan hospital said they had seen a sharp increase in the number of cases recently. He also said the hospital is struggling financially and has appealed to the international community for help.”

ANI, [Afghanistan sees sharp spike in Covid cases](#), 28 January 2022

“Kabul [...] Airing concern over the sharp increase of patients infected by COVID-19, the doctors on Thursday said that the number of reported patients showing the symptoms of the new COVID-19 variant has risen by 70 per cent within the past week compared to the week before.”

Global Shelter Cluster (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan - Joint Winterization Plan 2021-22](#), 20 January 2022

“The outbreak of COVID-19 has also touched every facet of life for the people of Afghanistan, in many cases exacerbating existing humanitarian and development needs. Between April 2020 and 08 July 2021, a total of 131,586 people was infected with COVID-19 with the deaths of 5,561. Since the beginning of the third wave in June 2021, there has been an exponential increase in the number of cases, with an average of over 2,000 new cases and 100 deaths per day. As of 29 July 2021, only 0.6% of the population received fully vaccination (two doses); and only 2% of the population received the first dose. Presidential decrees (2020) was issued to avoid large crowds and upscale hand-hygiene, and Ministry of Interior Affairs (Moi) banned large gatherings, sporting and entertainment events. According to IOM and UNHCR, cross-border movement from Iran and Pakistan will remain a key challenge in 2021, primarily due to reduced employment opportunities amid the economic crisis partially caused by COVID-19. Even before COVID-19, an estimated ninety three percent (93%) of people were living on less than \$2 per person per day. [...] The winter month’s season brings with it a rise in respiratory infection outbreaks. WoAA reported that there is constant increase in hospitalizations, morbidity and mortality during winter months. The exposure to cold has often been associated with increased incidence and severity of respiratory tract infections and dying from them. The longer the duration of exposure the higher the risk of infection. Some 25% to 30% of deaths in children below five years are due to respiratory tract infections, 90% of these deaths are due to pneumonia. Furthermore, in many parts of the country, major roads are blocked during the winter months limiting the provision of timely and sufficient life-saving medical supplies to communities isolated during the winter months.”

Avapress, [Taliban Awaits Global Assistance to Counter the COVID-19 Threat](#), 19 January 2022

“Kabul resident Nisar Ahmad Hooshmand says that although the country’s doctors and health staff are professionally trained, the lack of facilities, including the lack of diagnostic kits for omicrons, lack of oxygen, and medicine, is worrying.

Reporters are also concerned that no data has been available on the prevalence of Covid-19 in Afghanistan in the past five months. Merajuddin, a reporter and presenter of Ayna TV, said: “It has been five months since the daily publication of coronavirus statistics was stopped and, no one is aware of the current situation and possible dangers.” [...]

In an interview with Hasht-e Subh, Morteza Samimi, a journalist from Balkh province, said that the lack of access to new statistics on the coronavirus in the country was worrying. According to him, secrecy can lead us to an undelightful fate. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Meanwhile, some doctors and medical staff are also worried about not treating patients due to the lack of facilities. The Taliban Ministry of Public Health is currently unable to determine the type of coronavirus. [...]

the means to deal with the virus were limited and that trained medical staff had been laid off since August. Mostamandiyar also said that there is no human resources capacity in the country in the fight against Corona. For example, there are no omicron detectors in Kabul and Bamiyan provinces. [...]

Mahboob Ahmadi, a doctor working in the field of coronavirus infection, says that he has left his job due to the lack of facilities to save the lives of medical staff. Ahmadi added that the safety of the medical staff, even though they were at the forefront of the fight against the Coronavirus, was not observed because the facilities were very limited. As a former medical staff, he noted that the problem is not in the specialization of the medical staff, but following the recent developments and the bankruptcy of the country's health system in terms of facilities, the success possibility against the fourth wave of Corona is lower."

Ariana News, [Afghanistan unable to detect omicron variant: health ministry](#), 17 January 2022

"Public Health Ministry officials said Monday that Afghanistan's health sector does not have the medical equipment needed to detect the newly mutated version of the coronavirus and as such, they have no idea how many people are infected with the omicron variant.

While the case number in Afghanistan is lower compared to neighboring countries, the ministry of health says the latest data put the number of cases at 40. However, it's not known how many have the omicron variant.

"We have problems to identify the new variant of COVID-19. We call on the international community to help us. They vowed that they will continue their help," said Javid Hazher, spokesman for the ministry of public health.

Meanwhile, staff at the Afghan-Japan Hospital, the main COVID-19 treatment center in Kabul, said that between 15 and 20 patients seek treatment at the hospital daily, however they are not able to detect the variant.

"So far, the mutated type of COVID-19 has not been identified because we have not received the diagnostic device and we have asked the Ministry of Health to make the device available as soon as possible," said Mohammad Anil, HR director of the hospital."

Al Jazeera, [Afghanistan healthcare 'on brink of collapse' amid Omicron scare](#), 16 December 2021

"Without outside help, "we are not ready for Omicron. A disaster will be here," said Dr Shereen Agha, the 38-year-old head of the hospital's intensive care unit. The hospital was short even of basic supplies like examination gloves, he said, and its two ambulances sit idle for lack of fuel."

TOLO News, [34 COVID-19 Centers Close Across Afghanistan](#), 17 November 2021

"In the meantime, citizens are deeply worried about the closure of COVID-19 centers, and ask other countries to support Afghanistan's health sector. Health officials said that thirty-four hospitals and centers treating COVID-19 patients have been closed after international aid was cut off in Afghanistan. [...]

This comes as the Afghan-Japan Hospital officials and staff announced on November 10 that the center will be closed if the medical staff does not receive five months' worth of unpaid wages within the week.

Officials and medical staff of the Afghan-Japan Hospital began their strike last Tuesday, claiming the hospital faces a lack of medicine and medical equipment."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO), Foreign Travel Advice: Afghanistan - Coronavirus, Last updated: 5 November 2021

"There is no guarantee that any local health care will be available in the current security situation. Healthcare in Afghanistan is very limited. Medical facilities, including those in Kabul, do not have the capacity or capability to effectively deal with the COVID-19 outbreak. The supply of ICU beds and ventilators remains low. There are areas which have no medical facilities with ICU beds and ventilators. COVID-19 treatment centres in Afghanistan are experiencing severe shortages of commodities and drugs. The vaccination programme only recently resumed and is operating at a very low level."

AVA Press, Officials warn of possible 4th wave of COVID-19 in Afghanistan, 27 October 2021

"Afghanistan's health officials on Tuesday warned of a possible 4th wave of COVID-19 in the country, adding that treatment possibilities have been minimized recently. [...] "There is no medical equipment such as drugs and other (necessities) to fight the 4th wave of COVID-19 in Afghanistan," said Qayamuddin, a doctor at the hospital. This comes after the WHO said that 1.6 million doses of the in Afghanistan will expire if it is not used."

Landinfo, Afghanistan: En humanitær krise, 13 October 2021

"Like the rest of the world, Afghanistan is also affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. To what extent we do not know. There is great underreporting and unreliable data on the number of infected and dead as a result of the pandemic. Neither before nor after the Taliban took power has the health service had the capacity to test on a large scale. There are no records of deaths (Essar et al. 2021, p. 1).

At the end of September 2021, Covid-19 was registered as the cause of death in approximately 7,200 cases, while about 155,000 people had been diagnosed with the infection. On nationwide, only 750,000 of a population of about 33 million are tested. About 4 percent of the population is vaccinated. The vaccination rate is particularly low in rural areas (OCHA 2021, p. 5; Reuters 2021).

Afghanistan has had three waves of infection, the third with a peak in June / July 2021. The infectious delta variant dominated the country. The hospitals were full, there was a lack of oxygen and many died (Sarwar 2021; Essar et al. 2021)."

Original excerpt in Norwegian [translated using Google translate]
"I likhet med resten av verden, er også Afghanistan rammet av Covid-19- pandemien. I hvor stor grad vet vi ikke. Det er stor underreportering og upålitelige data om antallet smittede og døde som følge av pandemien. Verken før eller etter Talibans maktovertakelse har helsevesenet hatt kapasitet til å teste i stor skala. Det finnes ikke registre over dødsfall (Essar et al. 2021, s. 1).

Ved utgangen av september 2021 er Covid-19 registrert som dødsårsak i cirka 7200 tilfeller, mens om lag 155 000 personer hadde fått påvist smitte. På landsbasis er kun 750 000 av en befolkning på om lag 33 millioner testet. Rundt 4 prosent av befolkningen er vaksinert. Vaksinasjonsgraden er særlig lav på landsbygda (OCHA 2021, s. 5; Reuters 2021).

Afghanistan har hatt tre smittebølger, den tredje med topp i juni/juli 2021. Den smittsomme deltavarianten dominerte i landet. Sykehusene var fulle, det var mangel på oksygen og mange døde (Sarwar 2021; Essar et al. 2021)."

What treatment for mental health conditions is available?

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, Afghanistan six months after the Taliban takeover- photo essay, 4 March 2022

"The Kabul-based International Psychological Organisation (IPSO) has said Afghanistan is a "trauma state", estimating that 70% of Afghans are in need of psychological support."

AVA Press, Mental illness a silent threat to Afghanistan, 30 September 2021

"A mental health expert, concerned about the increase in psychological problems among people, warns the number of such patients will double if factors behind it are not prevented.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_ involves a wide range of disorders that affect the ability to think, feel and behave properly. The affected individuals cannot handle their daily affairs well.

Misbehavior, aggression, lack of concentration, depression, lack of interest and enjoyment, bullying, irritability, rapid weight change, fear, anxiety, changes in eating habits, extreme exhaustion, inability to cope with daily problems, excessive anger, violence and suicidal tendencies are some the symptoms of mental problems.

In line with the data from the Ministry of Public Health, 46 percent of the country's population, or 35 million people, do not have mental health.

In an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, Dr. Azizuddin Himmat, a mental health specialist and head of the Afghan psychologists' union, said: "We have to say that the number of people with mental illness is higher than what was provided by the MoPH because there is conflict, insecurity and economic problems in the past 40 years."

Referring to the change of government and problems arising in various areas, he said: "Since the day the country's political system changed, insecurity had decreased.

"Unfortunately, people are not mental calm. There are factors have cause people psychological pain and a surge in their problems." [...]

"You know, the most affected people in this situation are women and girls. After the change in the political system two months ago, they remain at home. [...]

"If such factors are not prevented, believe me, the number of people with mental illness will increase significantly. I can say, mental illness is a catastrophe that threatens Afghanistan silently," said Dr. Himmat. [...]

Stressed the need for the opening of girls' schools and higher education centers as soon as possible and women should be employed, he added: "I believe if the Islamic Emirate do so, not only they will gain popularity, but also national and international community's support." "

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

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Taliban must immediately stop unlawful killings and arbitrary arrests in Panjshir, 16 June 2022

"Zaman Sultani, Amnesty International's South Asia Researcher, said: "Constantly, reports are coming of arbitrary arrests and unlawful killings of civilians by the Taliban in Panjshir. Events in the last couple of weeks leave little room for doubt that there is a growing pattern of extrajudicial executions and arbitrary arrests committed by the Taliban... Amnesty International is gravely concerned about reports that those arbitrarily arrested are also facing physical torture and beatings that, in some cases, even resulted in death, as has been reported in the case of Abdul Munir Amini on 4 June"

"On 12 June 2022, the Taliban shot dead Murzataza, a resident of Khesa-Awal district of Panjshir who reportedly was also suffering from mental illness. On 4 June 2022, the spokesperson for the Taliban

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Governor of Panjshir Province in a video statement to the media said that fewer than 40 people were arrested. In Panjshir the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, an armed group fighting against the Taliban, has strong presence. One of those arrested, Abdul Munir Amini, was reportedly tortured to death. Media reports suggest that a larger number of civilians than admitted by the Taliban have been arbitrarily arrested from various different districts of Panjshir in the past few weeks."

Al Jazeera, Now in power, Taliban sets sights on Afghan drug underworld, 11 October 2021

"Now the uncontested rulers of Afghanistan, the Taliban has set its sights on stamping out the scourge of narcotics addiction, even if by force.

At nightfall, the battle-hardened fighters-turned-policemen scour the capital's drug-ravaged underworld. Below Kabul's bustling city bridges, amid piles of garbage and streams of filthy water, hundreds of homeless men addicted to heroin and methamphetamines are rounded up, beaten and forcibly taken to treatment centres.

The Associated Press gained rare access to one such raid last week.

The scene provided a window into the new order under Taliban governance: The men – many with mental illness, according to doctors – sat against stone walls with their hands tied. They were told to sober up or face beatings.

How are people with mental health conditions treated by society?

Afghan Voice Agency, Mental illness rise in hospitals, 31 August 2022

"Doctors believe that severe economic conditions, joblessness and the youth's lack of access to education, are the main reasons for the increase of mental problems."

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

ICRC, Afghanistan: A changed perspective to disability helps her inspire others, 3 August 2022

"The ICRC's physical rehabilitation programme, which was one of our first activities in the country, began in Kabul almost 35 years ago. Now, there are a total of seven ICRC-run physical rehabilitation centres – in Kabul, Gulbahar, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Faizabad and Lashkar Gah."

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"Access to basic services including healthcare is also diminishing. According to the World Health Organization, some 18.1 million people are in need of health services, including 3.19 million children under five. Compounding all of this is the glaring absence of functioning national mechanisms to monitor human rights violations, severely limiting the ability to provide basic protection for the Afghan people, especially vulnerable groups such as children, people with disabilities, internally displaced people, minorities, and LGBTQI communities."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Persons with disabilities faced increased barriers to reproductive health resources as a result of decreased access to transportation, education, and social support. [...] Persons with disabilities could not access education, health services, public buildings, and transportation on an equal basis with others.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Persons with disabilities faced barriers such as limited access to educational opportunities, inability to access government buildings, difficulty in acquiring government identification required for many government services and voting, lack of economic opportunities, and social exclusion due to stigma. [...] The World Institute on Disability (WID) estimated that 90 percent of persons with disabilities were unemployed as a result of entrenched social biases and faced barriers to accessing public services including health and education. According to WID, persons with disabilities also faced barriers to accessing education, transportation, and health care. Lack of security remained a problem for disability programs throughout the year. Insecurity in remote areas, where a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities lived, precluded delivery of assistance in some cases. Most buildings remained inaccessible to persons with disabilities, prohibiting many from benefitting from education, health care, and other services.”

What treatment is available for people with drug-addiction issues?

ToloNews, Drug Addicts Describe Difficult Life in Herat, 10 July 2022

Dozens of drug addicts are living in open areas under the sun in the western province of Herat.

[...]

The drug addicts said that they are suffering from other diseases but there is no one consider their situation.

“There are no jobs. I got addicted to it due to lack of work. We don’t have any place and we lay down here,” said Mohamad Riza, a drug addict.

The provincial health officials said that around 1,500 drug addicts have been collected from the streets in nearly one last year.

“Around 1,200 drug addicts have been either sent to their provinces or handed over to their families in Herat city or districts after they were treated,” said Sayed Mohammad Sadat, a health official.

[...]

Based on available numbers, more than 70,000 of people are addicted to drugs, of whom women and children are %13.

Gandhara, Scared Straight: Taliban Treats Drug Addicts With A Heavy Dose Of Prison, 4 April 2022

“One of the Taliban's first moves upon seizing power in Afghanistan was to take extreme measures to tackle the country's drug epidemic. To that end, thousands of addicts have been rounded up, beaten, and marched off to prison, where they have been forced to go cold turkey among hardened criminals for months. Dawood, who was rounded up along with hundreds of other addicts in the southwestern province of Farah, says the harsh methods employed by the prison were ineffective. Within weeks of his release two months ago, he was using again. "I have been suffering from this disease for 10 years. I was sent to prison by the Taliban's government, but the treatment didn't work," he told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "I want to go to a rehabilitation center, because they provide better treatment." Afghanistan is home to an estimated 3.5 million addicts, a number that accounts for nearly 10 percent of the population. While there were some 100 drug-treatment centers operating in the country before the hard-line Islamist group returned to power in August, many that depended on foreign funding are closed or struggling to remain open. Government facilities, meanwhile, are overwhelmed with the new forced arrivals. The leading drugs of choice in Afghanistan are opioids that derive from the opium poppy that flourishes in the country despite years of eradication efforts and attempts to sow alternative crops. But aside from heroin and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

morphine, an increasing number of Afghans are now hooked on crystal meth, which drug traders have learned to produce from ephedra plants that grow wild in the central highlands. [...] Today, Afghanistan is well-entrenched as the world's leading producer of opium, generating up to \$2.7 billion in income in 2021. [...] In his first press conference in August, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid vowed that the group would again ban opium poppy cultivation and trafficking. Months later Mujahid backtracked, saying a ban would deny Afghans a major source of income. However, on April 3, Mujahid announced a new decree by Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada that banned opium-poppy cultivation and drug manufacturing. The decree also ordered the destruction of opium crops and prohibited the trade and transport of a range of drugs. [...]"

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Heroin use in Kabul grows under Taliban, say locals, 10 February 2022

"The Pul-e-Sukhta bridge in Kabul is synonymous with hard drug use. After many NGOs and charities fled Afghanistan, drug addicts have been largely left on their own. And the number of users is swelling, residents say."

Ariana News, IEA turns Kandahar Prison into treatment center for drug addicts, 25 December 2021

"Kandahar Central Prison is home to around 800 drug addicts, along with 1,000 inmates."

BBC, 'It's like hell in here': The struggle to save Afghanistan's starving babies, 2 December 2021

"(...) another hospital specialising in treating drug addicts is also struggling to adequately care for its patients, whose withdrawal from heroin, opium and crystal meth can no longer be supported with medication.

"There are patients who have to be tied to the bed with chains, or there are patients who need to be handcuffed because they experience severe attacks. It's very difficult for us to take care of them," says Dr Nowruz, the hospital's director, adding that - without proper care - "our hospital is exactly the same as jail for them".

But this hospital too is on the brink of closing in the face of dwindling staff, and if it does shut, Dr Nowruz worries what will become of his patients in the brutal winter ahead.

"There is no shelter for them. They normally go and live in places like under bridges, in ruins, in graveyards, in a situation which is unbearable for a human," he says.

Al Jazeera, Now in power, Taliban sets sights on Afghan drug underworld, 11 October 2021

"Now the uncontested rulers of Afghanistan, the Taliban has set its sights on stamping out the scourge of narcotics addiction, even if by force.

At nightfall, the battle-hardened fighters-turned-policemen scour the capital's drug-ravaged underworld. Below Kabul's bustling city bridges, amid piles of garbage and streams of filthy water, hundreds of homeless men addicted to heroin and methamphetamines are rounded up, beaten and forcibly taken to treatment centres.

The Associated Press gained rare access to one such raid last week.

The scene provided a window into the new order under Taliban governance: The men – many with mental illness, according to doctors – sat against stone walls with their hands tied. They were told to sober up or face beatings.

The heavy-handed methods are welcomed by some health workers, who have had no choice but to adapt to Taliban rule. "We are not in a democracy anymore, this is a dictatorship. And the use of force is the only way to treat these people," said Dr Fazalrabi Mayar, working in a treatment facility. He was referring

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

specifically to Afghans addicted to heroin and meth.””

Women

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

Human Rights Watch, Futures In The Balance: Taking Action To Ensure Afghan Women's & Girls' Rights Under Taliban Rule, 17 August 2022

“Severe food insecurity, an economic crisis, human rights abuses targeting women and girls, and overt gender discrimination have brought Afghanistan to the brink of humanitarian collapse and eroded decades of progress towards development and gender equality.”

Human Rights Watch, Joint UK Parliamentary Briefing on Afghanistan, 17 August 2022

“Taliban authorities have harassed and detained human rights defenders, women’s rights activists, journalists, and female protesters who peacefully demanded their right to work and other freedoms; summarily executed or forcibly disappeared more than a hundred people associated with the former government; tortured people in custody; and increasingly censored or imposed wide-ranging restrictions on the media and free speech.”

“The Taliban have imposed an array of policies violating virtually every aspect of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. They dismissed all women from leadership posts in the civil service and prohibited girls in most provinces from attending secondary school. In March, they extended their earlier ban on girls’ secondary education, striking a devastating blow to millions of girls and their families. Taliban decrees prohibit women from traveling unless accompanied by a male relative and require women’s faces be covered in public—including women TV newscasters.”

“The Afghan economy collapsed after August 2021, as millions of people lost salaries when the US, World Bank, and other donors stripped the Central Bank of Afghanistan of its foreign assets and access to financial assistance. Afghanistan now faces a severe humanitarian crisis. About 95 percent of Afghan households are facing acute food insecurity—the result of an economic meltdown set off by widespread lost income, cash shortages, and rising food costs, along with a lack of medicine and a rise in malnutrition-related disease. Afghan children are starving to death nearly every day, humanitarian organisations reported in January.”

Qantara, One year of Taliban Rule: How life has changed for Afghans, 17 August 2022

“The Taliban have not fulfilled most of their promises under the 2020 Doha agreement. They have been reluctant to form an inclusive government in the country, while girls above grade 6 are not allowed to go to school. Also, women are not permitted to work in most sectors and they can only visit public parks on specific days.”

BBC News, Taliban break up rare protest by Afghan women in Kabul, 14 August 2022

“Since the Taliban takeover, women rights' have been severely restricted... In the year since the Taliban returned to power, they have issued various orders restricting the freedom of women - barring them from

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

most government jobs, secondary education and from travelling more than 45 miles (70km) without a male guardian. In May, the militants decreed that Afghan women will have to wear the Islamic face veil for the first time in decades. If a woman refuses to comply, her male guardians could be sent to jail for three days - although this is not always enforced. There have been minor sporadic protests over the past year, but any form of dissent is being crushed. Afghanistan is the only country in the world that officially limits education by gender - a major sticking point in the Taliban's attempts to gain international legitimacy. Girls have been banned from receiving secondary education, the ministry for women's affairs has been disbanded, and in many cases women have not been allowed to work."

List of Taliban Policies Violating Women's Rights in Afghanistan by Heather Barr dated 29 September 2021
[Note that these are presented in Tweets]

The National News, Life under Taliban cages Afghan women and girls, former human rights chief says, 3 August 2022

"The futures of millions of Afghan women have been stolen by repressive Taliban policies, resulting in a mental health crisis, the former head of Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission has said."

"In the year since the extremist group took over Afghanistan it has imposed movement restrictions, draconian dress codes and effective education bans on women and girls."

"The hardline rulers have banned girls from joining secondary schools in almost all provinces."

The Khaama Press News Agency, U.S. Senators Urge UN to Take 'Meaningful Actions' in Defense of Afghans Rights, 29 July 2022

"At least four American senators voiced their concerns over human rights violations in Afghanistan in a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres, saying "we must not stand by as the Taliban seeks to erase the human rights of Afghan women and girls.""

"The United Nations has an opportunity to take meaningful actions that will send a clear, unequivocal message to the world that its member nations will defend the human rights of Afghans, particularly women and girls," the letter reads, as TOLONews quoted."

"Emphasizing on the ever-increasing restrictions and ongoing violation of human rights by the Taliban leadership, these senators urged the United Nations to exclude Taliban of any seat at the United Nations."

Violence against women

Pajhwok, Casualties in Afghanistan down by 73pc last week, 28 August 2022

"Casualties

Fifteen individuals were killed and seven others injured in different violent incidents in the country last week.

Three civilians and an individual carrying explosives were killed in a blast in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province. Two robbers were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces last week, according to reports.

In Badghis, a man killed his neighbour before the murderer was gunned down during an exchange of fire with security forces.

Security force killed two robbers in Kabul during a clash, says a report.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

In Faryab, a man killed his sister along with her lover over their alleged illicit relationship. In Farah, a woman killed his father-in-law and in Badghis another woman shot dead her husband. During investigations, the woman insisted she had killed her husband unintentionally. According to reports, a woman axed her niece to death and wounded her husband. A militant commander was killed in Samangan while two people were gunned down in Paktia over a land dispute. Reports said Iranian security forces killed an Afghan on the border between the two nations. The casualty figures were obtained from reports available to Pajhwok Afghan News. However, there is a possibility of reports regarding some violent incidents being missed or sources not providing exact casualty figures.”

Khaama Press, Running Away from Home: Taliban Arrests Three Girls in Western Afghanistan, 23 August 22

“Three young girls have reportedly been arrested by Herat policewomen for the crime of home escape, according to local Taliban authorities in the western Afghan province of Herat. These three girls were reportedly taken into custody from the 6th district of Herat city, the provincial capital, according to the Taliban government’s office of the chief of police in Herat. The case concerning the three young girls has reportedly been brought before the appropriate judicial agencies and authorities in Herat for consideration. The Herat police chief’s office, however, provided no further information regarding the reasons why the three girls left their homes. A boy and a girl from the fifth district of Kunduz province in northern Afghanistan were earlier arrested by Taliban security officers on grounds of running away from home. Afghan women have been subjected to forced marriages and domestic violence, and Human Rights Watch reports that up to 70% of cases of “running away” from home are related to fleeing forced marriage or domestic violence.”

Khaama Press, Brother Kills Sister, 19, in Northern Afghanistan by Shooting Her with Father’s Gun. 20 August 2022

“Using his father’s gun at home, an 11-year-old boy shot and killed his 19-year-old sister, according to local Taliban authorities in the northern Faryab province of Afghanistan. The incident, according to the Taliban officials, took place on Friday, August 19, at the Khwaja Khwab Mosque area of the Andkhoy district of the Faryab province. Local sources confirmed that this 11-year-old boy used his father’s gun, an Ak-47 (Kalashnikov) to shoot at his 19-year-old sister, who was killed when the bullet struck her in the head. These sources state that the findings of their preliminary inquiries suggest that someone else is responsible for the murder, not the 11-year-old boy who materialized the act. [...] Since the Taliban took control, domestic violence has worsened, and Afghanistan is currently seeing its highest rates of unemployment, and poverty. As a result, the number of homicides, suicides, and interpersonal conflicts has increased.”

Center for Strategic & International Studies, New Century, Old Taliban, 18 August 2022

“In December 2021, the Taliban forbade women from going to healthcare appointments without a male relative, and prohibited taxi drivers from picking up unveiled women or driving any unaccompanied woman farther than 78 kilometers. Though the Taliban had promised to reopen girls’ schools in March, when the deadline came, they reneged on their promise and, within days, imposed even more restrictions on women, including banning unchaperoned air travel and sex-segregating public parks. In May 2022, the Taliban officially announced that all women must wear head-to-toe coverings when in public and “encouraged” Afghan women not to leave home at all—formalizing a stance they had taken since the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

capture of Kabul in September 2021. The Taliban have also closed shelters for victims of domestic violence and trafficking, and harassed and disappeared civil society actors involved in that work, even going so far as to punish domestic violence and trafficking victims for committing “moral crimes.” Given that 9 out of 10 Afghan women report experiencing at least one form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime, these changes are particularly devastating”

Amnesty, The Rule of Taliban: A Year of Violence, Impunity and False Promises, 15 August 2022

“This is often the case, women and girls are disproportionately affected by the dire economic and humanitarian situation. There are thousands of women who were the sole breadwinners for their families. Some of these women are widows who have been providing support to their children and elderly in-laws and parents. These women are facing a dire financial situation for losing their income.”

“In addition to domestic abuse, women are at a heightened risk of sexual and genderbased violence from the Taliban soldiers or local communities if they seek to exercise their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. Dozens of women have been arrested and tortured for holding peaceful rallies demanding their rights.”

“Women have also been subjected to violence by the Taliban as a way of punishing their family members. On 27 June 2022, the Taliban attacked and killed a 22-year-old woman named Lida who was eight months pregnant, along with her two children, aged two and four. Lida was attacked in district four of Qala Naw city, Badghis province, in an apparent act of retaliation against her husband, who was a military officer under the previous regime”

“Peaceful women protesters are routinely insulted and beaten by Taliban soldiers, while many women attending such gatherings have been arbitrarily detained. Journalists covering the protests also frequently face beatings and arrests.”

Inter Press Service News Agency, Gender Equality & Women’s Rights Wiped out Under the Taliban, 15 August 2022

“In the year that has passed since the Taliban’s takeover in Afghanistan we have seen daily and continuous deterioration in the situation of Afghan women and girls. This has spanned every aspect of their human rights, from living standards to social and political status. It has been a year of increasing disrespect for their right to live free and equal lives, denying them opportunity to livelihoods, access to health care and education, and escape from situations of violence...It is the only country in the world where girls are banned from going to high school. There are no women in the Taliban’s cabinet, no Ministry of Women’s Affairs, thereby effectively removing women’s right to political participation. Women are, for the most part, also restricted from working outside the home, and are required to cover their faces in public and to have a male chaperone when they travel. Furthermore, they continue to be subjected to multiple forms of Gender Based Violence. This deliberate slew of measures of discrimination against Afghanistan’s women and girls is also a terrible act of self-sabotage for a country experiencing huge challenges including from climate-related and natural disasters to exposure to global economic headwinds that leave some 25 million Afghan people in poverty and many hungry.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), UN Special Rapporteur Condemns Violent Suppression of Afghan Women's 'Peaceful' Protest, 14 August 2022

"In response to the Taliban forces' suppression of women's protest on Saturday, August 13, UN official, Bennett, tweeted that the Taliban's excessive use of force and mistreatment against women's "peaceful" demonstration in Kabul is a breach of their right to freedom of assembly and association. He publicly condemned the Taliban's actions and stated that they had disrupted peaceful assembly by firing rifle bullets, inducing "intimidation, harassment," and other methods. The Taliban reportedly arrested some journalists and protesting women while suppressing the women's march in Kabul that shouted the slogans "bread, work, and freedom."...According to the UN experts, there have been stringent restrictions on access to information, which has hampered journalistic freedom. In order to avoid being recognized, journalists, civil rights activists, and human rights activists have either left the country or stopped all of their activities."

Deutsche Welle, Fact check: Have the Taliban kept their promises?, 11 August 2022

"Women must cover themselves from head to toe in public. If a woman doesn't cover her face outside the home, her father or closest male relative could be imprisoned or fired from government jobs. Women can't board planes without a male guardian, who has to be her husband or a close male relative past puberty. Entry to public parks in Afghanistan is limited by gender. Three days are reserved for women, four for men. However, according to a decree, it is strongly recommended that women leave home only when necessary... The Taliban have also restricted access to work in certain sectors, as outlined in a report by Amnesty International. "Most female government employees have been told to stay at home, with the exception of those working in certain sectors such as health and education," the report said. "The Taliban's policy appears to be that they will only allow women who cannot be replaced by men to keep working." Many women in high-level positions, even in the private sector, have been dismissed... Women who have protested against the Taliban's restrictions and policies have been harassed, threatened, arrested and even tortured, said Amnesty International."

The Guardian, 'They beat girls just for smiling': life in Afghanistan one year after the Taliban's return, 7 August 2022

"Maryam is near the top of her sixth grade class in Kabul, which under Taliban rule means that her education should be ending in a few months. But the 10-year-old, whose name we have changed to protect her identity, has a strategy to stay in school for another year, and her eyes dance with satisfaction as she explains her plan. "I will make sure I don't answer too many questions right. I have decided to fail, so I can study sixth grade again." [...] Women face harsher restrictions here than anywhere else in the world, barred from secondary education and most work outside healthcare and education. They are forced to be accompanied by a male guardian for all but short journeys and required to cover their faces in public. Restrictions are enforced intermittently but, particularly for poorer and more vulnerable women

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

including those without a guardian, the fear of enforcement alone can be crippling. “Three times now I’ve seen women being beaten in the market by Taliban. Some were wearing trousers they thought were too tight, you should have seen how broken they were afterwards,” said Farkhunda, 16, who had to stop school in September and has been battling depression. “Another time they beat girls just for smiling and talking too loud. It’s a natural thing to chat about dresses you are buying and things,” she said.” She doesn’t have Taliban-regulation long, black abaya and the family can’t afford to buy one. “Since then I’ve even stopped going to study at the madrassa [religious school], it’s better to be at home than run into these animals,” she said.”

TOLO News, Accused Men, Women Publically Whipped in Zabul, 7 August 2022

“Information and Culture department head Rahmatullah Hamad said that in Zabul two women and one man were publically whipped for committing adultery and another two men were whipped for robbery. Earlier, the leader of the Islamic Emirate, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, said that all previous laws will be considered null, and Sharia law will be implemented in the country. Dozens of locals gathered to watch the public punishment.”

The Khaama Press News Agency, Badghis Woman Murdered Mysteriously by Unknown Men, 2 August 2022

“Due to a sharp surge in family violence and interpersonal animosity, the number of reports of domestic violence and violence against women that resulted in homicides has substantially increased.”

“Over 100 women and girls are alleged to have been killed, abducted, or committed suicide in the last six months, according to a report by the Afghanistan International news channel.”

The Khaama Press News Agency, Young Man Kills Self in Central Afghanistan Under the Pressure of Domestic Violence, 2 August 2022

“In the central Afghan province of Ghor, a young man allegedly killed himself with a pistol as a result of family violence, according to local Taliban security authorities.”

“Afghanistan is in the midst of the “worst humanitarian crisis” since the Taliban came to power and is at its worst in terms of poverty, unemployment, and hunger, all of which have a direct or indirect impact on the crime rate.”

“Domestic violence, personal animosity, and family blood feuds have increased recently, leading to more suicides, homicides, target killings, and honor killings.”

The Khaama Press News Agency, Badghis Woman Murdered Mysteriously by Unknown Men, 2 August 2022

“Unidentified individuals mysteriously killed a woman in Badghis province, in northwestern Afghanistan, said Taliban local security officials.”

“Earlier, another woman was mysteriously murdered in Badghis province’s Qala-e-Naw district, which is the provincial capital, in late June.”

“Despite the Taliban’s claims that security is in place, unexplained, mysterious murders and other crimes continue in several provinces across Afghanistan.”

The Khaama Press News Agency, Man Brutally Kills Wife in Eastern Afghanistan, 1 August 2022

“The number of reports of domestic violence resulting in homicides has dramatically increased due to a large rise in family violence and personal animosity.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"In the past six months, over 100 women and girls are said to have been killed, kidnapped, or committed suicide, according to a report by the Afghanistan International news channel."

Deutsche Well, Afghan women report beatings, abuse under Taliban, 27 July 2022

"The Taliban have 'decimated' the rights of Afghan women and girls since they returned to power in Afghanistan almost a year ago, an Amnesty International report said on Wednesday. This includes rights to education, work and free movement which have been severely curtailed under the draconian rules of the regime. 'Every daily detail — whether they go to school, if and how they work, if and how they leave the house — is controlled and heavily restricted. This suffocating crackdown against Afghanistan's female population is increasing day-by-day,' said Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General. The report titled 'Death in Slow Motion: Women and Girls Under Taliban Rule' interviewed more than a hundred Afghan women and girls and revealed that those who protested against the restrictions were 'threatened, arrested, detained, tortured, and forcibly disappeared.'" "Women are also being arbitrarily detained and tortured for crimes such as appearing in public with a man who does not qualify as "mahram" - a male chaperone. Survivors of domestic and gender-based violence have said that they are being sent to prisons, instead of shelters, which do not exist. Here, the women are 'subjected to solitary confinement, beatings and other forms of torture, and forced to endure inhumane conditions.'" "Under the Taliban regime, the number of child marriages have surged."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"As the Taliban took over Afghanistan, the network of support for gender-based violence survivors – including legal representation, medical treatment and psychosocial support – collapsed. Shelters were closed, and many were looted and appropriated by Taliban members. In some cases, Taliban members harassed or threatened staff. As shelters closed, staff were forced to send many women and girl survivors back to their families. Other survivors were forced to live with shelter staff members, on the street or in other unsustainable situations...As the Taliban advanced across the country, they also systematically released thousands of detainees from prisons, many of whom had been convicted of gender-based violence offenses. Habiba, the service provider from Daikundi province, told Amnesty International: "There were 353 prisoners [in the prison in Daikundi], and almost 100 of them were perpetrators of gender-based violence... When the Taliban took over, they opened the door to the prison, and the prisoners just ran out."

"Three gender-based violence survivors told Amnesty International that because of the collapse of accountability mechanisms that formerly existed, such as specialized prosecution units and courts, as well as the societal dynamics that shifted with the Taliban's takeover, their children were at risk of being forcibly taken from them by husbands they had separated from or divorced."

"No reliable data currently exists on whether the rates of gender-based violence in Afghanistan have increased after the Taliban's takeover. However, factors such as increased rates of unemployment and poverty, women's and girls' confinement within their homes due to the restrictions on movement and clothing discussed above, and the lack of the accountability mechanisms that formerly existed are all likely to increase the prevalence of gender-based violence within the country."

Khaama Press, Girl, 15, Killed by Unknown Armed Men in Northern Afghanistan, 24 July 2022

"According to the sources, the armed men killed a young girl after breaking into a house in the Kohistan district of Faryab province on Saturday night, July 23. On the other hand, the provincial Taliban

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

officials have not yet spoken on the matter.

While the Taliban has taken no action to combat these crimes, reports of armed attacks by armed people have recently escalated, with women being the primary victims.

Earlier this month, an unidentified man stabbed a 50-year-old woman to death in her own home in the central Afghan province of Kapisa.

In Kandahar Province's Ayno Mina city, a man allegedly shot his ex-wife, killing two men and a woman.

Over 100 women and girls have reportedly been killed, abducted, or committed suicide in the previous six months, according to a report by the Afghanistan International news channel.

In recent months, there has been an upsurge in domestic violence, personal enmity, and family blood feuds, which have resulted in homicides, target killings, and honor killings."

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Afghanistan), UN Human Rights Council: [Urgent debate on women and girls' rights in Afghanistan](#), 1 July 2022

"The Taliban have carried out a full-on assault on the rights of women and girls, including their rights to freedom of movement, expression, work, and education. Peaceful protests by brave Afghan women demanding their rights have been violently repressed in some cases. Many reports have emerged of Taliban's threats, intimidation, restrictions, arrests, forced confessions, abductions, and end forced disappearances targeting women. In March this year, girls' rights to education was indefinitely put on hold. In May, women were ordered not to leave their homes unless their heads and faces were covered by a full veil."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan) Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan: Emergency Earthquake Response Plan \(Jul - Sep 2022\)](#), 30 June 2022

"Sudden onset disasters affect women, girls and other vulnerable groups in terms of vulnerabilities and exposure to violence including physical injury and through compromised dignity. Decreased access to lifesaving protection and GBV services for women and girls is also expected. Exacerbated/ increased risk of GBV, and exacerbated risk of negative coping strategies are also high amidst such shocks."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), [Teenage Girl in Northeast Afghanistan Shoots Herself to Death](#), 29 June 2022

"Despite the fact that there have previously been many instances of violence against women and female homicide in Afghan society, reports suggest that suicide among Afghan women has increased significantly recently.

Male suicides outnumber female suicides globally, however in Afghanistan, it is estimated that women attempt suicide at a rate of 80%, according to a report by BBC.

And violence against women is a common occurrence. According to statistics from the United Nations Population Fund, 62% of Afghan women have endured various forms of abuse, and 87% of women have experienced at least one form of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, [Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover](#), 22 June 2022

"Research leader at Christian Michelsen's Institute, Torunn Wimpelmann, writes in a column in May 2022 that the Taliban's women policy is soon as extreme as it was in the 90s (Wimpelmann 2022). There are credible reports that women who protesting and demonstrating against politics, being abducted and arrested, or that they arrested in their own homes (United Nations 2022)."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The shelters for abused women were closed down shortly after the takeover because they were considered to be Un-Islamic (Afghan source, conversation in Islamabad March 2022)."

Gandhara, Taliban's Burqa Decree Exposes Afghan Women To Increasing Domestic Abuse, 26 May 2022

"The Taliban ordered all women to cover their faces when in public earlier this month, urging women not to leave their homes altogether if possible. The militant group said punishments, including arrest or even jail time, would be imposed not on women but their male family members instead."

Deutsche Welle, Afghan women athletes: prisoners in their own homes, 25 April 2022

"These women continue to hide in their homes, "waiting, in a sense, for the Taliban to knock on the door and arrest them," Rezayee says. "The Taliban have sent them threatening letters. They've been intimidated and they can't go outside."

Judoka Amira describes the athletes' dramatic situation this way, "We don't need a prison for women in Afghanistan. Our houses have become prisons for us." Afghanistan, says Mina (name changed), another judoka who remained in the country, "has become a fatherless country where violent children have the power to do whatever they want with women and girls." The Taliban have not yet officially banned women's sports by law."

UNOHCHR (Afghanistan news), Afghanistan: UN experts call on US Government to unblock foreign assets of central bank to ease humanitarian impact, 25 April 2022

"Alarmed by the critical humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, UN human rights experts call on the Government of the United States to unblock the foreign assets of Da Afghanistan Bank of more than US \$7 billion to enable the unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance to cover the basic needs of tens of millions of people in the country. They issue the following statement:

We are gravely concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which puts at serious risk the lives of more than half of the country's population, with disproportionate impact on women and children. While gender-based violence has been a long-standing and severe threat to women and girls, it has been exacerbated by the measures imposed by the US, together with the drought and widening gender-based discrimination adopted by the de facto authorities."

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Herat Women's Prison Head Missing 6 Months, 20 April 2022

"The women's prison director in Herat, Afghanistan has been missing since October 2021 and is feared to have been forcibly disappeared, Human Rights Watch said today. Alia Azizi had worked under the former government but returned to her job after the Taliban took over Herat in August."

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan), Tracking Disorder During Taliban Rule in Afghanistan, 14 April 2022

"Since the Taliban seized power, there have been fears that political violence targeting women and girls will increase under Taliban rule given the Taliban's traditional position on the rights of women and girls. The strict interpretation of Islamic Law adopted by the Taliban heightens the risk of political violence targeting women and girls. After the Taliban takeover, many demonstrations in support of women's rights – including the right of girls to go to school – and against the Taliban government have been held. ACLED records over 80 demonstrations featuring women since the Taliban takeover in comparison with only three recorded in 2021 prior to the Taliban takeover.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Many women activists have been targeted specifically for their participation in these demonstrations. For example, on 18 January 2022, a woman civil society activist was killed by unknown gunmen near her house in Mazar-e-Sharif city, Balkh, after protesting against the Taliban government with other women in recent months. The following day, Taliban intelligence forces raided the houses of several women's rights activists in Kabul after they participated in demonstrations in support of women's rights and against women being forced to wear the hijab. While in detention, the women were abused, with at least one woman seriously beaten (Baaghi TV, 20 January 2022).

Despite the Taliban's efforts to quell demonstrations for women's rights, many women have adapted their protests to the repressive environment. To avoid being targeted by the Taliban, women have organized demonstrations which disperse quickly and have taken precautions to ensure the activist networks used to organize such demonstrations are not infiltrated by Taliban informants (France24, 9 February 2022). Women have also taken to staging demonstrations in private spaces, such as their homes. These indoor demonstrations involve women holding signs with protest slogans while they give speeches that are recorded and shared with the media (Gandhara, 8 December 2021). ACLED records over 20 indoor demonstrations since the first one was reported in late November 2021."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Women in IDP sites reported high levels of domestic violence. [...] Protection concerns were increasingly reported to humanitarian partners, with growing protection needs for persons with disabilities, the elderly, female-headed households, and sexual and gender minorities. [...] Prior to August 15, in the Taliban-controlled areas of the country many women and girls could not decide whom they would marry or at what age, or object to beatings by their husbands. In Jowzjan's Darzab district, a Taliban commander raped and killed a 16-year-old girl when the family refused to allow her to marry a Taliban fighter. [...] On August 13, the Taliban entered Herat, seizing government offices and the police station. A Taliban fighter reportedly threatened to kill a widowed mother of five if she did not marry him, and she was forced to do so in September with the consent of a mullah. She has said that her life is a nightmare and "it is like he is raping me every night."

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan - 2021 Final Report, 31 March 2022

"The closure of many women's protection shelters has also left women at risk while justice system mechanisms established to deal with cases of gender-based violence are largely non-functional."

UNFPA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Appeal 2022, 14 March 2022

"It is estimated that 1 in 2 women experience gender-based violence and this is anticipated to increase under the de facto administration."

OHCHR, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet visits Kabul, Afghanistan, 11 March 2022

"While the women protesters and their family members who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in January have now been released, their treatment has meant that there are no longer public demonstrations on women's rights in Afghanistan."

UN, Women must be given space to lead if Afghanistan is to find peace: Bachelet, 10 March 2022

"Afghan women have been threatened and attacked for speaking up, and excluded from positions of power. [...] Women should be visibly represented in the police force, courts of law, Government and the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

private sector – indeed in every sphere of civic and public life. [...] Women’s denial of rights to free movement, work, participation in public life and education, is limiting greater economic development for the country.”

UNHCR, Afghanistan Crisis update: Women and Girls in Displacement, 1 March 2022

“Recent news reports from Afghanistan have raised concerns over safety threats to women and girls, including reports of forced marriages, beating of women protesters and targeting of rights activists, female judges and police; and safety threats are compounded by restrictions on women and girls’ freedom of movement and education. Furthermore, women and girls may experience violence perpetrated by intimate partners. Even prior to the recent crisis, violence against women was pervasive in Afghanistan. In 2015, an estimated 51 per cent of women in the country had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. In light of recent events, this figure is expected to have risen. The Afghanistan Protection Cluster⁶ estimates that as many as 90 per cent of Afghan women may have now experienced gender-based violence, the majority perpetrated by their intimate partner, although no official statistics exist in this regard. Despite the existential threats posed by conflict and the many gender-specific forms of persecution currently taking place in Afghanistan, many Afghan women and girls are not able to leave the country through regular channels. Restrictions on movement and the lack of documentation may pose challenges for women, especially at official border points. Unofficial border points are more remote, lack basic facilities, and often require travellers to employ smugglers, and those conditions put women and girls at further risk of violence. [...] Afghan women and girls living in displacement settings may also be at a heightened risk of GBV, as a result of hostilities with the host community, precarious living arrangements, limited freedom of movement and limited access to protection and redress mechanisms. As highlighted in group discussions conducted by the Afghanistan Protection Cluster, almost 35 per cent of women respondents reported feeling unsafe and 8 per cent noted GBV risks as a specific reason for feeling unsafe. Other reasons cited in focus groups included growing insecurity and presence of armed groups, among others. Within the country, many GBV services have been discontinued and legal documentation is required for accessing the services that remain.”

Gandhara, Detained Women Activists In Afghanistan Apparently Forced to Confess Before Release, 23 February 2022

“On February 21, the Taliban Interior Ministry released a video of several women who said they had been encouraged by foreign-based activists to take to the streets by offering them the chance to relocate or send their children to study abroad. They also said that unlike what they expected from the Taliban, they were not treated harshly by the militants. [...] In the controversial video, a spokesman for the Taliban Interior Ministry claimed the women regretted their actions. The women, who had been recently encouraged by some intelligence circles to demonstrate against the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and chanted slogans against the Islamic regime, were recently detained by security forces in a house,” said the spokesman, Aqel Azam. “They have confessed to the involvement of foreign intelligence circles, they have expressed regret over their actions, and now their lives have been secured by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.” [...] “I am increasingly concerned about the wellbeing of missing women activists in Afghanistan. Several have ‘disappeared’, some not heard from in weeks,” UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on Twitter on February 10. “I strongly urge the Taliban to ensure their safety so that they can return home.””

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

TOLO News, Mol-Detained Female Protestors in Video Claim Outside Influence, 21 February 2022
 “Ten days have passed since 29 women disappeared from a women’s safe house in Kabul, and now the Ministry of Interior Affairs has released a video of a number of them. The women are still detained. Some of the detained women in the video confess that they were encouraged by women abroad to protest against the current Afghan government. “Nilofar Ayoubi, Mitra Mehran, Atiya Mehraban, Huda Khamoosh and Zahra Mousawi are among the women who are abroad and told us that we should protest against the government of the Islamic Emirate,” said a woman who was detained. “On Wednesday, a person named Rahman called us and asked for a code, and by that code they brought us to the safe house,” said a woman on the video. TOLONews could not reach the women for comment. The Ministry of Interior said that at the moment there is no threat to the detained women’s lives. “The protesting women, who chanted slogans against the Islamic Emirate, were recently detained by the forces of the Islamic Emirate. They admitted in their comments that they were receiving help from abroad and that they regret their actions. At the moment there is no threat to their lives,” said Aqel Azam, spokesman of the Ministry of Interior. Meanwhile, the release of the confessions of these detained women has sparked widespread reactions. “Those women named by the women protestors owe some response to all Afghans especially women activists. I hope you have realized your mistakes. You have put these women's life at RISK. You had no advocacy strategy, security plan & even evacuation plan. Where are these detained women now? Taliban must release them immediately if not yet released. We need strong guarantees by UNAMA news,” tweeted Samira Hamidi, who according to her Twitter account is an activist from Afghanistan "currently at Amnesty." “The video of the confessions of the detained women is not acceptable for several reasons. First, because these confessions were made under duress and pressure when people are on the verge of death. There is no doubt that human beings struggle to survive, to live and to breathe,” said Monisa Mubariz, co-founder of the Afghan Powerful Women's Movement.”

International Federation for Human Rights, Afghanistan: Six months after takeover, no accountability for Taliban abuses, 15 February 2022

“Despite Taliban pledges to respect basic human rights, the situation in the country has worsened over the past six months, particularly impacting women, journalists, and human rights defenders (HRDs). [...] Amid an all-out assault on human rights—including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture—HRDs, women’s rights activists, and other civil society actors have been particularly vulnerable to such violations. Despite the risks and a climate of fear on the ground, information concerning human rights violations continues to be collected and reported by HRDs and journalists. Although it is almost impossible to have a comprehensive picture of the human rights situation in the country and to systematically collect data, preliminary figures obtained by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) indicate that at least eight civil society activists and two journalists have been killed since 15 August 2021. In addition, 44 journalists and 10 civil society activists have been arbitrarily detained.”

Gandhara, Four missing female activists reportedly released in Afghanistan, 13 February 2022

“Four female activists in Afghanistan who went missing several weeks ago have been released by the country’s de facto Taliban authorities, the United Nations said on February 13. “The four women -- Tamana Paryani, Parwana Ibrahimkhel, Zahra Mohammadi, and Mursal Ayar -- went missing after attending an anti-Taliban rally in Kabul. “The Taliban repeatedly denied detaining them. ““After a long period of uncertainty about their whereabouts and safety, the four ‘disappeared’ Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

women activists, as well as their relatives who also went missing, have all been released by the de facto authorities,” the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) posted on Twitter.””

The Guardian, Taliban have detained 29 women and their families in Kabul, says US envoy, 12 February 2022

“The Taliban have detained 29 women and their families in Kabul, a senior US diplomat said on Saturday, adding to concerns about rising numbers of people seized and held indefinitely in Afghanistan.

Rina Amiri, US special envoy for Afghan Women, Girls and Human Rights, said that women were among 40 people seized on Friday. “These unjust detentions must stop,” she said in a tweet.

It has since been deleted, but other sources confirmed that multiple women had been detained in Kabul. The state department did not respond to requests for comment on why it was removed.

“I am increasingly concerned about the wellbeing of missing women activists in Afghanistan. Several have ‘disappeared’, some not heard from in weeks,” António Guterres had said on Twitter on Thursday. “I strongly urge the Taliban to ensure their safety so that they can return home.”

“Every disappearance highlights one of the huge gaps in Afghanistan today, the lack of rule of law,” said Heather Barr, associate women’s rights director at Human Rights Watch.

“This is not how you act when you are trying to be a government, and it highlights the callousness with which they seem to think they can just abduct women and sloppily deny it.”

There are also concerns about Alia Azizi, a senior prison official who has been missing for more than four months after reporting for work. Several women who worked for the security forces under the previous government have been attacked and killed since the Taliban came to power.”

AVA Press, 4 missing women activists freed: UNAMA, 14 February 2022

“After weeks of disappearance, four women activists have been set free by the Taliban, says the UN mission in Afghanistan.

“After a long period of uncertainty about their whereabouts and safety, the four ‘disappeared’ , as well as their relatives who also went missing, have been released by the de facto authorities.”

Ibrahimkhel was reportedly released on Friday. She had disappeared along with on January 19 after attending a protest in.

AFP reported Mohammadi and Ayar went missing weeks later. Several relatives of the women activists had also disappeared.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 February 2022

“Despite efforts by the Government up to August 2021 to ensure legal protections that facilitated the full enjoyment by women and girls of their fundamental rights and freedoms and their access to justice, significant gaps existed. The gaps remain in the new context.”

BBC News, Afghanistan: Taliban takes another women's rights protester, 3 February 2022

“The Taliban have allegedly taken a woman from her home by force after she participated in protests in the Afghan capital, Kabul. Mursal Ayar was arrested in the city on Wednesday, a source told the BBC, after she took part in rallies demanding equal rights for women. Women have been participating in a string of protests which have attracted international attention. Ms Ayar is believed to be the sixth protester to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

vanish in recent weeks. [...] The UN noted that the Taliban had on Saturday announced an investigation into the women's disappearance but said confirmed information was still lacking. They also said the reports of missing women highlighted "a pattern of arbitrary arrests and detentions", as well as torture and mistreatment of civil rights activists, journalists and former government officials in Afghanistan."

ToloNews, [UN Calls for Investigation Into Missing Female Activists | TOLONews](#), 27 January 2022

"The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan Deborah Lyons told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that "we remain extremely concerned about the fate of several women activists who were abducted from their homes and have disappeared." She also called on the Islamic Emirate to make an investigation into such cases. Tamana Zaryabi Paryani and Parawana Ibrahimkhel are the two women's rights activists who went missing last week. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also called for the release of the two female activists. [...]"

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), [Afghan Women's Rights Activist Forcibly Disappeared](#), 24 January 2022

"The Taliban's response to the apparent enforced disappearance of Tamana Paryani, Parwana Ibrahimkhel, and other women activists in Afghanistan has laid bare their intent to eradicate critical women's voices through unlawful use of force. Taliban leaders have denied arresting the women, heightening concerns for their safety and prompt release. On January 16, Paryani and Ibrahimkhel participated in a protest in Kabul against recent Taliban abuses of women protesters and other restrictions on women. Witnesses said that on the night of January 19, armed men claiming to be Taliban intelligence broke through the door of Paryani's home and took her away, along with three of her sisters. Paryani posted a video on social media of the moment before the men broke into her house. Ibrahimkhel was similarly abducted from her home and her whereabouts remain unknown. Since taking over the country on August 15, the Taliban have imposed harsh restrictions on women's right to work, banned secondary education for girls in most of the country, and beaten peaceful women protesters. Taliban authorities have severely limited what the media can report and have detained and beaten journalists. Taliban forces have forcibly disappeared former government officials. On January 23, during talks in Oslo, Norway, between Taliban authorities and several Western governments, Afghan activist Hoda Khamosh publicly called on the Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi to "pick up his phone now and call Kabul [and] order the immediate release" of the detained women. Muttaqi reportedly responded that there were bad people among the Taliban whom the Taliban were expelling and said such elements may have detained the women. He said the situation was under investigation. Taliban authorities previously claimed to have dismissed some of their forces for theft and other crimes, but have been conspicuously silent about killings and enforced disappearances, blaming these instead on "rogue" elements. Taliban denials of the arrests were undermined on January 23 when Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the Taliban had the right "to arrest and detain dissidents." By failing to hold their forces accountable, Taliban leaders are sanctioning such human rights violations against women activists and others. Arbitrary arrests and disappearances have become the Taliban's routine method of responding to criticism."

Operational Data Portal UNHCR (Iran), [Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran](#), 23 January 2022

"On 22 January, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) called on the Taliban to provide information on the whereabouts and protect rights of two women rights activists, Tamana Zaryab Paryani and Parawana Ibrahimkhel, who disappeared on 19 January from Kabul (Link). The Taliban have

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

denied any involvement in their disappearance. Paryani was among about 25 women who took part in an antiTaliban protest on 16 January against the compulsory Islamic headscarf for women. Similar raids were reported across homes of female protesters in Kabul. Other reports claim that the Taliban's religious police have threatened to shoot women NGO workers in a north-western province of Afghanistan if they do not wear the allcovering burqa, two staff members told AFP. "The Taliban are intensifying their attacks on the civic space, and more specifically on women who are pioneers of the civic space," said Shaharзад Akbar, chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan: Taliban authorities must reveal Alia Azizi's whereabouts](#), 21 January 2022

"The Taliban authorities must urgently investigate the abduction of Alia Azizi, a senior female prison official who has been missing for more than three months after she reported for duty in Herat, and immediately and unconditionally release her if in their custody, Amnesty international said. Alia Azizi, a member of the ethnic Hazara community and the Head of Herat Women's Prison, never returned home after going to work on 2 October 2021. Despite several pleas by her family to the Taliban to investigate the case, a veil of secrecy still shrouds her disappearance. "It's been more than three months since Alia Azizi disappeared and her family still remains completely in the dark about her whereabouts. Her apparent abduction takes place within the context of the Taliban illegally detaining members of the former government, journalists, and assorted critics across the country," said Zaman Sultani, Amnesty International's South Asia Researcher."

Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity](#), 18 January 2022

"Taliban rule has had a devastating impact on Afghan women and girls, new research shows, Human Rights Watch and the Human Rights Institute at San Jose State University (SJSU) said today. The organizations looked at the conditions for women since the Taliban took control in Ghazni province, in southeastern Afghanistan.

Since taking control of the city of Ghazni on August 12, 2021, days before entering Afghanistan's capital, Kabul, the Taliban have imposed rights-violating policies that have created huge barriers to women's and girls' health and education, curtailed freedom of movement, expression, and association, and deprived many of earned income. Afghanistan's rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis exacerbates these abuses. [...]

They described spiraling prices for food staples, transportation, and schoolbooks, coupled with an abrupt and often total income loss. Many had been the sole or primary wage earner for their family, but most lost their employment due to Taliban policies restricting women's access to work. Only those working in primary education or health care were still able to work, and most were not being paid due to the financial crisis.

The Taliban have banned women and girls from secondary and higher education, and altered curricula to focus more on religious studies. They dictate what women must wear, how they should travel, workplace segregation by sex, and even what kind of cell phones women should have. They enforce these rules through intimidation and inspections. [...]

The women said they had acute feelings of insecurity because the Taliban have dismantled the formal police force and the Women's Affairs Ministry, are extorting money and food from communities, and are targeting for intimidation women they see as enemies, such as those who worked for foreign organizations and the previous Afghan government. Most interviewees cited serious mental health

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

consequences since the Taliban takeover, including fear, anxiety, hopelessness, insomnia, and a deep sense of loss and helplessness. [...]

"We don't leave our home much," a government worker said. "When we leave, we leave with a mahram. Some things like sanitary pads must be purchased by women themselves, but it's hard to do it with a man accompanying us. ...Women can't take transport, they either must go out with a mahram or walk. They should walk with burqa, no heels, no makeup." [...]

A government worker said the Taliban told male shopkeepers and tailors that they may no longer interact with women, and women had been told they should sew their own clothing rather than go to a male tailor. The new rules for dress and conduct – including that woman should not socialize outside their houses – were sent in writing to the mosques, an interviewee said."

OHCHR, Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022

"GENEVA (17 January 2022) – Taliban leaders in Afghanistan are institutionalizing large scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls, a group of UN human rights experts* said today. [...]

The experts also noted the increased risk of exploitation of women and girls including of trafficking for the purposes of child and forced marriage as well as sexual exploitation and forced labor."

VOA, Former Afghan female soldier: 'I am so afraid' under Taliban, 31 December 2021

"Afghan women who served in the country's military are speaking out about how their life has changed under the Taliban.

"I feel like I am in prison," said Jamila, 28, a former Afghan military officer in the western city of Herat. "I have to be at home. I can't work or go out. I am so afraid."

More than 6,300 women served in the former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Now they face not only threats to their life as former members of the military but also the Taliban's imposed restrictions on their gender.

Human Rights Watch and the United Nations accused the Taliban in November of the summary killing of more than 100 former Afghan security officials despite the group's promise of general amnesty.

Jamila served for 10 years in the 207th Zafar (Victory) Corps of the Afghan National Army, headquartered in Herat province. She says she now hears news every day of someone else who was killed or disappeared.

"I fear that they (the Taliban) might find me and kill me," she said."

Republic World, Female Journalist Describes Harrowing Details Of Life On The Run In Afghanistan: Report, 15 December 2021.

"As Taliban troops seized control of Kabul, women journalists were increasingly instructed to stay at home, harassed, banned from going on reporting assignments, or even beaten, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF). RSF reported last year that there were 108 media outlets in Kabul, employing 4,940 individuals, including 1,080 women, 700 of whom were journalists."

Refugees International, Lifesaving Humanitarian Response for Women and Girls in Afghanistan: An Urgent Call for U.S. Action, 10 December 2021

"Violent conflict, a devastating drought, and food insecurity affecting over half the population in Afghanistan are driving one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Assessments indicate this emergency will exponentially grow as Afghanistan's economy teeters on the edge of total collapse and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the country remains almost entirely dependent on external aid. Urgent action is needed to address the looming famine and avert a humanitarian catastrophe that will impact women and girls and other marginalized groups the most."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Survivors of gender-based violence abandoned following Taliban takeover – new research, 6 December 2021

"As the Taliban advanced, they also systematically released detainees from prisons, many of whom had been convicted of gender-based violence offenses. Testimony from witnesses and others with first-hand knowledge, as well as credible media reporting, indicate that members of the Taliban were responsible. A Taliban spokesperson denied this to Amnesty International, insisting the previous government had opened prisons.

A legal professional who specializes in gender-based violence said she had been involved in the conviction of more than 3,000 perpetrators of gender-based violence in the year preceding the Taliban's takeover. She said: "Wherever [the Taliban] went, they freed the prisoners... Can you imagine? More than 3,000 released, in all the provinces of Afghanistan, in one month." [...]

There is nowhere to turn for women and girls who have faced violence since the Taliban's takeover. One psychologist who worked with gender-based violence survivors in Kabul told Amnesty International: "The Taliban doesn't have any procedure of how to deal with these cases."

A prosecutor for cases involving gender-based violence explained: "In the past, women could go to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. They could go alone and report their case. But now that women are not allowed to go anywhere without a mahram [male guardian], this will make it really complicated." "

The Washington Post, Taliban chief bans forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021

"The Taliban decreed on Friday they were banning forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, a move apparently meant to address criteria the international community consider a precondition to recognizing their government and restoring aid to the war-torn country.

The move was announced by the reclusive Taliban chief, Hibatullah Akhundzada, a cleric chosen as the group's supreme leader who is believed to be in the southern city of Kandahar. It comes as poverty is surging in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August amid the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops. Since then, foreign governments have halted funds that had been a mainstay of the economy. "Both (women and men) should be equal," said the decree, adding that "no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure. [...]

The decree did not mention a minimum age for marriage, which previously was set at 16 years old."

TOLO News, Taliban's Supreme Leader Issues Decree on Women's Rights, 3 December 2021

"supreme leader of the Taliban, Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, on Friday issued a decree regarding the rights of women in Afghanistan.

The decree, which was released by the spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, Zabiullah Mujahid, stipulated that the relevant institutions must take steps in its implementation.

The decree is comprised of six elements:

"Adult women's consent is necessary during Nekah/marriage. (Though, both should be equal with no risk of sedition). No one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure."

"woman is not a property, but a noble and free human being; no one can give her to anyone in exchange for peace deal and or to end animosity.

"the death of the husband, 'Sharaie Adat' (four months and ten nights or pregnancy) passes, no one can

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

marry a widow by force including her relatives. A widow has the right whether to marry and or to determine/ choose her future. (Though, the principle of equality and preventing sedition should be kept into consideration).

"It is the Sharia right a widow, to obtain 'Mahar' from her new husband. [Mahar is an amount of money specified by the wife and husband during the Nekah to be paid by the husband to the wife.]

"A widow has heritage rights and fixed share in the property of her husband, children, father and relatives, and no one can deprive a widow of her right."

"Those with multi marriage (more than one wife) are obliged to give rights to all women in accordance with Sharia law, and maintain justice between them."

The letter instructed the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Supreme Court as well as provincial governors and district governors to implement the dictates of the decree and to communicate them to the public."

TOLO News, Half of Afghan Women Will Face Violence: UNFPA, 2 December 2021

"Even before the recent upheaval, the needs of women and girls were staggering: Over half of Afghan women experience violence during their lifetime, and one Afghan woman dies from a pregnancy-related complication every two hours," said Dr. Aleksandar Sasha Bodiroza, UNFPA Representative in Afghanistan. "Their situation will get worse if the international community does not act, and act soon," he added.

UNAMA, UN Calls for solidarity and commitment to end violence against women and girls amidst humanitarian crises, 25 November 2021

"The message we receive from our partners and women across the country is clear - violence against women that was already at alarming levels, has been exacerbated by both crisis and COVID-19. And yet, lifesaving services for women survivors of violence have closed on account of fear of being targeted," said Alison Davidian, UN Women Country Representative in Afghanistan [...]."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatches: 'Only time will tell if we stay subject when we're hungry.' - JURIST - News - Legal News & Commentary, 15 November 2021

"JURIST EXCLUSIVE – Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Here, a law student in Kabul offers his perspective on recent Taliban abuses of power amidst a rapidly-deteriorating economic situation. [...] In a city ruled by rapists and murderers, a knock at the door is heard. A young girl in her twenties—to judge by her appearance—opens the door and sees a number of Taliban carrying weapons. They ask for her brother, who was an officer of the Afghan National Army forces. But he's not there. In his absence she's dragged to the police precinct, where she's asked for sexual intercourse, beaten and lashed. She says a Taliban officer tell the others to not let her go as she is a northerner. She later she posts her story in a video after barely avoiding being raped by several men; she shows her bruises while covering her face. The girl was lashed heavily, resulting in bloody cloths and bruises in the areas she can show to the camera. In the end she calls angrily for the leaders of the northern provinces and the politicians who fled with millions in cash to resist the Taliban."

Kabul Now, Woman who accused Taliban of sexual abuse arrested in Kabul, 14 November 2021

"The Taliban security forces have arrested two women, including the one who recently accused a Taliban police officer of sexual abuse and torture, in Kabul, the Ministry of Interior confirmed.

An investigation is underway and the truth whether the claims of torture and abuse is true or not will be

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

revealed today or tomorrow, Saeed Khosti, spokesperson for the Taliban's ministry of interior told Kabul Now on Saturday, November 13.

In a video started circulating on social media last Thursday, a woman claims that Taliban forces barged into her house only to "touch her [abusively]" and "dishonored" her.

Introducing herself as sister of a former military officer, she said that she started shouting to ask for help when the Taliban forces barged into her house. Afterwards, they took her to the PD11 where a police officer, as she claims, asked her to have sex with him.

"When I refused his demand, they whipped me," she added. The woman says that another Taliban personnel told the officer "do not let her go, because she is from the north [of Afghanistan]."

She has bruises all over her shoulder and her back. She says that she has bruises on some other parts of her body that she cannot show.

Late last night, November 13, the Taliban released a video showing two women and a man. In the video, the two women admits that they have made the video only to seek asylum in foreign countries.

"We are satisfied with the Emirate and regret for the mistake we committed. I ask for apology from the bottom of my heart from Emirate," the woman, who is identified as Arezu – previously accused the Taliban for sexual abuse – says in the video."

AREU, 11 Years of the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law, 13 November 2021

"Obtaining transparent and comprehensive data on cases of VAW [violence against women] and, in particular, the processing of such cases by the police, the prosecutors and the courts continues to be a challenge due to the lack of a systematic framework and national data collection system. Each actor, the police, the attorney general, the courts, as well as the AIHRC [Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission] and the MoWA [Ministry of Women's Affairs], keep their own records of the cases they register, which means that data that trace these cases across institutions—and therefore prosecution or conviction rates—have generally not been available. Today, the main sources of statistical information on the implementation of the EVAW law are UNAMA reports,² and reports by MoWA and the AIHRC, as well as a few reports by the Afghan Women's Network. [...]

In sum, there appears to be little statistical data available on prosecution and conviction rates, particularly for recent years. Available studies also do not provide information about the legal aspects of cases, such as whether the EVAW law or the Penal Code were the basis for prosecution or conviction. [...] Several studies highlight how prosecutors have had an inclination towards using mediation in VAW cases, often due to it being the preferred resolution method for prosecutors and families, both of the complainant and of the accused, as mediation is seen by some, particularly by those not supportive of gender equality, as being more in line with traditional norms. [...] An additional harmful practice highlighted by UNAMA, the Special Rapporteur on Sexual Violence, and the AIHRC is the use of "virginity tests", which have been frequently imposed on women by police, prosecutors and judges, despite being prohibited unless a court orders it or the person examined consents to it. [...]

As in other places where consensual sexual relations are criminalised, victims of rape face particular difficulties in the justice system in Afghanistan. Charges of zina, or sexual intercourse outside marriage, has sometimes been introduced by conservative prosecutors or judges in rape cases."

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

Aljazeera, Taliban official says Islam grants women right to education and work, 31 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“A Taliban official has said that Islam grants women the right to education, work, and entrepreneurship, and reiterated that the group is working to create a so-called “safe environment” for girls and women in secondary schools and the workplace.

“I must say that Islam has given women the right to education, Islam has given women the right to work, Islam has given women the right to entrepreneurship [...] if Islam has allowed it, who am I to ban it.” [quote by Taliban spokesperson of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, Sadeq Akif Muhajir]

“The comments by Muhajir came more than a year after the armed group took over the country and imposed several limitations on women’s freedoms, including a ban on secondary education for girls.

Since returning to power, the Taliban has among other things, shut down girls’ secondary schools across the country, ordered women to wear hijabs in the workplace and to cover their faces in public, and has banned women from travelling long distanced without a close male relative.”

“But a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) this year found that Afghan women’s employment levels fell by an estimated 16 percent in the months immediately following the Taliban takeover. In contrast, male employment dropped by 6 percent. ‘In the pessimistic scenario in which restrictions intensify and women do not feel they can safely show up at their workplaces, the scale of job losses for women could reach 28 percent,’ the report said.

Working Afghan women have previously told Al Jazeera that while the Taliban has not directly fired female government employees, it has restricted women from entering workplaces and has paid them a notably reduced salary to remain at home.”

“The Taliban’s return to power has exacerbated Afghanistan’s economic woes. The country has been reeling from a humanitarian crisis with more than half of the population facing hunger.

The Western-imposed sanctions and the freezing of nearly \$10bn in Afghan central bank assets by the US have largely contributed to the collapse of the economy.”

Pajhwok, Amid extreme hardships, women vendors demand dignified job, 31 August 2022

“Two women vendors, who are sisters-in-law, sell hand-made things on the roads in Kabul from dawn to dusk to earn [...]”

Al Jazeera, Women working inside an Afghan chemical lab face uncertain future, 19 August 2022

“Noori, aged 30, is a lab technician at Afghanistan’s largest chemical plant, located outside the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif in Balkh province. [...] She started as a lab assistant and quickly worked her way up to become manager of the entire urea production laboratory. It was a position that she studied hard for and was proud to earn. Yet soon after the Taliban retook control of the country last August, Noori was stripped of her role and the female staff were separated from their male colleagues.[...] But now, working under the supervision of a man far less qualified than herself, Noori and many of her female colleagues wonder what the future holds for them – and for their careers – in the Taliban’s Afghanistan.[...] Against the backdrop of a humanitarian and economic crisis, the rights of Afghan women have also begun to erode. Many girls’ high schools around the country remain closed, locking thousands out of an education that seemed within their grasp only 12 months ago. Across the country, many women, particularly those working outside the healthcare and education sectors, have lost their jobs, and now find themselves unable to secure any form of employment. Some remain at home simply out of fear of interacting with the Taliban. Others continue to attend their jobs but find their workplaces are now gender-segregated. Demonstrations in support of women’s rights have, on several occasions, been violently repressed, and many women remain fearful that advocating for their rights will result in harassment, arrest, or worse.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

BBC News, From Kabul and beyond, a year of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, 15 August 2022

“Kabul, where women are told to give their jobs to men. I'm sitting down with a few former senior civil servants from the finance ministry who share their messages. They're part of a group of more than 60 women, many from the Afghanistan Revenue Directorate, who banded together after being ordered to go home last August. They say Taliban officials then told them: Send CVs of your male relatives who can apply for your jobs... Taliban officials say women are still working. Those who do are mainly medical staff, educators and security workers including at the airport - spaces where women frequent. The Taliban also emphasise that women, who once held about a quarter of the government's jobs, are still being paid - albeit a small fraction of their salary.”

Al Jazeera, A year of Taliban takeover: The missing women in Afghan workforce, 11 August 2022

“While the new regime has not directly fired female government employees such as Samar, it has restricted women from entering the workplaces, paying them a significantly reduced salary to stay at home, many working Afghan women told Al Jazeera... Meanwhile, in the private sector as well, several organisations have reduced the number of female staff, either out of financial crunch, Taliban coercion or as a precautionary measure to avoid the group's wrath. A study by the International Labor Organization (ILO) this year documented a disproportionate drop in women's employment in Afghanistan – 16 percent in the months immediately following the Taliban takeover. In contrast, male employment dropped by 6 percent... Working women in Afghanistan are also vulnerable to unemployment shocks due to the existing economic crisis, restrictions on women's movement by the Taliban, and the prevalent patriarchy... A recent World Bank survey noted that 42 percent of women-owned businesses in Afghanistan had temporarily closed compared with 26 percent of the firms owned by men. Additionally, about 83 percent of the businesswomen indicated that they were expecting revenue losses over the next six months, forcing them to engage in coping mechanisms such as downsizing their staff, often comprising largely of women.”

BBC News, From Kabul and beyond, a year of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, 15 August 2022

“Kabul, where women are told to give their jobs to men ... They say Taliban officials then told them: Send CVs of your male relatives who can apply for your jobs.”

Human Rights Watch, Economic Causes of Afghanistan's Humanitarian Crisis, 4 August 2022

“[...] Taliban policies that bar women from most paid jobs have had a swift and devastating impact on households in which women were the sole or main earners. Repeated WFP surveys indicate that nearly 100 percent of female-headed households don't have enough to eat and almost all are taking “drastic measures” to obtain food, such as selling vital household items, sending children to work, or marrying off young girls for dowries. Even in areas in which women are still allowed to work in some jobs – primarily education and health care – they are often unable to comply with oppressive Taliban requirements, such as having a male family member escort them to work and even to remain there throughout the workday.”

BBC News: Afghanistan: How one TV presenter became a refugee, 1 August 2022

“On 14 August 2021, the night before the Taliban took control of Kabul, Shabnam Dawran was preparing to present the news bulletin on Radio Television Afghanistan. [...] At their first official news conference, a

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban spokesman told a room filled with journalists that women could work "shoulder to shoulder with men". The next day, a nervous but excited Shabnam put on her work clothes and made her way to the office. But as soon as she arrived, she was confronted by Taliban soldiers, who she says were guarding the building and only allowing male workers to enter. [...] When she told them she had every right to work, Shabnam says one of the soldiers pointed his rifle at her, placed his finger on the trigger and said: "One bullet will be enough for you - will you leave or should I shoot you here?" She then left, but posted a video describing the encounter on social media. It went viral, putting her and her family's life in danger. She packed a small bag and fled the country a few days later, taking her two younger siblings - Meena and Hemat - with her."

Khaama Press, German FM Says 'Every Human Right Has Been Taken From Women and Girls in Afghanistan', 27 July 2022

"German media reported on Tuesday, July 26, that Annalena Baerbock, the foreign minister of Germany, had said that the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan was a unique instance of egregious human rights abuses. She also emphasized that women in Afghanistan are facing "the biggest violation of women's rights on the Earth," and that a greater emphasis on Afghan women and girls, whose lives "stopped" when the Taliban took power, is required.

Barred from work and education, she expressed concern regarding the deteriorating women's rights in Afghanistan saying "every human right has been taken from women and girls in Afghanistan."

(...) This comes at a time when Afghanistan's situation with regards to human rights and women's rights under the Taliban rule has worsened as girls are deprived of attending school and women in the public sector are denied their right to work."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"In general, the Taliban appears to permit women to work if, according to Taliban policies, they cannot be replaced by men or if the position is deemed not to be a "man's job"... "Many of the women who have continued working are finding it difficult and stressful because of Taliban restrictions on their clothing, behaviour and opportunities. Shabnam, a 25-year-old nurse in a government hospital in Kabul, said that Taliban members had also regularly visited her workplace:

They were saying we shouldn't work with men or communicate with them, and we should change our dress and clothes. Then one day they said I should not wear my uniform. I said I respect my uniform, because I worked so hard to get it, and they had no right to tell me what to wear... One of them slapped me in the face, and another pointed his gun at me, and said they could kill me, and I wouldn't be able to do anything."

"Taliban restrictions on work have created a desperate situation for many women who were their families' only wage-earner. The hardships these women are facing have been exacerbated by Afghanistan's humanitarian and economic crisis. According to a World Food Programme survey released in February 2022, nearly 100% of female-headed households are facing insufficient food consumption, and 85% are taking "drastic measures" to obtain food"

Khaama, The Taliban Tells Afghan Women to Send Male Relatives to Replace Them at Work, 19 July 2022
"[...] the Taliban has instructed women working at Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance to send male relatives to do their job."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, Send us a man to do your job so we can sack you, Taliban tell female officials, 18 July 2022
“The Taliban have asked women working at Afghanistan’s finance ministry to send a male relative to do their job a year after female public-sector workers were barred from government work and told to stay at home. Women who worked in government positions were sent home from their jobs shortly after the Taliban took power in August 2021, and have been paid heavily reduced salaries to do nothing. But several women told the Guardian they had received similar calls from Taliban officials requesting they recommend male relatives in their place, because the “workload in the office has increased and they need to hire a man instead of us”, according to one woman who did not wish her identity to be revealed.” “Sima Bahous, executive director of UN Women, said in May: “Current restrictions on women’s employment have been estimated to result in an immediate economic loss of up to \$1bn – or up to 5% of Afghanistan’s GDP. “There is almost universal poverty in the country,” she added. “An entire generation is threatened by food insecurity and malnutrition.” “Maryam*, 37, received a call from the HR department of the Afghan ministry of finance, where she had worked for more than a decade. She said: “I was asked to introduce a male family member to replace me at the ministry, so I could be dismissed from the job...Since they came [to power], the Taliban have demoted me and reduced my salary. I cannot even afford my son’s school fees. When I questioned this, an official rudely told me to get out of his office and said that my demotion was not negotiable...Maryam said she was aware of at least 60 female colleagues from the finance department who had received similar calls.” “In a report this year, HRW investigated the loss of women’s jobs and livelihoods in Ghazni province since August 2021, when the Taliban seized power in Kabul. “Nearly all the women interviewed who previously had paid employment had lost their jobs,” an interviewee said in the report...Only female healthcare workers and teachers can go to work. Women working in other fields are forced to stay home now.”

ToloNews, Activists: Rise in Forced Marriages Linked to Closed Girls' Schools, 8 July 2022

“Some women’s rights activists in Bamyan province said that the closure of girls’ schools above sixth grade has caused a surged in the number of forced marriages and has added to domestic violence in this province.

"According to the activists, the closure of schools for female students has caused many girls to turn to hard labor.

"When the schools are closed, some traditional families ... forced (daughters) to marry, and I have seen many school students who were forced to marry underage," said Latifah Sadat, women's rights activist." [...]

"After nearly a year of girls being deprived of school and of increasing poverty in Bamyan, some students say they have turned to hard labor.

"We started sewing and doing handicrafts as a way to escape unemployment. I would prefer to get employment than to be unemployed," Mastora Akbari, one of the students, told TOLONews."

Rukhshana Media, Taliban fired all female employees of a clinic in Kandahar because they came to work without male chaperone, 29 June 2022

“The Taliban fired all five female health workers of a clinic in Maiwand district of southern Kandahar province because they weren’t accompanied by male companions on Wednesday, June 29, local sources said. Two nurses, a vaccinator, a midwife and a health officer, all working at Maiwand Bashir Health Center, were among those fired by the Taliban, according to a source who spoke on the condition of anonymity. A source from the Baran Institute, a health institution affiliated with the Kandahar Public

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Health Department, confirmed the report, saying they were trying to meet with local Taliban officials in the province to resolve the issue.”

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"Figures from Reporters Without Borders (as reproduced in Kumar & Noori 2022) show that only 100 of the country's 700 female journalists were still working at the end of 2021. According to an international journalist (conversation in Islamabad) that follows developments in Afghanistan closely, in March 2022 there were still female journalists which was determined to continue reporting from the country. Women were newscasters on TV, they reported and interviewed people in the street. The females the journalists were at that time covered with a simple scarf.

On March 27, 2022, BBC News, Voice of America and Deutsche, among others Welle closed to viewers in Afghanistan (BBC 2022). According to the international the journalist (conversation in Islamabad, March 2022) this was about broadcasts on dari and pashto. He believed that the reason for this should have been that women who participated in the broadcasts did not follow acceptable dress code and that they were not covered properly. So it was not what was reported, but how women appeared in the broadcasts that was the reason why the broadcasts were taken off air, according to the journalist.

In May 2022, a directive came with a requirement that all female news anchors should cover the faces while on the air. Several female presenters took part countermeasures and male presenters showed solidarity with their female colleagues by wearing black face masks when they read the news. One was started social media campaign - #FreeHerFace. The Taliban, for its part, stressed that the decision was final and not subject to negotiation (Al Jazeera 2022c; Barr & Fetrat 2022; Strømme, Wolasmal & Fjeld 2022)."

ToloNews, Women in Kabul Call for Right to Work, End of Restrictions, 9 June 2022

" The "Female Civil Service Employment of Afghanistan"...urged the Islamic Emirate to let allow women to return to work.

They say that despite officials in the caretaker government stating repeatedly that they will decide whether or not women will continue to work in government institutions, their fate is still unclear.

Most female workers in government institutions have been denied access to work since the Islamic Emirate assumed control of the country, and a number of them have been fired. The Islamic Emirate, on the other hand, has said that female employees of government institutions are paid even though they remain their houses; however, it is unclear how long this will continue."

Gandhara, Afghan Protester 'Ready To Give Life' To Defend Women's Rights, 1 June 2022

"An Afghan protester told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi on May 26 that she's not afraid to give her life to defend the rights of women and young girls in the country. Her comments came after female protesters took to the streets of Kabul to demand the Taliban allow education and jobs for women."

Tolo News, Haqqani: 'We Are Not Forcing Women to Wear Hijab', 18 May 2022

"When asked about women's access to work, acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani said that the Islamic Emirate is seeking to provide work opportunities for women within the framework of Islamic and national principles. "Here in Afghanistan there are Islamic, national, cultural, and traditional principles;

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

within the limit of those principles, we are working to provide them with opportunities to work and that is our goal," he said."

Afghan Voice Agency, Haqqani: 'We Are Not Forcing Women to Wear Hijab', 18 May 2022

"When asked about women's access to work, acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, said that the Islamic Emirate is seeking to provide work opportunities for women within the framework of Islamic and national principles. "Here in Afghanistan there are Islamic, national, cultural, and traditional principles; within the limit of those principles, we are working to provide them with opportunities to work and that is our goal," he said."

The Guardian, 'We are worse off': Afghanistan further impoverished as women vanish from workforce, 16 May 2022

"From civil servants, teachers and doctors to journalists and business owners, loss of female workers under the Taliban has already cost the economy \$1bn. It is not only government positions that women have been forced out of. According to Reporters Without Borders, only 100 of Kabul's 700 female journalists were still working by the end of 2021. In 2019, 36% of teachers in the country were women, according World Bank data, the highest number for 20 years, but the Taliban's ban in March on education for girls forced many female educators out of work. But a report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) in January found that Afghan women's employment levels fell by an estimated 16% in the third quarter of 2021, compared with 6% for men. Women's employment was expected to be 21% lower than before the Taliban takeover by mid-2022 if current conditions continued, according to the ILO, though this does not take into account employees such as Nasira who are still paid without being allowed to work."

Afghan Voice Agency, Health Ministry Pledges to Hire More Midwives, 16 May 2022

"The Ministry of Public Health said it intends to increase the number of female professionals in health institutions to prevent maternal mortality. According to Mohammad Ishaq Sahebzada, deputy minister of finance and administration of the Ministry of Public Health, more than 38,000 midwives are working at health institutions in the country. The deputy stressed the importance of providing more employment opportunities for women in the health sector. "We promise the people and the international institutions that in the future we will increase midwives in the health sector to a level that is in line with international standards," Sahebzada said.

Hela Gharshin, the director general of midwives at the Ministry of Public Health, said that due to the lack of higher education in the field of midwifery in the country, some midwives do not want to work in the field. "Our midwives in remote areas are working up to three days at a time because there is a shortage of midwives; Midwives are also subject to risk and their education is two years; Higher education in the field of midwifery is very rare," she said. Based on available numbers, 6,000 midwives are working within the Ministry of Public Health, and the shortage of professional midwives in remote areas of the country is considered a major challenge."

Tolo News, Ministry: 7,000 Vacancies for Teachers, Other Staff, 14 May 2022

"The Ministry of Education announced vacancies for thousands of teachers in the country. At a press conference in Kabul, the Ministry of Education announced more than 7,000 vacancies for teachers and administrative staff in the education departments of eight provinces. Nearly 3,000 vacancies were

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

reserved for women, they said.

The Guardian, The Guardian view on Afghan women: the Taliban turn the screws, 10 May 2022

"Though the Taliban justify the burqa as a matter of tradition, this has only been the case in the most conservative rural areas. For many Afghan women, this is a wholly alien and unwelcome imposition. Yet, equally, their greatest concern may not be the edict to cover their faces per se, but the fact that this is the latest blow removing their ability to work, earn, or be present in the public sphere, and handing control of their bodies to the men in their families. Authorities also suggested that women should not leave their homes if possible, emboldening enforcers on the ground. Women cannot even decide independently what risks they are willing to take, since if their faces are seen in public their male "guardians" face fines, jail time and losing their jobs. (Women who work for the government will also be fired.)"

The Guardian, 'The Taliban know they need us': the Afghan hospitals run by women, 9 May 2022

"But behind the walls of several female-run hospitals in Kabul, a different reality exists: here, women save lives on a daily basis, offer marriage advice, care for and adopt abandoned children. Many of the doctors and nurses working here have raised children and often remain their family's sole financial supporters. And they all agree: things work better when women run the show."

Khaama, SIGAR: Since the Taliban Assumed Control of Afghanistan, 900,000 People Have Lost Their Jobs, 9 May 2022

"According to the International Labor Organization, more than 500,000 Afghan workers lost their jobs in the third quarter of 2021, and the number of people who will lose their jobs since the Taliban took control is expected to reach 700,000 to 900,000 people by mid-2022. Working women are disproportionately affected, according to SIGAR, with women's employment expected to fall by 21% by mid-2022."

BBC News, Afghanistan: Women's faces become latest Taliban restriction after face veil rule, 8 May 2022

"Teenage girls have still not been allowed back to school in most of the country, and whilst women are working in some sectors such as healthcare and education, many others have been told not to return to their offices."

The Guardian, We had 4,000 policewomen in Afghanistan. Let them get back to work, 21 April 2022

"Despite being forced to flee, Ebtakar hopes to raise awareness on the issues facing policewomen in Afghanistan. When the Taliban took over, there were nearly 4,000 women police officers in the country, most of whom lost their jobs. A fraction were retained to manage women's prisons. The Ministry of Women Affairs and other women's support services were also dissolved. The Taliban has maintained a very small number of women as security officials, who have been reportedly called on during investigations and house raids"

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"After the Taliban takeover, most women-led businesses suspended operations due to the ongoing liquidity crisis and fear of violating Taliban edicts against women in the marketplace. [...] Since their takeover, the Taliban permitted women to continue their roles as health practitioners, but many women were afraid to return to work due to safety and security concerns related to the Taliban's stated policies restricting women in the workplace. After August 15, the ever-smaller number of qualified female health practitioners steeply increased the risk of poor health outcomes for women. [...] After August 15, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Taliban prohibited most female government employees from working, although the Taliban claimed they continued to pay their salaries. Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) executives sought meetings with the Taliban-controlled Ministry of Economy after the takeover to get clarity on whether the Taliban would allow the estimated 57,000 women-led private businesses in the country to remain open. The AWCCI stated they failed to get a formal meeting with high-level Taliban decisionmakers but were assured informally that women would be allowed to work “if that work conformed with Islamic law.” [...] In September the Taliban-appointed “Kabul mayor” instructed the city’s female staff (amounting to approximately one-third of Kabul’s 3,000 municipal employees) to stay at home, with the exception of women whose jobs could not be replaced by men. Taliban leaders stated they would implement their version of sharia, prohibiting women from working alongside men, but gave no indication when female employees would be able to return to work. A similar Taliban ruling kept public universities from opening in September, as they were not configured to meet the Taliban’s gender-segregation standards, which effectively barred women from obtaining a secondary education, disenfranchising them from professional employment. In October, media reported Taliban representatives stated women would continue to work at police stations and in passport offices. The Taliban further stated they were trying to provide working conditions for women in the sectors where they were needed, according to Islamic law. Taliban representatives also stated women were banned from most employment while saying women could keep their jobs only if they were in a role a man could not fill. In a December 16 interview, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid claimed no women had been fired from public-sector jobs and that they continued to receive salaries at home. As of December the UN OCHA mapped the agreements between aid agencies and the Taliban in each of the country’s 34 provinces, showing where female staff members would be permitted to work. The document, reviewed by HRW, indicated that, as of October 28, Taliban representatives in only three provinces had provided a written agreement unconditionally permitting women aid workers to do their jobs.”

Afghan Voice Agency, Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry Reopens in Herat, 11 April 2022
Officials at the chamber said they will attempt to provide facilities for women’s activities.

“Since the chamber is now reopened and it has resumed activities, other women are encouraged. The women who suspended their business activities, they will resume them again,” said Bahnaz , a member of the chamber. According to the Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the activities of has increased.

A female entrepreneur in Herat called on the government and international organizations to provide support as they have suffered severe economic challenges [...] There are a total of 130 members in the 's Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Herat. Based on available figures, dozens of women entrepreneurs left Afghanistan following the recent political changes in the country. According to the department of Commerce and Industry, more than 1,500 women are engaged in business in Herat.”

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan - 2021 Final Report, 31 March 2022

“Since August 2021, women have largely been excluded from the workforce both as a result of the economic crisis and restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities. In the public sector, exceptions are made in some cases for women working in healthcare, primary schools, as well as for a very small number of female civil servants.”

WHO, WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the meeting on Interim Priorities for Health Sector in Afghanistan – 29 March 2022, 29 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Last year’s conflict led to major disruptions to essential health services, and a significant exodus of health workers. When I visited Afghanistan in September last year, I had the honour of meeting with several female health workers. We must support them with decent salaries, safe working conditions, and education.”

TOLO News, Facing Criticism, Govt Says More Posts for Women Are Planned, 11 March 2022

“The Ministry of Higher Education announced 275 posts for female teachers in the capital city of Kabul.”

International Federation of Journalists, Afghanistan: 87% of women journalists have suffered discrimination under Taliban rule, 9 March 2022

“The survey, “Working conditions of women journalists under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan” addresses women journalists’ psychological, physical, and digital safety situation and the growing crisis of freedom of expression in the country. The survey found that:

- 87% of women journalists have experienced gender discrimination during the Taliban regime
 - 60% of women journalists have lost their jobs and careers.
 - 79% of women journalists said they have been insulted and threatened under the Taliban regime, including physical threats, abuse by Taliban officials, written and verbal threats.
 - 91% of working women journalists were the sole economic support of their families
 - 87% of women journalists are not motivated to work in the current situation due to fear and panic
- Respondents also shared deep concerns over Taliban policies affecting security, the restriction of media funding and the lack of a media law.

The survey also shows that women journalists need more training in safety and capacity building.

Over 500 respondents from 34 provinces took part in the survey.”

OHCHR, Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

“Since August 2021, women have largely been excluded from the workforce both as a result of the economic crisis and restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities. In the public sector, exceptions are made in some cases for women working in health-care, primary schools, as well as for a very small number of civil servants.”

AAN, Regime Change, Economic Decline and No Legal Protection: What has happened to the Afghan media?, 7 March 2022

“Only about 17 per cent of female journalists or media workers returned to work by early December 2021. The situation for female journalists remains precarious, because the Taleban’s policy on this matter is still unclear. In 17 of the country’s 34 provinces there are no women working in the media. [...]

“On the evening of 15 August, the office posted a message on a WhatsApp group with all employees in it, asking female employees to stay home until further notice,” Zahra Rahimi, a former female journalist working with Tolonews, told AAN.”

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Threatening Provincial Media, 7 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“An estimated 80 percent of women journalists across Afghanistan have lost their jobs or left the profession since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, and hundreds of media outlets have closed. [...] In some provinces, Taliban officials told all women journalists to stop working. The few who are allowed to work can no longer have roles in which they come face-to-face with the public. [...] A female journalist in Balkh said that, in September, Taliban soldiers had beaten her on the street while she was trying to cover women’s protests. She said: “Journalists can easily get beaten by Taliban soldiers in the streets and no one will be held responsible. In the past few months, the journalist from Arezo TV has been beaten and a Pajhwak journalist in Balkh has been arrested.” [...] In Ghor province, the Taliban’s Cultural Affairs Department, which regulates the media, has turned away former women journalists when they came to their jobs, saying they have no orders confirming that female journalists can work. As of February, there were no female journalists in Ghor. In Kapisa, a journalist said that in the first days of the Taliban takeover, officials said that women journalists should stay home, and there has been no change since then.[...] A former journalist in Helmand said that she had six female colleagues, but as of February there were no female journalists working in the province. She said that Taliban officials have instructed the media not to involve any women as program hosts or guests. Cultural programs in which women had been involved have also been terminated.”

UNHCR, [Afghanistan Crisis update: Women and Girls in Displacement](#), 1 March 2022

“In localities such as Badakhshan and Herat the lack of women staff among service providers was raised as a barrier. Data are currently unavailable to determine the proportion of public services that include women providers in Afghanistan. However, information on the provinces that lack agreements for the full engagement of women humanitarian staff can provide some insight. As of 25 December 2021, nine provinces in the country had only partial agreements for women humanitarian staff. That is, while some organizations secured the ability for women staff to work in all sectors, others were only able to secure agreements for work in health and education. This leaves 3,492,666 women (more than 18 per cent of Afghan women and girls) without or with limited access to women aid workers. Engagement with the de facto authorities to advocate for expanding partial agreements is currently on-going but, in most cases, assurances received have only been verbal. This is particularly worrisome in conservative communities, where only women aid workers are allowed to speak to women and girls for needs assessments and provision of aid. If their views aren’t provided or taken into consideration, this may result in gender-blind interventions. Even where women humanitarian workers are allowed to operate, their work often remains conditional on the accompaniment by a male chaperone, which may deter women and girls from disclosing certain needs and may affect survey responses.”

TOLO News, [Afghan Women Artisans Struggling With Lack of Work](#), 24 February 2022

“Afghan women who make handicrafts complain of a decline in their activities. These women say that in the current situation their business has decreased significantly.

“We have been working here for five years, our business was very good before the political change in the country, we have had a lot of progress; after the takeover of the Taliban, our work became very limited, restrictions were imposed on us. We are not prospering, the markets are shrinking and we have a lot of restrictions,” said Aliya, a business owner.

“Our demand is that women should be allowed to go to work, and without any harassment, because some families do not have men, they should allow the women to work,” said Firoozah, a businesswoman. Aliya, who studied computer science, is the sole breadwinner of a family of five.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

In addition to computer science, she is also skilled in sewing handicrafts and has been working in a handicraft workshop for more than five years.

According to Aliya, the number of female workers in this workshop has been reduced from twenty to three.

"80 percent of women have lost their jobs, most of the women are the breadwinners who are currently at home and are facing severe economic problems," said Aliya, a businesswoman.

"In the past, women were working here and our business was very good, but now it has diminished," said Azizullah, a handicraft seller.

"There were 12 girls and women who worked here, they were tailors, but now all of them are unemployed at home," said Khwaja Hodayoun, a handicraft seller."

Gandhara, [Afghan Beauty Parlors Take a Cut After Taliban Takeover](#), 22 February 2022

"Three years ago, Nida, a young Afghan entrepreneur, established a modern beauty parlor in Shahr-e Nau, an upscale neighborhood in Kabul. [...] But she closed her salon shortly after the Taliban swiftly seized Kabul in August, well aware that businesses like hers were being defaced with spray paint to cover posters of women models and brides used to attract customers. Some salon owners removed the pictures themselves or painted them over to avoid trouble with the new authorities. [...] After repeated closures, Nida recently obtained a trade license from the Taliban. But her clientele and peace of mind have disappeared. "We women are terrified of the Taliban and worried about our future," she told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "Now, we often wait for just one customer to show up during an entire day."

The Guardian, [‘The Taliban want revenge’: Afghanistan’s female judges in exile in Australia](#), 19 February 2022

"At 10am I was at work in Kabul. At 11am I got a phone call: 'The Taliban are in control. They are looking for you, go home and hide,'" said Farah Altaf Atahee, who fled with her husband and three children.

The Guardian met Atahee and other female judges in mid-December in Athens, where they had been evacuated from Afghanistan and were awaiting relocation to new homes.

Fifteen judges and their families – a cohort of about 70 people – have now been resettled in Australia. As she recounted the events of the day the Taliban seized power in Kabul, Atahee fought back tears. She said she realised that thousands of recently released prisoners, including Taliban leaders and heroin traffickers, the violent criminals she had sent to jail, wanted revenge on her and other judicial officers."

"Everything we worked for, everything we had, gone," she said, from the Melissa office, an Athens-based NGO supporting refugees. "My home, my family, my work, my life, my savings, all gone, in less than an hour."

Gandhara News, [Six Months And An Eternity: Afghans Lose Hope Under Taliban Rule](#), 15 February 2022

"Khaleda Tahsin, 51, another Afghan journalist, is giving up on journalism after 22 years spent chasing her country's evolving story nonstop. She braved suicide attacks, threats, and intimidation from both the government and the insurgents.

But the sole breadwinner for the family is calling an end to her career. She resigned from her job as the editor in chief at Radio Killid, a private station, this month because the conditions for women's work had so rapidly deteriorated under the Taliban.

"Conditions for work, particularly for women, have become tough," she told RFE/RL. "I don't have any peace of mind because of all the security threats."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tahsin says that while women journalists can still work in theory, they have no protections. "Our major challenge is that we do not have access to information while the authorities remain unaccountable," she said.

Afghan women have endured the brunt of Taliban restrictions and discrimination. Most teenage Afghan girls are still waiting to return to school, while women have lost jobs, businesses, and the expanded societal roles they had gained over the past two decades.

"Women have been completely marginalized politically," Zahra Rahnavard, a resident of Kabul, told RFE/RL. "[The Taliban] had promised to preserve women's rights, but we see nothing.... Everyone is in a state of despair and hopelessness."

The Guardian, The Taliban forced Afghan TV workers into hiding. Now they're asking Hollywood for help, 14 February 2022

"[...]Rahima, a screenwriter, said she was in the middle of teaching a university class when she learned that the Taliban had entered Kabul. She and a female colleague ran out to buy burkas, only to find the shops already closed. She went home and locked herself inside. She has stayed in hiding for the past five and a half months, she said.

"In our neighborhood, everyone recognizes me as a woman activist, the university teacher and TV employee," Rahima said through a translator. In the first 100 days of Taliban rule, more than 70% of journalists lost their jobs, and at least 250 news outlets closed their doors, according to a report from an Afghan press watchdog this fall. By September, fewer than 100 of Kabul's 700 female journalists were still working, according to a report from Reporters Without Borders. [...] While larger TV stations are still reporting the news, and a few women still appear as correspondents on larger networks, many of the faces are new, as older reporters have fled or gone into hiding, former TV workers said. Violence against journalists, including the vicious beating of two journalists covering a women's rights protest, has undermined the Taliban's pledge that it would allow independent media outlets to continue operating. At least 50 journalists and media workers have been detained or arrested over the past six months, according to Reporters Without Borders."

ToloNews, Students Welcome Reopening of Public Universities, 31 January 2022

"[...] University students are praising the government's decision to reopen all public universities across the country. The Ministry of Higher Education announced on Sunday that all public universities in warm areas will be opened on February 2nd and in cold areas on February 26th. Bargi Khalil, a university instructor, told TOLONews: "There should be no change in the educational method of the Ministry of Higher Education. We don't say that there should not be positive changes, but the former methods should continue." Earlier, the Islamic Emirate said it has made plans to segregate male and female students."

Reuters, Afghan women losing jobs, 20 January 2022

"Hard-won gains in women's rights over the last two decades have been quickly reversed, and reports from international rights experts and labour organisations this week painted a bleak picture for female employment and access to public space. Though the economic crisis is hitting the entire country - some agencies predict it will leave almost the entire population in poverty in the coming months - the effect is disproportionately felt by women. [...]

"Work in key sectors has dried up while newly imposed restrictions on women's participation in some economic areas are also hitting home." [...] Afghan women's employment levels fell by an estimated 16% in the third quarter of 2021, according to an ILO report released on Wednesday [19 January 2020], relative

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to 6% for men. Women's employment was expected to be 21% lower than it was before the Taliban takeover by mid-2022 if current conditions continued, according to the ILO."

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity, 18 January 2022

"Nearly all the women interviewed who previously had paid employment had lost their jobs. "In Ghazni [province], only female healthcare workers and teachers can go to work," a nongovernmental organization worker said. "Women working in other fields are forced to stay home now." [...]

Those still working have largely not been paid because health care and education were almost entirely financed by foreign donors, whose aid has been cut off. The only interviewee being paid regularly was working for an international nongovernmental group. [...] While primary schools for girls are open, the teachers have not received their salaries. [...]

Taliban restrictions have compounded the financial crisis for women. The owner of a business exporting products produced by female farmers said the farmers are no longer allowed to work, the products cannot be exported, and the farmers she sources from cannot afford transportation costs. [...]

Taliban authorities in Ghazni city search for women they see as having engaged in behavior they find unacceptable. [...] Several said they had relatives or friends in hiding who were afraid to be interviewed. "Women who were in the army or worked as police were targets," a government worker said. "Women's rights activists feared for their lives and either left the province or stopped their activities. I fear for my life too: I worked, and I was active in civil society. I don't do those activities anymore." Several cited the Taliban's killing of two female police officers in Ghazni, days before the province fell to the Taliban, as having struck particular fear among women in the community. [...]

The Taliban have imposed new restrictions on women's dress and conduct, which affect every aspect of their lives, including their career options. "Women can only become teachers or nurses, nothing else," the government worker said. [...]

"The Taliban government has affected our daily lives," a student said. "In the past, when I would come to Ghazni, I would wear the same dresses as in Kabul, and I could go around the city on my own. But now we are required to wear a burqa, and our commute to the town is restricted." [...]

When women are allowed to work, their workplaces operate under new Taliban restrictions. A health worker said her boss arranged a meeting with a senior Taliban official. "The hospital assembled all female staff to tell us how we should behave after this," she said. "How we should dress, and how we should work separately from the male personnel. We were advised to talk to male personnel in an insolent manner and angry tone, not in a soft tone, so that we don't evoke sexual desires in them."

There were also new requirements to wear a burqa and a long dress. [...]

Taliban restrictions on women, difficulty discerning what they are, and arbitrary enforcement impair women's access to health care. "Doctors are also scared of treating female patients," a government worker said. "It's also hard to find female doctors." She said there used to be more women healthcare workers in private hospitals and clinics, but they are harder to find now."

Khaama Press, IEA to resume hiring government employees, women are excluded, 11 January 2022

Administrative Reform Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan announced that they are working on a new policy to resume the recruitment process of civil servants. Speaking to journalists in Kabul on Monday, January 10, 2022, officials of the Commission said that they will reactivate the network of Administrative Reforms and will recruit civil servants through open competition. About women, the officials said that decision about female government employees is not yet made and that it will take time to.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

VOA, Former Afghan female soldier: 'I am so afraid' under Taliban, 31 December 2021

"Afghan women who served in the country's military are speaking out about how their life has changed under the Taliban.

"I feel like I am in prison," said Jamila, 28, a former Afghan military officer in the western city of Herat. "I have to be at home. I can't work or go out. I am so afraid."

More than 6,300 women served in the former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Now they face not only threats to their life as former members of the military but also the Taliban's imposed restrictions on their gender.

Human Rights Watch and the United Nations accused the Taliban in November of the summary killing of more than 100 former Afghan security officials despite the group's promise of general amnesty.

Jamila served for 10 years in the 207th Zafar (Victory) Corps of the Afghan National Army, headquartered in Herat province. She says she now hears news every day of someone else who was killed or disappeared.

"I fear that they (the Taliban) might find me and kill me," she said."

AVA Press, The Ambiguous Fate of Women in Afghanistan's Armed Forces, 28 December 2021

"Female soldiers in province say they have become destitute since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, adding that they are in precarious security and economic situation. They say security threats on the one hand and poverty on the other have made life difficult for them. Meanwhile, the Taliban's interior ministry says they are working on a method to clarify the fate of officers."

Reporters without borders, Since the Taliban takeover, 40% of Afghan media have closed, 80% of women journalists have lost their jobs, December 20, 2021 - Updated on December 21, 2021

"A survey by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) shows a radical change in the Afghan media landscape since the Taliban took power. A total of 231 media outlets have had to close and more than 6,400 journalists have lost their jobs since 15 August. Women journalists have been hit hardest, with four out of five no longer working."

"Six provinces have seen three quarters of their male journalists lose their jobs. But no female journalist at all is still working in 15 of the countries 34 provinces. For example, in the northern province of Jowzjan, which used to have 19 media outlets employing 112 women, none of the 12 media outlets still operating is employing a woman.

The Taliban controlling many localities impose conditions on the local media that include not employing any women journalists at all. The media landscape is now largely devoid of women journalists, even in regions such as Kabul where traditionally there were more of them. Fewer than 100 women journalists dared to return to work in the weeks after the Taliban arrived in Kabul and told women to stay at home. Others have returned to their media outlets in the past two months. But, of the 1,190 women journalists and media workers counted in the capital at the start of August, only 320 are now working – a 73% fall."

AVA Press, The Taliban Leader's Special Decree on Women Is Disappointing, 4 December 2021

"The Taliban leader's decree on women has sparked controversy. It is the first time the Taliban leader has spoken about women and their rights. This decree, however, is extremely conservative and does not comply with established and accepted human rights standards.

This decree reflects the patriarchal view of society towards women. In this view, women are identified as weak beings and are pitied. This view will never give women the right to -determination. The decree also

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

does not mention women's civil and political rights as their most basic rights. The decree does not mention the right to work, the right to education, and the right to political and civil participation of women. In this decree, women's rights are reduced only to the right to choose a husband. It does not mention other basic rights based on global human rights values. This decree seeks to ensure justice within the framework of a polygamous legal system; Today, polygamy is a violation of women's human rights. Even this system never meets the same standards as its traditional counterparts in Afghanistan and is more motivated by a decline in male sexual desire and a sense of diversity in a patriarchal society."

TOLO News, Women Activists Seek Govt, Society Inclusion, 29 November 2021

"Many challenges lay in front of women in the previous government; right now, the women do not have access to their rights either--rights to education or to work. We ask the Islamic Emirate to fulfill their commitments that they promised earlier," said Diana Azizi, a women's activist."

DW, Afghanistan: What Taliban's new media rules mean for female actors, 28 November 2021

"The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice — which replaced the Ministry of Women's Affairs after the Islamic fundamentalist group seized power in the country in August — also told broadcasters not to screen films or programs that are "against Islamic or Afghan values."

The broadcasting of films that promote foreign cultures or traditions in Afghan society, or which provoke immorality, is also to be prohibited, the directive said.

Women TV journalists, however, are allowed to present their reports if they wear the Islamic hijab.

The Taliban's interpretation of the hijab — which can range from a hair covering to a face veil or full body covering — is unclear, and the majority of Afghan women already wear headscarves."

Variety, Afghan Actresses Decry Taliban Ban on Women in Entertainment: 'An Artist Without Art is Basically Dead', 26 November 2021

"Women may no longer appear in dramas and soap operas on television and newswomen must wear the hijab, says the first missive of its kind from the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. (...)

When broadcast journalist Zahra Nabi heard news of the religious directives, she felt a sense of relief. In her view, they serve to make an impossible situation for Afghan media more visible on a global stage.

"The Taliban we're facing on the street is completely different from the Taliban you see on the media or at Doha," she explains. "They always capture journalists, beat them, arrest them for so many hours. They take cameras, break them and don't allow us to report.

"We're already having very tough times. At least now they announced their intentions, so that the international press and community can see," continues Nabi."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), "They are the Revolution": Afghan Women fighting for their future under Taliban rule, 25 November 2021

"At a time when Afghans have had a whole spectrum of rights taken away from them almost overnight, these 16 stories serve as a reminder of how much Afghan women have achieved over the last 20 years despite political instability and conflict and the heightened risks that they now face under the present regime."

DW, Afghanistan: What Taliban's new media rules mean for female actors, 24 November 2021

"Afghanistan's Taliban rulers unveiled a new set of restrictions on Afghan media Sunday, banning

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

television channels from showing dramas and soap operas featuring women actors.

The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice — which replaced the Ministry of Women's Affairs after the Islamic fundamentalist group seized power in the country in August — also told broadcasters not to screen films or programs that are "against Islamic or Afghan values."

The broadcasting of films that promote foreign cultures or traditions in Afghan society, or which provoke immorality, is also to be prohibited, the directive said.

Women television journalists, however, are allowed to present their reports if they wear the Islamic hijab."

The Independent, Afghan journalists 'facing death threats' and harsh rules, with female reporters hit hardest, 23 November 2021

"Journalists in Afghanistan are facing death threats and harsh new rules, which are particularly impacting women, according to campaigners.

Human Rights Watch warned the Taliban's clampdown on the press is escalating, with Taliban intelligence officials forcing all journalists to enter all of their articles to be authorised before they can be published. New rules unveiled by the Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice on Sunday have blocked soap operas and dramas from including women actors. (...)

"I used to produce reports on virginity testing and violence against women, which no one can cover anymore," a woman, who worked as a journalist in Herat in north-western Afghanistan, said. "No program covers women's issues, especially on TV channels. The educational and entertainment programs have all stopped.

Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said: "The Taliban's new media regulations and threats against journalists reflect broader efforts to silence all criticism of Taliban rule. The disappearance of any space for dissent and worsening restrictions for women in the media and arts is devastating.

"Despite the Taliban's promises to allow media that 'respected Islamic values' to function, the reality for Afghanistan is that journalists live in fear of a knock on the door or a summons from the authorities. This is contributing to an information blackout in which Taliban abuses increasingly happen in secret and without accountability.""

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report, October 2021, 15 November 2021

"All cluster partners continue to experience challenges with liquidity, affecting salary and contractor payments. Challenges remain across the country with varied permissions on women's right to work, across and within provinces as well as across clusters. This directly impacts education and child protection services and while some programming continues, there is a need to engage with authorities at all levels across the clusters to ensure harmonization."

TOLO News, Afghan Woman Journalist Working as Street Vendor in Kabul, 14 November 2021

"Farzana Ayoubi, a woman journalist, must work as a vendor on a Kabul street due to economic problems in order to support her three-member family.

Mrs. Ayoubi said that she became jobless after the rapid political change in Afghanistan.

"With the closure of some media organizations, journalists became jobless and I was forced to work as a vendor as they don't allow us (women) to work," she said.

She called on the international community and media watchdogs to pay attention to the problems of the media family in Afghanistan. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“When the political changes came to Afghanistan, the media family was severely damaged. The journalists unfortunately engaged in hazardous work, and working as vendors on the streets, ” said Masrroor Lutfi, head of Afghanistan’s National Journalists’ Union.

This comes as the UN and other humanitarian organizations expressed concerns over the severe economical crisis ahead of a cold winter in Afghanistan.”

The Guardian, ‘I loved my job in the police. Then the Taliban came for me’, 14 November 2021

“Fatima Ahmadi only stopped screaming when the Taliban held a knife to her child’s throat, and told her: “Shut up, or we will kill your son.” They had burst into the policewoman’s Kabul home one late September morning, demanding she hand over her weapons. She told the Taliban she had no guns at home, but they said she was lying, ransacked the house, then began beating her, pulling out handfuls of hair, and when she would not stop shouting, they grabbed her nine-year-old son.

The knife was pressed so violently into his throat it left a red welt, visible in photographs seen by the *Observer*. Ahmadi’s back was covered with bruising from an assault so vicious that she lost control of her bodily functions. The men eventually left, but with an ominous warning. “We will come back.”

A divorced single mother of two young children, Ahmadi had no idea who gave the Taliban her address, or what they might do on a return visit, but she knew the family couldn’t risk waiting to find out. There have been several murders of female police officers since the hardline group took control of Afghanistan, including a vicious attack on one woman who was eight months pregnant.

So she packed her bags, went into hiding and days later managed to flee with her two boys to Pakistan. But their visa is only valid for 60 days and she is terrified about what will come next; Pakistani authorities are deporting Afghans without documents. [...]

She has tried to apply for refugee status in Pakistan through the United Nations, but has had no response yet. Asylum applications to western countries that sponsored police training, and encouraged women to join the force, have met with silence, despite the documented evidence of threats to her and her children’s lives.

But there are regular reports of reprisal killings, despite an official amnesty for anyone who worked in the security forces or for the last government. Thousands of people are still in hiding inside Afghanistan and thousands more like Ahmadi are clinging to precarious safety in neighbouring countries.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban blocking female aid workers, 4 November 2021

Taliban rules prohibiting most women from operating as aid workers are worsening the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Countrywide restrictions mean that aid will reach fewer families in need, particularly women-headed households.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has mapped the agreements between aid agencies and the Taliban in each of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, showing where female staff members will be permitted to function. The document, reviewed by Human Rights Watch, indicates that, as of October 28, 2021, Taliban officials in only three provinces had provided a written agreement unconditionally permitting women aid workers to do their jobs. In over half the country, women aid workers face severe restrictions, such as requirements for a male family member to escort them while they do their jobs, making it difficult or impossible for them to do their job effectively.

In Badghis province, the Taliban are not allowing women aid workers to work at all. In two other provinces – Bamiyan and Daikundi – the Taliban have said women aid workers are only permitted to work during assessments – gathering information about people’s needs – but not in other stages, such as delivering aid.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

In 16 more provinces, the Taliban have said that women aid workers must be accompanied by a mahram (a male family member chaperone) when they are outside the office. The most crucial work women aid workers do is often outside the office, meeting with people in need including women and girls, assessing their needs, determining risk factors they face, and ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most. Requiring women aid workers in these roles to be escorted, forces a male family member to essentially become a second unpaid worker or – very often – will prove to be an impossible requirement that forces the woman to leave her job.

The Taliban have also restricted the types of work female aid workers can do. In 11 provinces, women aid workers are permitted to work only in health and education programs, blocking them from other areas of humanitarian assistance, such as distributing food and other necessities, water and sanitation, and livelihoods assistance, in which women's participation is also essential. Another key aspect of aid programming is protecting and assisting people, predominantly women and girls, who may face gender-based violence. Without women workers this task is virtually impossible. The Taliban, since taking over Afghanistan on August 15, have systematically dismantled systems established in the country to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. [...]

Many women aid workers have been afraid to go to work since the return of the Taliban, fearing harassment on the street and at their workplace and retaliation by Taliban members and sympathizers who oppose women working. Without a written agreement, women workers will feel less secure and able to continue their work.

Aid agencies told Human Rights Watch that the Taliban are increasingly imposing requirements for offices, strictly segregating employees by gender, with no contact between female and male employees. Such restrictions harm both those in need of assistance and women employees, and reduce the effectiveness of agencies women aid workers kept from the room where decisions are being made, won't be able to provide their expertise, with expected harm to potential female recipients. And women workers who are cut out of key discussions and decision-making in their agencies will find that their careers, job retention, and morale suffer.

Human Rights Watch, From Taliban to Taliban: Cycle of Hope, Despair on Women's Rights, 1 November 2021

"Secondary schools have reopened for boys but remain closed to the vast majority of girls. Women are banned from most employment; the Taliban government added insult to injury by saying women in their employ could keep their jobs only if they were in a role a man cannot fill—such as being an attendant in a women's toilet. Women are mostly out of university, and due to new restrictions it is unclear when and how they can return. Many female teachers have been dismissed.

The policy of requiring a mahram, a male family member as chaperone, to accompany any woman leaving her home, is not in place according to a Kabul official but Taliban members on the street are still sometimes enforcing it, as well as harassing women about their clothing. The Taliban have systematically closed down shelters for women and girls fleeing domestic violence. Women's sports have been banned. The Taliban have appointed an all-male cabinet. They abolished the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and handed over the women's ministry building to the reinstated Ministry of Vice and Virtue, which was responsible for some of the worst abuses against women during the Taliban's previous period in power from 1996 to 2001."

Gandhara News, Afghan women protest in Kabul demanding right to work, education 26 October 2021

"Female activists held a protest in the Afghan capital, Kabul, demanding the right to work and education.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

During their October 26 march, they called on the international community do more to pressure Taliban leaders to respect their rights. Since taking power in August, the Taliban has prevented older girls from attending school and most women from working.”

BBC News, Fleeing Afghanistan: 'Women are imprisoned, while the criminals are free', 26 October 2021
“Asked whether women would hold prominent roles, such as judge or minister, in the future, Mr Karimi [secretary to the Taliban spokesman Bilal Karimi] told the BBC he could not comment, because "the working conditions and opportunities for women" were "still being discussed".”

Al Jazeera, Anxious wait for Afghan girls as opening of high schools stalled, 5 October 2021

“Women employment

Though Hossaini is no longer in the country, the women Al Jazeera spoke to said there are tens of thousands of Afghan women who have had their lives put on hold by the stalling of fully reopening all schools across the country.

Masuda Sultan, an Afghan-American entrepreneur and activist who has also joined in the efforts to restart employment and education for women, said it is not just the girls who are heavily affected by the continued shutdown of secondary education for female students.

“More women are employed in education than any other sector in Afghanistan,” said Sultan.

UNICEF estimated that roughly one-third of Afghan teachers were women, and Momand and Afghani said a further 150,000 are employed in other facets of the education sector.

“For a lot of families, teaching is the only job they’ll let their women have,” said Sultan referring to the decades-long practice of gender-segregating primary and secondary education in the country.

Because of this, Sultan said it is imperative to reopen all schools across the country as quickly as possible, “If you don’t employ these teachers, then we are failing women in Afghanistan.” “

Reuters, Protests get harder for Afghan women amid risks and red tape, 4 October 2021

“Women in Afghanistan who object to what the Taliban have said and done since returning to power are finding it harder to protest, now that impromptu demonstrations have been banned and previous rallies were broken up by gunfire and beatings.

Resistance within families and concerns over sharing information over social media that could identify people involved are also acting as deterrents, according to six female protesters Reuters spoke to across the country.

Sporadic demonstrations by women demanding that the Taliban respect their civil freedoms have been captured on social media, as have the sometimes violent responses, drawing the world's attention to issues of equality and human rights.

The last time the Taliban ruled in the 1990s, they banned women from work and girls from school, allowed women to leave their homes only when accompanied by a male relative and insisted that women wore all-enveloping burqas.

Those who broke the rules were sometimes whipped in public by the Islamist militants' "moral police".

This time the Taliban are promising greater freedom for women, including in education and employment, in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic law.

Yet older girls are still not back at school, there are no women in senior positions in the new government, the Women's Ministry in Kabul has been shut and the Taliban have said women will only be allowed to work in a small number of jobs.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, 'I don't know where to go': uncertain fate of the women in Kabul's shelters, 1 October 2021
"When a Kabul-based shelter that once housed 80 women closed during the Taliban takeover, its cook lost her income as well as a way to provide for her extended family. "My mother and I were the breadwinners but now we both sit at home, not knowing how we will survive," says the 30-year-old, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Since last year she cooked, twice a day, receiving £190 a month and independence from her abusive husband, who was a crystal meth addict. Her mother, who was the cook at another shelter funded by the same western NGO, also lost her job.

"Now that I am locked up in my house, I suffer a lot, mentally and financially," the daughter says. She fears for her own two daughters, who were meant to enter secondary school next year. "As an illiterate Afghan woman, I was working to help my two daughters go to school but now they can't even get an education."

NY Times, At Afghan Universities, Increasing Fear that Women will never be allowed back, 29 September [updated 5 October]

"The new government has also prohibited most women from returning to the workplace, citing security concerns, though officials have described that as temporary. (The original Taliban movement did that as well in its early days in 1990s, but never followed up.)"

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 27 September 2021

"There have been reports that women-owned businesses, especially restaurants and cafes, have remained closed by the Taliban in Kabul. "Women have been progressively excluded from the public sphere, prohibited from appearing without a male guardian and face increasing restrictions on their right to work," the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said at the UN General Assembly on 21 September."

TOLO News, Kabul restaurants owned, staffed by women now closed, 22 September 2021

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

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

Reuters, Taliban replaces women's ministry with ministry of virtue and vice, 17 September 2021

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

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

BBC news, Afghanistan: Life under Taliban rule one month on, 16 September 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

TOLO News, Kabul Airport Employees, Including Women, Return to Work, 13 September 2021

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

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

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

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Not Keeping Its Word: Afghan Woman Quits Job After Pressure From Taliban, 11 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

TOLO News, Afghan Women Seek Right to Return to Govt Jobs, 10 September 2021

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

Speaking to TOLONews, they urged the Taliban to pave the way for women employees to return to work. Shugufa Najibi, who has her master's degree in law from India, worked in Afghanistan's parliament for around ten years and said: “When I went to the office, they stopped me. I asked ‘Why? Your officials say women can work?’ When I left, they told me through my colleagues to not come anymore.”

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

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

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

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

Human Rights Watch, How the International Community Can Protect Afghan Women and Girls, 2 September 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Access to Employment

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

What is the Taliban’s position regarding women studying?

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

Aljazeera, Taliban official says Islam grants women right to education and work, 31 August 2022

“A Taliban official has said that Islam grants women the right to education, work, and entrepreneurship, and reiterated that the group is working to create a so-called “safe environment” for girls and women in secondary schools and the workplace.

“I must say that Islam has given women the right to education, Islam has given women the right to work, Islam has given women the right to entrepreneurship [...] if Islam has allowed it, who am I to ban it.” [quote by Taliban spokesperson of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, Sadeq Akif Muhajir]

“The comments by Muhajir came more than a year after the armed group took over the country and imposed several limitations on women’s freedoms, including a ban on secondary education for girls. Since returning to power, the Taliban has among other things, shut down girls’ secondary schools across the country, ordered women to wear hijabs in the workplace and to cover their faces in public, and has banned women from travelling long distanced without a close male relative.”

“But a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) this year found that Afghan women’s employment levels fell by an estimated 16 percent in the months immediately following the Taliban takeover. In contrast, male employment dropped by 6 percent. ‘In the pessimistic scenario in which restrictions intensify and women do not feel they can safely show up at their workplaces, the scale of job losses for women could reach 28 percent,’ the report said.

Working Afghan women have previously told Al Jazeera that while the Taliban has not directly fired female government employees, it has restricted women from entering workplaces and has paid them a notably reduced salary to remain at home.”

“The Taliban’s return to power has exacerbated Afghanistan’s economic woes. The country has been reeling from a humanitarian crisis with more than half of the population facing hunger.

The Western-imposed sanctions and the freezing of nearly \$10bn in Afghan central bank assets by the US have largely contributed to the collapse of the economy.”

Tolo News, [Girls Continue Education Amidst Schools Closure](#), 20 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Girls from secondary schools who have been banned by the Islamic Emirate to attend their classes have continued their education in personal levels, at home and with their classmates, as some students described.

However, the girls said they are not sure about having a promising future due to being away from schooling.”

Khaama Press, Taliban’s ‘Cohesiveness’ Precedence over Reopening Girls’ Schools in Afghanistan, 18 August 2022

“Human Rights Watch says that since the Taliban stated that the group has not established a “consensus” and that the Taliban’s “cohesiveness” is a priority to the group before reopening schools, it has become blatantly obvious that the Taliban will not be reopening girls’ schools “anytime soon.” Heather Barr, Associate Director of the Women’s Right Division at Human Rights, stated in a tweet on Thursday, August 18, that the international community must stop waiting and act on this “reality”. In her note on Twitter, Human Rights Watch official, Barr, wrote that the international community must take immediate action to provide girls with alternatives to their education as well as put travel restrictions and other sanctions against Taliban officials.”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘In the final weeks of my bachelor’s degree, I was studying law, but there was no rule of law, no freedom, and no law.’, 18 August 2022

“Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation that has developed there since the Taliban takeover. Here, our correspondent, a now-graduated law student, reflects on her academic, professional and personal circumstances before and after the fall of Kabul on August 15, 2021. [...] On August 15th, I lost my future, my dreams, the best version of myself in the near future, my favorite path and my peace. After that day, I was deprived of the chance of going to university; I couldn’t follow my French and English classes; I wasn’t able to take French and English exams; I couldn’t participate in national and international competitions; I was deprived of the opportunity to get internships; I was deprived of serving my country. After that day, I was obliged to stay at home, to forget myself, to leave my dreams, On that dark day, I lost my freedom. [...] A gender separation plan was imposed and the male professors weren’t allowed to teach girls; the enter and exit times were fixed and no one could go out or into the university outside of the fixed times; wearing colorful dresses was forbidden; even taking a photo was forbidden for girls at university. Taliban forces were entering the faculties randomly with their guns to control the application of their ridiculous plans at university; university student associations were dissolved by the Taliban; the pictures of distinguished female professors and students were removed from the walls of faculties. The learning clubs have stopped their activities by the force of the Taliban, and the most important thing is that there was no rule of law in the faculty founded on the Rule of Law. [...] This is a very small part of my life under the rule of the Taliban. I’m not the person that I was hoping to be before August 15th. The Taliban broke my path.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Human Rights Watch, [Afghan Women and Western Intervention: A Conversation](#), 17 August 2022

“Girls are banned from secondary education in the vast majority of Afghanistan’s provinces. Women are banned from most employment. Women in universities face harsh new restrictions. Many female teachers have been dismissed. The policy of requiring a mahram, a male family member chaperone, to accompany any woman leaving her home, has not been officially stated, but Taliban officials on the street are often enforcing it, as well as harassing women about their clothing. Rules requiring women to have a mahram with them have been imposed for women travelling long distances or leaving the country. The Taliban have ordered women to cover their faces in public, including women journalists reporting on television. Since taking over Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have systematically dismantled the system designed to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, including closing almost all shelters for women and girls. Women’s sports are banned and there are new barriers to women obtaining health care. The Taliban appointed an all-male cabinet. They abolished the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and handed over the building to the reinstated Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, responsible for some of the worst abuses against women during the Taliban’s previous time in power, from 1996 to 2001.”

Jurist.org, [UN expert, Amnesty International condemn Taliban crackdown on women’s rights protest](#), 14 August 2022

“Around 40 female protesters marched in front of the Afghan Ministry of Education to mark the one-year anniversary of the Taliban’s takeover of the country. The protesters chanted slogans such as “bread, work, and freedom,” “we want political participation” and “no to enslavement.” To disperse the protesters, the Taliban opened fired in the air, and it has been reported that some protesters and journalists were beaten, and phones as well as cameras were seized. Several journalists were detained, out of whom at least three were still in custody as of Saturday evening. It is not known if any protesters were also detained...[T]he Taliban is reported to have assaulted and detained women’s rights protesters incommunicado previously.” “Since August 15 last year, Afghanistan has gained the status of the only country in the world that has a ban on girls’ secondary education, and women must wear a burqa, are not allowed to travel long distances without a male companion or work in most government jobs. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs was replaced with the “Ministry for Preaching and Guidance” in September, and in May this year, Taliban authorities dissolved the country’s Human Rights Commission, calling it “unnecessary.””

UNICEF, [Depriving girls of secondary education translates to a loss of at least US\\$500 million for Afghan economy in last 12 months](#), 14 August 2022

“New analysis by UNICEF has found that depriving girls in Afghanistan of their right to secondary education will have a devastating effect on the country’s economy. Keeping girls out of secondary school costs Afghanistan 2.5 per cent of its annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to a new analysis by UNICEF.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

If the current cohort of three million girls were able to complete their secondary education and participate in the job market, girls and women would contribute at least US\$5.4 billion to Afghanistan's economy.

UNICEF's estimates do not take into account the non-financial impacts of denying girls access to education, such as upcoming shortages of female teachers, doctors and nurses, the ensuing impact on decreasing attendance for girls in primary school and increasing health costs related to adolescent pregnancy. The estimates also do not account for the broader benefits of education, including overall educational attainment, reduced child marriage and reduced infant mortality.

"The decision on March 23, not to allow girls back to secondary school was shocking and deeply disappointing," said UNICEF Afghanistan Representative, Dr. Mohamed Ayoya. "Not only does it violate girls' fundamental right to education, it exposes them to heightened anxiety, and greater risk of exploitation and abuse, including child trafficking, early and forced marriage. Now, this new analysis clearly articulates the terrible economic impact of this decision on the country's GDP."

Even before the Taliban seized power on August 15 last year, Afghanistan struggled with over 4.2 million children out of school; 60 per cent of whom were girls. Although the potential costs of not educating boys and girls alike are high in terms of lost earnings, not educating girls is especially costly because of the relationship between educational attainment and girls delaying marriage and childbearing, participating in the workforce, making choices about their own future and investing more in the health and education of their own children later in life. The analysis indicates that Afghanistan will be unable to regain the GDP lost during the transition and reach its true potential productivity without fulfilling girls' rights to access and complete secondary school education. [...]

Child malnutrition is also increasing. In June 2021, 30,000 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition in Afghanistan; in June 2022, 57,000 children were admitted -- a 90 per cent increase. Children are being obliged to work to support their families instead of going to school which is the safest place they could be. [...]"

Gandhara, Afghan Girls' lives 'shattered' since return of Taliban, says new report, 10 August 2022

"A humanitarian group says that one year into the return to power of the Taliban, Afghan girls have been confronted with a grave economic crisis, a crippling drought, and new restrictions that have shattered their lives, excluding them from society and leaving them hungry.

As a result, a quarter of Afghan girls are showing signs of depression, Save the Children said in a new report on August 10.

The report, titled *Breaking Point: Life For Children One Year Since The Taliban Takeover*, found that a whopping 97 percent of families are struggling to provide enough food for their children and almost 80 percent of children said they had gone to bed hungry in the past month.

Girls were almost twice as likely as boys to frequently go to bed hungry, and eat less in general.

Hunger is affecting children's health and development, with 90 percent of the girls saying that less and less food over the past year caused them to lose weight and lack energy to work or even play.

The girls' mental and psychosocial well-being has also been endangered seriously, the report said.

According to the research for the report, 26 percent of girls are showing signs of depression compared with 16 percent of boys, while 27 percent of girls are presenting symptoms of anxiety compared with 18 percent of boys.

[...]

Furthermore, since the militant group's return to power, thousands of secondary school girls were ordered to stay home, reversing years of progress for gender equality.

Girls interviewed by Save the Children expressed disappointment and anger over the fact that they can

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

no longer go to school and said they felt hopeless about their future because they don't have the rights and freedoms they had previously.

More than 45 percent of the girls interviewed by the humanitarian group said they're not attending school, compared with 20 percent of boys.

"Life is dire for children in Afghanistan, one year since the Taliban took control. Children are going to bed hungry night after night. They're exhausted and wasting away, unable to play and study like they used to," said Chris Nyamandi, Save the Children's Country Director in Afghanistan.

"Girls are bearing the brunt of the deteriorating situation. They're missing more meals, suffering from isolation and emotional distress, and are staying home while boys go to school. This is a humanitarian crisis, but also a child rights catastrophe," Nyamandi said."

Afghan witness, Afghanistan education sector under the Taliban, 16 August 2022

"Closure of girls' secondary schools and Taliban U-turn

So far, the most defining event of the Taliban's return to power has been their move to close secondary schools for girls, which has drawn global condemnation. After months of promises, on March 21, the hopes of teenage girls were briefly raised when the Taliban leadership announced that high schools would reopen for all students on March 23.

On the morning of March 23, as girls in various locations around the country prepared to attend their first classes in months, the Ministry of Education backtracked on their decision, announcing that all girls' secondary schools – beyond grade 6 – would remain closed indefinitely until a policy was formulated in accordance with "Sharia and Afghan" culture.

The U-turn on girls' schools made global headlines, with images of girls in tears circulated on social media. One tenth grade student Afghan Witness (AW) recently spoke to described it as "the most bitter experience of my life".

Over the following days, many protests erupted around the country and abroad, and, in response to the restrictions, alternative methods of learning and teaching have also been established. Some girls have turned to online schooling, however, an online teacher we recently spoke to raised the issue of a lack of internet access for girls in remote areas. Some private centres have reportedly continued operating, while there have also been reports of 'secret schools' set-up behind closed doors.

Organisations such as Pen Path claim to have arranged secret and online schools for 5,300 girls in Afghanistan, while the Yalda Hakim Foundation, which also provides education opportunities for Afghan girls, has been counting each day the schools are closed in a bid to raise awareness of the situation.

At the end of May, it was reported on social media that some girls' schools had started to reopen enforcing the hijab decree. On May 23, images circulated on Twitter showing girls on their way to school in Balkh, fully covered.

[...]

Despite the reopening of some girls' high schools, the majority remain closed, and there has been no indication of when they will reopen. In mid-July, a fake Ministry of Education press release made international headlines after claiming that girls' schools would reopen imminently, but was later denounced as false by several Taliban-linked Twitter accounts.

Some Taliban officials have hinted at the negative effects of the closure of girls' schools in the long-run, and experts and rights groups suggest a likelihood of "deep divisions" on the issue. At the beginning of August, Maulawi Ahmed Taqi, a spokesperson for the Taliban's Ministry of Higher Education, pointed out that restrictions on girls' high schools will become a de facto ban on university degrees for women if it stays in place. "Automatically if we do not have high school graduates, we won't have new female university students anymore," Taqi said, adding that he is "hopeful" the Ministry of Education will reopen

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the schools soon.

[...]

The restrictions imposed upon women more broadly have also posed further obstacles to female students and higher education staff. In December, a decree issued by the Taliban's Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, announced that women travelling for more than 45 miles (72km) should be accompanied by a close male family member. In February, female students told Rukhshana media that they are not allowed to travel without a Muharram (male guardian) and cannot attend university in other provinces as a result of the restriction.

In May, a Taliban decree ordered women to cover their bodies and faces in public – a move that was seen as a return to the group's signature policy of the 1990s. The extent to which these regulations have been enforced is not clear, but following the announcement of the hijab decree, several news outlets reported incidents where female university students were allegedly beaten or denied entry for wearing colourful clothes or the "wrong" type of covering.

On May 18, it was reported that female students were denied entrance to the Kabul Education University, also known as Shahid Rabbani Education University, for wearing colourful headscarves.

University students in multiple provinces who AW spoke to in March raised similar issues. One student in Balkh University says she and classmates heard a girl "screaming loudly" while being "punished for not complying with the authorities' rules on hijab." Another student in Kabul says Taliban authorities often warned students through their department and faculty officials that if they did not observe "full hijab", they would close the universities to female students again, while a student from Samangan University told us students were instructed by Taliban authorities to wear long black robes, completely cover their faces – including eyes – and not wear high heels and colourful clothing.

Staff face restrictions, reports of Taliban controlling hiring process

While experts say Afghanistan is already facing a brain drain, the staff shortage has been exacerbated by the segregation of male and female students and staff, as classes must now be taught twice. Although there is an obvious need for new staff members, the Taliban appear to be taking measures to ensure the values of staff align with their own. According to reports, the Taliban have made it compulsory for private universities to request permission before hiring new professors and have urged higher education institutes to "seriously examine the professors' past" and prevent the promotion of the current members of staff who don't fit their ideals.

[...]

The Taliban have also reportedly dismissed dozens of university professors, mainly targeting ethnic minorities. A report in April claimed that Abdullah Safi, the Taliban representative at Balkh University, terminated the employment of 50 professors at the university based on their ethnicity. A list containing the names of all the dismissed faculty members was also shared by a journalist on Twitter, and an AW source – a civil activist in Balkh – confirmed the news.

In extreme circumstances, violence against staff has also been reported. There have been several reports of professors and teachers being detained by the Taliban, including the high profile case of Ustad Faizullah Jalal, a professor at Kabul University, who was arrested in January after allegedly publicly criticising the Taliban on Twitter and television. There have been numerous other reports of professors and teachers being arrested for their alleged criticisms of the Taliban, or in some cases, alleged affiliations with the National Resistant Front.

While these cases relate to male staff, female lecturers have faced similar restrictions to their students, and have reportedly been prevented from participating in scientific conferences with their male

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

counterparts. Despite the Taliban's rules on gender segregation in universities, in some cases, male lecturers still teach female students due to the shortage of female academic staff – a result of many professors leaving the country. According to a BBC report in February, since the takeover, 229 lecturers from the three major universities of Balkh, Herat and Kabul left the country – with 112 resigning from Kabul university alone.

[...]

Removal of Farsi from Balkh University sign

Other examples of the Taliban's management of educational institutes include reports of the Taliban removing the Farsi words from the Balkh University sign, in what has been described as part of an "anti-Farsi sentiment". In a news article by Paik Aftab, one unnamed student pointed out that even though the Taliban claim to have an issue with *all* foreign languages and are not targeting those who speak Farsi specifically, they did not erase the English from the sign – only the Farsi."

The National News, How the Taliban has rolled back civil rights after a year in control of Afghanistan, 10 August 2022

"In the early months after their takeover of Afghanistan last year, the Taliban appeared to have turned over a new leaf, making surprising statements that seemed to support gender equality and education for women. [...] In March, the Taliban officially announced high schools would remain closed until a plan was created to allow them to re-open in accordance with "Islamic law and teachings". They are still yet to re-open, a year after the takeover. [...] On employment, the Taliban made similar promises of allowing women to continue in the workplace. However, soon after their takeover, they said those steps would need to wait until women could work in what they considered a safe environment. "In Afghanistan, 20 years of progress towards enhanced protection and promotion of women's rights was rolled back overnight," Amnesty International said in a recent report. [...] "The Taliban have made it very difficult and expensive for offices to hire women. For instance, they order that there should be gender-segregated spaces for women to work, there is no support within departments for women, and women should not be allowed without a mahram (male guardian)," an Afghan woman told The National in May. "Added to that, women aren't allowed to represent the organisation in meetings, or conduct outdoor activities such as purchasing and processing documents. So you can see why an organisation will not want to hire women." [...] Protests against the Taliban's oppressive views on education and other issues were met with violence, including live ammunition, tear gas and physical beating and lashing of protesters. Under the new government, there are no women in the cabinet and the Ministry of Women's Affairs was shut down. [...] In May, the Taliban officially announced that a dress code of sorts will be mandatory for women. "They should wear a chadori [head-to-toe burqa] as it is traditional and respectful," Taliban chief Hibatullah Akhundzada said."

TOLO News, Girls' Schools Closed for 'Religious Issues': Mujahid, 10 August 2022

"Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said that the schools for female students are closed for religious issues and that there is a need for agreement of Islamic scholars on this matter. [...] "If (we) were acting on Pakistan's instruction, the problems of the schools and other problems would have already been solved. This is a religious issue and it needs Islamic cleric's agreement," Mujahid said."

TOLO News, Officials: Girls' Schools Closed Due to 'Cultural Constraints', 8 August 2022

"During his visit to the province of Khost, Noorullah Munir, the acting minister of education, stated that girls' schools had been shut down due to cultural constraints. He expressed his hope that the Islamic

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Emirate's leaders and the elders would agree to reopen girls' schools. [...] Munir denies reports that the closure of the girls' schools was caused by the change in the curriculum. He said that the Afghan curriculum has issues and that there is currently no plan to change it."

TOLO News, Karzai Voices Concerns Over Closed Girls' Schools, 6 August 2022

"Former President Hamid Karzai expressed concerns over the closure of girls' schools, saying that the decision to close the schools for female students in grade 7-12 is not based on Islamic values but is made based on Pakistan's order. He made the remarks in an interview with Der Spiegel. Karzai said that depriving girls from education means an isolated Afghanistan which will not be able to stand on its own feet.

The National, Life under Taliban cages Afghan women and girls, former human rights chief says, 3 August 2022

"The futures of millions of Afghan women have been stolen by repressive Taliban policies, resulting in a mental health crisis, the former head of Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission has said. In the year since the extremist group took over Afghanistan it has imposed movement restrictions, draconian dress codes and effective education bans on women and girls. [...]

She said many talented Afghan women and girls are today sitting idle in their homes. For them, it feels as if time has stood still. "They feel like they're forgetting what they had learnt in school. They are bored and unhappy at home. They feel like the world is moving ahead, and they're completely left behind," Ms Akbar said. [...]

The hardline rulers have banned girls from joining secondary schools in almost all provinces. "When I talk to women and girls in Afghanistan today, they say they feel that they are trapped in a cage of four walls, the walls of the house. They feel that they are being treated like animals in a zoo. There's a real sense of attack on their dignity," Ms Akbar said. And there are real concerns about their deteriorating mental health amid reports of attempted suicides. "These young women once had a lot of ambitions. Suddenly, they feel their life is over. The only path for them is to get married and have children, not to pursue an education or be able to have an income. And that's not a future that they want. Not everyone can afford to leave Afghanistan," she said.

Some women and girls have started schools in their houses. That is a big risk. "Secret schools are a sign of the Afghan women's resistance. But fathers and parents, in general, are terrified of the Taliban as there will be grave consequences for sending their daughters to such schools," she said. "This is extremely stressful. Imagine that you are being treated as a criminal because you want to seek an education.""

The Guardian, Taliban policies risk de facto university ban for Afghan women, say officials, 1 August 2022

"The Taliban's ban on girls studying at high schools will become a de facto ban on university degrees for women if it stays in place, a Taliban spokesperson and university officials have said."

"Girls will not have the documents needed to enrol in higher education, or the academic capacity to start university courses after nearly a year out of school."

"Even if practical barriers to women entering higher education are removed in the coming months, authorities are also considering limiting them to degrees in healthcare and education, said a source with Taliban leadership ties."

"Without a high school graduation certificate, Afghan students cannot take the kankor national university entrance exam, which is required to enrol even at private colleges."

"Afghanistan's new leaders have repeatedly claimed that they support women's education, as long as it complies with their definition of Islamic regulations."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, [Taliban policies risk de facto university ban for Afghan women](#), say officials, 1 August 2022

"The Taliban's ban on girls studying at high schools will become a de facto ban on university degrees for women if it stays in place, a Taliban spokesperson and university officials have said. Girls will not have the documents needed to enrol in higher education, or the academic capacity to start university courses after nearly a year out of school. "Automatically if we do not have high school graduates, we won't have new female university students any more," said Maulawi Ahmed Taqi, a spokesperson for the Taliban's ministry of higher education. "But I am hopeful that the ministry of education will come up with a policy and soon reopen the schools. Because we have realised that it is important, and the ban on girls' education is temporary."

Even if practical barriers to women entering higher education are removed in the coming months, authorities are also considering limiting them to degrees in healthcare and education, said a source with Taliban leadership ties. Without a high school graduation certificate, Afghan students cannot take the *kankor* national university entrance exam, which is required to enrol even at private colleges. Last year, the Taliban automatically "graduated" female twelfth grade students, making them eligible for the exam, should they want to attempt it when the new government holds one. But Afghanistan's new rulers have not yet scheduled a session of the *kankor* since they took control of the country. [...]

It is not clear whether the Taliban will once again issue otherwise meaningless "high school graduation certificates" to girls who should be finishing with them. Afghan law bars them from taking the entrance exam without one. [...]

Online classes and illegal underground schools have allowed some girls to keep studying, including in parts of the Taliban's deeply conservative southern heartland, but these efforts only reach a tiny minority. Because secret schools are private initiatives, most have to charge fees to at least cover their costs, and the economic catastrophe that engulfed Afghanistan means few families can afford them. Streaming or downloading classes requires at least a smartphone and a generous data package, again out of reach for many of the girls who were the first in their family to reach high school.

Afghanistan's new leaders have repeatedly claimed that they support women's education, as long as it complies with their definition of Islamic regulations. This includes near total separation of the sexes, although male professors still teach some women's classes due to a shortage of specialists.

Taqi pointed to the ministry's efforts to shift schedules and reallocate buildings, so that women can attend single-sex classes, as a concrete demonstration of that support. Some universities, including the leading Kabul University, now teach men and women on alternate days. Others have morning and afternoon shifts."

The Khaama Press News Agency, [Afghanistan Economic Stabilization World Interest: U.S. Envoy](#), 28 July 2022

"Addressing the ever-increasing restrictions against women and girls' education in Afghanistan, West said "many colleagues also raised grave concerns regarding human rights abuses, including restrictions on journalists and women's ability to contribute to the country's economic growth.""

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule](#), 27 July 2022

"On 17 September 2021, the Taliban Ministry of Education released a statement ordering the return of all male teachers and male students to secondary schools, making no mention of female students or

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

teachers. This statement marked the beginning of the Taliban's de facto ban on girls attending secondary school...After months of signalling and positive commitments from various Taliban representatives, the Ministry of Education announced on 21 March 2022 that both boys and girls would return to class at the start of the spring semester, on 23 March 2022. Yet at 9am on 23 March, the Taliban announced it would keep girls' secondary schools closed. Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen attributed the postponement to a "technical issue", and said that the Ministry of Education was working on developing a plan for standardized uniforms in line with "Afghan customs, culture and sharia".

"Women staying in on [university]-campus dormitories told Amnesty International that they are now facing a bleak existence, as they are constantly monitored. Two students said female students staying in dormitories had been prevented from leaving their dormitories, even for routine daily needs. Hanifa, a 22-year-old university student living in Laghman province, told Amnesty International: "If we need anything [the Taliban guards of the dormitory] would say, 'Why are you leaving the hostel?... If you want to go anywhere, they will ask you to have a mahram [male chaperone], which we don't have.'"56 Hanifa noted that before she left university, a Taliban representative had visited her dormitory and threatened to expel female students who failed to respect the dress code or who left the dormitory without a mahram."

"Amnesty International and other monitoring organizations have documented several incidents of Taliban members subjecting students and teachers to harassment and violence, either on account of them being students or teachers, or for other infringements of Taliban restrictions. For instance, Efat, a 22-year-old university student, and Naveed, her 16-year-old brother, said they were attacked by two members of the Taliban while going to an English class, which the Taliban members called "the language of infidels". Efat described the incident, in which Taliban members fractured her hand and beat her brother unconscious, badly injuring his neck."

"The deepening humanitarian and economic crisis has meant that girls and women are not able access education, as many families are now unable to afford the costs associated with schooling, while many children are now required to earn money for the family. According to Save the Children, around one in every five families is now sending their children out to work in Afghanistan...Families struggling to meet education costs often prioritize boys over girls."

Tolo News, Stanekzai: No Country Can Develop Without Education, 27 July 2022

"It has been over 11 months since the closing of girls' schools above the sixth grade, and there has yet to be any decision on their reopening."

"No country can develop without education, and the Islamic Emirate will open it for the citizens of the country, the reopening of a way to education is also Jihad and it should be done." [Statement from the political deputy of the Foreign Ministry, Sher Mohammad Abas Stanekzai]

Khaama Press, German FM Says 'Every Human Right Has Been Taken From Women and Girls in Afghanistan', 27 July 2022

"German media reported on Tuesday, July 26, that Annalena Baerbock, the foreign minister of Germany, had said that the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan was a unique instance of egregious human rights abuses. She also emphasized that women in Afghanistan are facing "the biggest violation of women's rights on the Earth," and that a greater emphasis on Afghan women and girls, whose lives "stopped" when the Taliban took power, is required.

Barred from work and education, she expressed concern regarding the deteriorating women's rights in Afghanistan saying "every human right has been taken from women and girls in Afghanistan."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

(...) This comes at a time when Afghanistan's situation with regards to human rights and women's rights under the Taliban rule has worsened as girls are deprived of attending school and women in the public sector are denied their right to work."

Pajhwok, Girl students seek early resumption of studies, 24 July

A number of students of two public institutes in western Badghis province are concerned at a halt to lessons and want the government to reopen their institutes at the earliest possible.

There are two government institutes (agriculture and administration & accounting), where 230 female students were studying before the fall of the previous government.

With both institutes closed, many girl students in the province are worried about their future. They say their fate remains uncertain. (...)

Adela Kabir, one of female lecturers at a university, believed the closure of educational institutions for girls would cause them serious mental and emotional stress. She remarked suspending this process was not in the interest of any member of society. It affected not only women, but the entire society, she explained. She hoped the problem would be resolved as soon as possible and girls would be able to continue their studies.

Mohammad Ewaz Ghairat, head of technical and vocational education in the province, said they were awaiting instructions of the Taliban's Supreme Leader) regarding the reopening of the institutes for girls. According to Ghairat, they have been given no written or verbal instructions for the reopening of the institutes for girls. He believed a decision in this regard would be taken soon.

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Toll of Ban on Girls' Secondary Education, 13 July 2022

"The Taliban's ban on secondary education has already caused girls in Afghanistan to lose 300 days of their studies with devastating consequences for them, their families, and the country's future, Human Rights Watch said today in a new video feature.

[...]

On September 18, 2021, a month after taking over the country, the Taliban ordered the reopening of boys' secondary schools but made no mention of girls' secondary schools. This was interpreted as a ban on girls' secondary education. In several provinces, under community pressure, Taliban officials allowed girls' secondary schools to reopen, but the vast majority of these schools remained closed.

On March 21, 2022, the Taliban pledged to reopen all schools on March 23, but on that date they closed girls' secondary schools again. An indefinite ban remains in place with no clarity about when or if these schools will reopen. Yalda Hakim, a BBC news presenter who participated in the project, has been counting down on Twitter the days since the ban began, on July 14 it will be 300 days."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Erosion Of Women's Rights, Extrajudicial Killings Plague Taliban Rule, UN Says, 20 July 2022

"Girls have been banned from school beyond the sixth grade in most of Afghanistan. In March, the Taliban ordered girls' high schools closed on the morning they were scheduled to open."

Tolo News, Potzel: Participation of Women, Girls 'Fundamental, 20 July 2022

"Potzel, the UNAMA deputy head, added that although security has been improved since August last year, Afghan people, especially women and girls, are deprived of their human rights...UNAMA's report highlights specific concerns over the Ministry of Vice and Virtue and the General Directorate of Intelligence, saying that these two institutions have restricted the fundamental freedoms of Afghans.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Many of the directives issued by the de facto Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice limit the human rights and freedoms of Afghans, in particular women and girls. Although such directives are said to be recommendatory in nature, at times members of the de facto authorities have taken a harsh stance on their implementation, including carrying out physical punishments for alleged infringements of their directives," UNAMA's report reads."

"While the closing of girls' schools above sixth grade has provoked a wide range of criticism, the deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate said the decision is related to the leader of the Islamic Emirate. "The statement which has been announced by the Ministry of Education and the leadership of the Islamic Emirate, there is a clear explanation about this issue, and everyone should be satisfied with it," said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate. 309 days have passed since girls' schools beyond the sixth grade have been closed, but the leader of the Islamic Emirate has not mentioned the reopening of girls' schools in his meetings and statements."

ToloNews, Campaign for Girls' Education Continues on Social Media, 12 July 2022

"It has been nearly 300 days since the secondary schools for Afghan girls remained shut and still there is no a clarification on the reopening of schools across the country."

AVA, Ashraf Ghani's Eid message; Those who claim leadership, prevent history from repeating itself, 9 July 2022

"Ashraf Ghani, the country's former president, in this message that was published on Friday night (July 8), said that the acquisition of knowledge is mandatory and the best family is a family where both men and women have knowledge. According to him; Experiences in the world show that the education of one girl can change five generations"

ToloNews, Activists: Rise in Forced Marriages Linked to Closed Girls' Schools, 8 July 2022

Some women's rights activists in Bamyan province said that the closure of girls' schools above sixth grade has caused a surge in the number of forced marriages and has added to domestic violence in this province.

"According to the activists, the closure of schools for female students has caused many girls to turn to hard labor.

"When the schools are closed, some traditional families ... forced (daughters) to marry, and I have seen many school students who were forced to marry underage," said Latifah Sadat, women's rights activist. [...]

"After nearly a year of girls being deprived of school and of increasing poverty in Bamyan, some students say they have turned to hard labor.

"We started sewing and doing handicrafts as a way to escape unemployment. I would prefer to get employment than to be unemployed," Mastora Akbari, one of the students, told TOLONews."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Taliban's New Chaperone Rule Deprives Afghan Women of Foreign Scholarships, 8 July 2022

"But Afghan women are now being deprived of studying abroad because the Taliban is not allowing women to travel outside Afghanistan without a male chaperone.

The restriction follows a Taliban ban on education for teenage girls, which has kept millions of secondary-

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

school students from the classroom since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August.

"I had a hellish experience because of this restriction," says Hadia Tuba, who recently went to Pakistan to begin her university education on a scholarship from Islamabad.

The young Kabul resident says the day she crossed the Torkham border crossing connecting eastern Afghanistan to northwestern Pakistan was the hardest in her life.

"The Taliban stopped me at the border and questioned me for the entire day," she told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "Eventually, I was let go after a stern warning [that I should never travel alone]."

Tuba says the intimidation she felt was difficult to describe.

"I will never forget what happened, but I don't like to talk about it," she said.

The restriction has forced entire Afghan families to leave the country. Sonia Ahmadi was forced to bring her parents and siblings with her when she went to the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad to attend Ferdowsi University.

"It is a major problem that no woman is allowed to travel alone, whether by road or by air," she told Radio Azadi. "The gender discrimination against women is pushing Afghanistan backward.""

AAN, Donor's dilemma: How to provide aid to a country whose government you do not recognise, 5 July 2022

"The call for international recognition [by Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada in his Eid ul-Fitr message on 1 May 2022] was highlighted in the closing statement of a gathering of more than 4,000 *ulema* (religious leaders) and elders which was held in Kabul on 29 June to 2 July 2022. The statement, however, made no reference to reopening girls' schools (see media reports [here](#) and [here](#)).

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"According to Wimpelmann (2022), Afghan women activists believe that they are now living with gender apartheid. On the basis of gender, women and girls are denied both education, work, freedom of movement and the right to leave one's home. As already noted, protesters can be arrested or abducted. After a visit to Afghanistan, Save the Children stated Foreign Manager Nora Ingdal that about 80 percent of the girls in junior high school do not attending school. According to sharia, the man is the breadwinner of the family, while the woman is responsible the daily operation of the home arena. Before the takeover it was not formal obstacles to women being able to work. Still had less than one of five women paid work (Desai & Li 2018, p. 34). After the takeover, the economy has stopped and many have lost their jobs. Women are particularly hard hit. With the exception of those who have work that can not performed by men, government-employed women were told not to show up for work. In 2019 36 percent of the country's teachers were women. The suspension of schooling for girls over 12 years has meant that many female teachers are out of work (Kumar & Noori 2022).

In order for women to be able to return to work, it is an absolute requirement gender segregation in the workplace (Human Rights Watch 2022). It have to be separate entrances, living rooms and dining rooms (Pakistani Analyst, 2022). Et hospitals in Kabul report that they have been asked to introduce total segregation of boats employees and patients (Kumar & Noori 2022).

Limited freedom of movement and low occupational participation are two sides of the same coin. Working women must get to and from work. The Taliban has instructed locals taxi drivers about not giving women access unless she wears the burka or has a male companion (mahram) (Ahad & Kumar 2022)."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Afghanistan), Oral Statement for the Interactive Dialogue on the UN High Commissioner's Oral Update on Afghanistan, 16 June 2022

"Over the past 10 months, abundant evidence has emerged that the Taliban remains the same human rights abusing entity it was before its August 2021 power seizure. The recent decisions by the de facto authorities to keep girls above grade six out of school and to force women to cover their faces are only two examples of the massive setback for the rights of women and girls."

ToloNews, Top UNHCR Official Voices Concerns Over Closed Girls' Schools, 15 June 2022

"It has been over 270 days that the girls' school above grade six have remained closed in Afghanistan. Earlier, the Islamic Emirate said it is working on a plan to facilitate the reopening of the schools but there has yet to be any progress in this regard."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Global Annual Results Report 2021 Gender Equality, 1 June 2022

"In Afghanistan, millions of girls are being denied access to schools. With outside repercussions on women and girls, climate change threats have multiplied and there have been escalating political and socioeconomic tensions in fragile settings, amplifying gender inequalities and compromising health, livelihoods and safety [...] In Afghanistan, education access for disadvantaged girls was ramped up through over 7,000 community-based education classes that benefited almost 240,000 students (over 50 per cent girls)."

Gandhara, Afghan Protester 'Ready To Give Life' To Defend Women's Rights, 1 June 2022

"An Afghan protester told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi on May 26 that she's not afraid to give her life to defend the rights of women and young girls in the country. Her comments came after female protesters took to the streets of Kabul to demand the Taliban allow education and jobs for women."

Tolo News, No Details Yet from Committee on Girls' Schooling: Spokesperson, 31 May 2022

"256 days have passed since the closing of schools for girls over grade 6, and although the Islamic Emirate says it has recently formed a committee of nine people to work on reopening the schools for girls, there have been no details provided yet about the progress of the committee."

Tolo News, Afghan Women Protest Over Closed Girls' Schools, 29 May 2022

"Women protesters gathered in Kabul on Sunday to emphasize that the Islamic Emirate should immediately lift restrictions on women and reopen girls' schools above the sixth grade."

Tolo News, Girls at Badakhshan University Say Covering Faces Unhealthy, 28 May 2022

"Female students in the northern province of Badakhshan said that they have been told by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue to cover their faces inside the university. The students said that they have been struggling with heat because of being obliged to wear black clothes and masks in the university. "There are some girls who have pneumonia problems and cannot use the mask, so we are against wearing masks in the class if it is possible to do so," said Royta Tahiri, a student."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"Measures such as the suspension of girls' secondary education, severe barriers to employment, no opportunities to participate in political and public life, limits on freedom of movement, association, and expression, directives on maharam (male family member chaperone), enforcing a strict form of Hijab and strong advice to stay at home, fit a pattern of absolute gender segregation and are aimed at making women invisible in society. These measures contravene Afghanistan's obligations under numerous human rights treaties to which it is a State party. [...] As a first step, the de facto authorities should announce the date for the reopening of girls' secondary schools in all provinces. Critical services for all Afghans, especially women, girls, and persons with disabilities, must continue to be delivered, and this requires female as well as male aid workers who are able to have full access to communities."

UNAMA, PRESS STATEMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council expressed deep concern regarding the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban, including through imposition of restrictions that limit access to education, employment, freedom of movement, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in public life, and emphasized that these restrictions contradict the expectations of the international community and the commitments made by the Taliban to the Afghan people. [...] The members of the Security Council called on the Taliban to swiftly reverse the policies and practices which are currently restricting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Afghan women and girls. They also reiterated their call on the Taliban to adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay."

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Afghanistan: Taliban confirms gender-based persecution, 24 March 2022

"The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) strongly condemns the decision by the Taliban to keep girls' secondary schools (i.e. above grade 6) indefinitely closed. This decision was confirmed by the Taliban yesterday, on the very day schools were supposed to re-open after a seven-month hiatus. While the Ministry of Education had said that all schools, including girls' high schools, would re-open at the start of the spring semester on 23 March 2022, yesterday's decision comes as no surprise considering its consistency with the Taliban's ideology and disregard for the Afghan population, exemplified by its violent overthrow of the elected government of Afghanistan in August 2021."

United Nations Security Council, Security Council Press Statement on Situation in Afghanistan, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council expressed deep concern regarding the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban, including through imposition of restrictions that limit access to education, employment, freedom of movement, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in public life, and emphasized that these restrictions contradict the expectations of the international community and the commitments made by the Taliban to the Afghan people.

...They also reiterated their call on the Taliban to adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay."

Tolo News, Haqqani: 'We Are Not Forcing Women to Wear Hijab', 18 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, said that soon good news will be heard about the education of girls and that a mechanism is being developed in this regard."

BBC News, [Afghanistan: The secret girls school defying the Taliban](#), 18 May 2022

"Primary schools for girls have reopened under the Taliban, and have in fact seen a rise in attendance following the improvement in security in rural parts of the country, but it's not clear when or if older girls will be allowed back into class. The Taliban have said the correct "Islamic environment" needs to be created first, though given schools were already segregated by gender, no-one seems sure what that means. Now, multiple sources told the BBC, a handful of hardline but highly influential individuals in the group appear to still be opposed to it. In private, other Taliban members have expressed their disappointment at the decision not to open girls' schools. The Taliban's Ministry of Education seemed as surprised as anyone when the leadership overruled their plans in March, and some senior Taliban officials are understood to be educating their daughters in Qatar or Pakistan. In recent weeks, a number of religious scholars with links to the Taliban have issued fatwas, or religious decrees supporting girls' right to learn."

Ariana News, [IEA says girls' schools will reopen soon](#), 16 May 2022

"Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), and deputy minister of the IEA's Ministry of Information and Culture, said progress has been made at a meeting of religious scholars and girls' schools would reopen soon. Speaking to reporters in Kabul on Sunday Mujahid said: "Good progress has been made at the meeting of the country's scholars regarding the reopening of girls' schools and other major political issues, and girls' schools will be reopened in the near future." He said that the meeting, attended by tribal leaders and influential people of the country, is focusing on major political, security and social issues. "The Ulema are consulting on the reopening of girls' schools, and progress will be made soon," said Mujahid. Meanwhile, Anas Haqqani, a senior member of the Islamic Emirate, said on Wednesday that a meeting of religious scholars would be held to discuss the issue of girls going to school. Officials at the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Emirate have said that they will reopen girls' schools in the near future within the framework of Islamic principles."

Tolo News, [15 Foreign Ministers Issue Statement on Afghan Women's Rights](#), 15 May 2022

"The Foreign Ministers of 15 countries in a statement expressed their 'deep' concerns over restrictions on girls' access to education in Afghanistan and called on the "Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students." The statement was issued by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States. Meanwhile, the US envoy for Afghanistan human rights and women, Rina Amiri, in an interview with the DW also voiced concerns over the restrictions being imposed by the current Afghan government on women. "The Afghan women expect the Taliban to focus on the security and facilitation of a good life for the people and not to interfere in the normal life of people," said Farah Mustafavi, a women's rights activist. But the Islamic Emirate denied the restrictions on the women. "We deny such claims about the violation of women's rights. The Islamic Emirate protect the rights of all Afghan citizens," said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate. Earlier, the US Department of State said that it has leverage to use against the Islamic Emirate if there was no revision in its policy regarding women."

The Guardian, [The Guardian view on Afghan women: the Taliban turn the screws](#), 10 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"On Saturday, the Taliban once more ordered women to cover their faces in public. While Afghan women have courageously protested against the injunction, the reaction internationally has this time been muted. That it follows other punitive restrictions creating what some have called "gender apartheid" – preventing teenage girls from studying and women from working outside healthcare or education, or travelling outside their home town without a male guardian – makes it all the more appalling."

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), How the Taliban are 'eliminating women' in Afghanistan, 9 May 2022

"The Taliban also recently backtracked on a promise to allow girls to attend school. Secondary schools for girls will be opened once "appropriate dress codes" are agreed upon for students aged 12 and older, according to a statement issued last week by the Ministry for the "Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.""

Pajhwok, 14 people suffer casualties in Afghanistan last week, 8 May 2022

"All girls' schools were expected to open at the beginning of 1401 solar year, but the Afghan caretaker government delayed the schools' opening until further notice. The Ministry of Education says it has worked on a plan to reopen the schools after approval from the leadership of the government."

"United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has also expressed concern about delays in the opening of girls' secondary and high schools in Afghanistan."

Pajhwok, Girls' schools to be reopened soon: Anas Haqqani, 4 May 2022

"KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Anas Haqqani, a member of the Islamic Emirate's Qatar office, on Wednesday said girls' schools would be opened [...]"

Tolo News, UNICEF Concerned by Impact of School Ban on Girls' Learning, 4 May 2022

"The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is concerned about the impact on girls' learning from the decision to ban schooling for females over the sixth grade, a senior UNICEF official said. Same Mort, chief of Communication, Advocacy and Civic Engagement in Afghanistan, said the closing of schools will affect the mental health of the female students. "One month since the new term started for some children but not all children in Afghanistan, UNICEF is deeply concerned by the impact of this decision on girls learning--on their mental health and on their ability to contribute to the Afghan economy into the future," she said. Mort said the UNICEF is supporting education in Afghanistan. "When girls are out of school, they are much more susceptible to early marriage and child labor. They are much more likely to be victims of exploitation and abuse, that is why UNICEF continues to advocate to get all children into school and learning at all levels in all regions," she said. Meanwhile, Shamayil Tawana, a female rights activist, urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for girls beyond grade six. "All Afghans demanded the Taliban reopen the schools and not deprive Afghan girls from their Sharia rights," she said. The Ministry of Education said that the reopening of school for girls is an important issue for the Islamic Emirate. "This issue is important for the Islamic Emirate as much as it is important for the international community. The meetings are underway about this," said Aziz Ahmad Riyan, a spokesman for the ministry. The closure of schools for girls above grade six triggered reactions at the national and international levels. However, officials of the current government said the problem will be solved soon."

Tolo News, Afghan Girls Banned From School Suffer Psychologically: Experts, 3 May 2022

"Female students above grade six say the closing of their schools is causing them mental health trouble. The students said they are counting the seconds until school will be reopened. Saeeda, a student in grade

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

10, said she dreams of being a doctor in the future. Saeeda said she is afraid to not reach her dreams now because girls beyond grade six are not allowed to go to school. "I am very disappointed that the schools were not reopened. It is the right of every girl to have access to education," said Saeeda, a student in grade 10. "We seriously don't know what type of situation this is. We should go to school to make our future," said Setayish, a student. Psychologists say that the banning of these girls from school is causing mental stress. "When someone likes something and is prevented from doing it, it causes mental stress and anxiety. The girls who like education and are not allowed to engage in it, it causes them mental pressure," said Jamshid Rasa, a psychologist. Sociologists said banning girls from education can pave the ground for early and forced marriages in the country. "The banning of girls from going to secondary and high school will cause a surge in forced marriage," said Bahauddin Baqayi, a sociologist."

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), Dress Restrictions Tighten for Afghanistan Girls' Schools, 27 April 2022
"But Balkh province in northern Afghanistan was unique: girls' secondary schools have remained open since the Taliban took power. But open schools in Balkh and elsewhere have been threatened with closure if they refuse to comply with increasingly harsh dress codes. [...] "The requirements on hijab are getting tougher day by day," said a teacher regarding the mandatory Muslim headscarf. "They have spies to record and report.... If students or teachers don't follow their strict hijab rules, without any discussion they fire the teachers and expel the students." She shared a photo of her school's assembly; students and teachers all wore uniforms allowing only their eyes to show."

Afghan Voice Agency, Karzai: Afghans want girls' schools to reopen, 26 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency [Sic] (AVA)_In an interview with the BBC, the former president insisted: "There is no way that the country can live without our girls going to school."

He added: "I am sure (secondary) schools will reopen because that is what the Afghan people want." Despite impassioned calls from different quarters, girl students above grade six have been out of school for the past 120 days."

Afghan Voice Agency, UNICEF director visits girls school; says 'education must be above politics', 25 April 2022

"The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has expressed concern about the continued closure of secondary and high schools for girls in Afghanistan, saying "education should not be held hostage to politics."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Muslim hijabi students leave exam venue after not being allowed entry, 25 April 2022

"Two girls from Karnataka, India, who had submitted a court petition seeking permission to wear Hijab inside classrooms, were refused to take their board examination after they requested to take the exam while wearing burqas."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), IEA Separates Weekdays for Male, Female University Students, 24 April 2022

"Ministry of Higher Education of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan separated weekdays of male and female students of universities in Kabul University and Kabul Polytechnic University in a bid to further end co-education."

Ariana News, IEA unveils segregation plan for male and female university students, 24 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The Ministry of Higher Education of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has announced that male and female students will be segregated and attend lectures on alternate days of the week.”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), 80% of Afghan girls missing out on education, 23 April 2022

“Almost 80% of Afghan girls are missing out on an education, Save the Children said Friday- almost a month after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) issued a ban on teenage girls going to school.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“An education director in Jawzjan Province said in March that Taliban militants stopped an estimated 20,000 female students from studying beyond sixth grade. Even before their takeover of Kabul, in Taliban-controlled districts within the provinces of Kunar, Helmand, Logar, and Zabul, the Taliban had largely prohibited women and girls from attending school as provincial education officials attempted in vain to negotiate with the Taliban for girls to have access to education. Violent attacks on schoolchildren, particularly girls, hindered their access to education, particularly in areas controlled by the Taliban. The Taliban and other extremists threatened and attacked school officials, teachers, and students, particularly girls, and burned both boys’ and girls’ schools. In February Taliban militants set fire to a girls’ school in Takhar Province, burning all equipment, books, and documents. [...] Following their takeover, the Taliban severely restricted or prohibited female education across all age levels, citing a need to ensure proper facilities were in place for segregated education in line with the Taliban’s interpretation of sharia.

The Taliban’s lack of a clear education policy regarding women’s ability to teach and girls’ ability to attend schools, combined with nonpayment of teachers’ salaries, led to low enrollment rates even where schools were open.

In September the Taliban stated that girls would be able to go to school in line with Islamic law, without further clarifying how it would respect their access to education. According to UNICEF, the Taliban instructed primary schools in late August to reopen for both girls and boys. On September 18, the new Taliban ministry of education issued a statement resuming secondary education for boys but gave no indication as to when girls might return to classes. As of December schools in nine of the country’s 34 provinces – Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Kunduz, Urozgan, Ghazni, Faryab, Zabul, and Herat – had allowed girls to attend secondary school before closing for the winter break, according to UNICEF and other reports. In December the Taliban asserted that this number had grown to 12 provinces and pledged that all girls could return to school in March 2022 after the break.

As of December all public universities remained closed. Several private, all-female universities reopened for fall classes in October. Taliban leaders stated they were committed to allowing girls and women access to education through the postgraduate level, although only in accordance with their interpretation of sharia and within the confines of Afghan culture, which includes segregation of genders and strict behavioral and dress codes.

On November 16, the head of the so-called Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice stated there was no theological basis in Islam for preventing girls and women from having access to all levels of education. Other Taliban representatives expressed the group’s intent to provide educational access at all levels to women and girls. At year’s end many Afghan girls remained excluded from the educational system.”

Ariana News, Clerics, teachers, activists call on IEA to reopen girls’ schools, 7 April 2022

“The clerics, teachers and activists noted in a resolution Thursday at a gathering in Kabul that the closure of girls schools was neither logical nor was it in keeping with Sharia.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

This comes after the IEA closed schools for girls above the sixth grade – a move that sparked an international outcry.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), The Ban on Older Girls’ Education: Taleban conservatives ascendant and a leadership in disarray, 29 March 2022

“The acute grief and disappointment of older girls and their parents and teachers that girls have not been allowed to resume their studies has been all too evident. There is also fear, both for the prospects for girls under the Islamic Emirate and for what this policy means for the future of their country. The Taleban authorities speak of this as a temporary measure in place until they can put measures in place to allow schools to open, but given a plan to reopen girls’ secondary schools has been promised since the Taleban took power in August, many now do not trust that such a plan will ever be enacted. The fear that this will be an indefinite ban has led to some families now considering leaving the country, but that is not an option for the majority who are too poor to leave. “I have no plan,” the vegetable seller from Ghazni quoted above who said he cried over his girls being barred from school. “What I can do! A person in a weak economic position cannot manage to migrate.” He said his girls were now studying at home and their elders were helping them, but he thought it would be of no use; they needed a formal system and a more certain future [...]. Since the August 2021 closures, the Taleban government has faced enormous pressure to reinstate full female access to education. Taleban officials have made numerous statements suggesting that it would do so, provided certain requirements were met. Implicit in these statements has been an expectation of international support for the education sector [...] The Taleban’s decision-making has historically been generally opaque, but all the more so with regard to controversial issues. The Taleban is typically referred to as a consensus-based movement, with the Rahbari, or leadership, Shura advising the amir ul-mumenin, Haibatullah Akhundzada, who has ultimate authority as the movement’s leader. But the balance of power is more delicate than this suggests, especially when opinion within the movement is sharply divided. Much comes down to personalities and perceptions. Unlike his predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansur, Haibatullah appears unwilling to take controversial decisions. He is widely viewed as personally opposing female education. Yet, he had been expected to act in accordance with the consensus view, which was thought to be in favour of allowing girls’ schooling. Instead, he sided with a minority who were against [...] Yet the opposition to girls’ schooling voiced at the meeting does not appear to be solely concerned with religion or ideology. Many religious conservatives have reportedly not felt included in the Taleban’s major decisions and so, in voicing their opposition to female education, they were voicing their displeasure at the direction of the government overall. Their power to stop the Taleban from moving ahead with something that many, if not most Afghans favour and much of their own leadership is willing to allow – reportedly including all three deputies of the movement (Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Ghani Baradar, Acting Minister of Defense Mullah Yaqub and Acting Minister of Interior Serajuddin Haqqani) – illustrates the importance of a small circle of ultra-conservative clerics in shaping policy [...] Even in places like Mazar-e Sharif, where some girls’ secondary schools are still open, the Taleban’s decision has set students and teachers on edge. One tenth-grader in the city, with hopes of becoming a doctor, said nearly half of her classmates were staying at home and they no longer had enough teachers. She said the school principal had already introduced further dress restrictions in hopes that this would safeguard the school from Taleban closure. The larger effect the Taleban’s decision will have on demand and attitudes toward female education remains to be seen. A father in Kabul said he worried that now the schools were closed, his daughters would lose interest in studying altogether. His older daughter is still attending university, but he worries the Taleban will shut university doors to her any day now. ”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNAMA, Security Council Press Statement on Afghanistan, 28 March 2022

“The members of the Security Council heard a briefing on 25 March by the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, regarding the right to education for all Afghans, including girls. The members of the Security Council expressed their deep concern regarding the reported decision by the Taliban to deny girls above the 6th grade access to education in Afghanistan. They reaffirmed the right to education for all Afghans, including girls, and called on the Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay.”

Inter Press Service (IPS), Afghanistan’s Girls’ Education is a Women’s Rights Issue, 28 March 2022

“The right to education has been an oft-discussed, critical human rights issue for Afghanistan, especially when it comes to how, or even if, this right is extended to girls. This concern had already been compounded by the forced closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted all school-going children and adolescents. While alternative learning pathways, including Community-Based Education centers based in rural and remote provinces for children to attend, have been available, girls’ education in government schools remained a lingering question.

The Taliban’s rise to power raised the fear that the right to education would be denied to girls indefinitely, if not permanently. It would only signal increasing measures to control women’s rights and mobility beyond the domestic sphere.

The last-minute decision may likely indicate infighting between factions that are divided on the issue of girls’ education.”

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Taliban’s backtrack on school re-opening for girls irreversibly impacts their future, 28 March 2022

“On 23 March, female students of secondary schools were returning to classrooms for the first time in seven months. While many girls were waiting to start their lessons, at 9 a.m. the Taliban leadership announced it had decided to keep girls’ schools closed ‘until school uniforms are designed in accordance with the Afghan customs, culture, and Sharia and all these girls were told to immediately leave the schools[...]

[...] Students, teachers, school principals and women activists in Afghanistan were left devastated when within hours of reaching schools they were informed about Taliban’s new order and were once again facing the reality of being denied education.

Since taking over Afghanistan seven months ago, the Taliban has made several commitments to respect girls’ right to education. The Taliban de-facto Ministry of Education circulated a statement on 20 March, announcing that all schools would re-open after the winter break on 23 March. However, secondary schools for girls remained closed for girls. In Herat province secondary schools were open only for two days and on the third day, female students were told that schools shall remain closed for them.

17-year-old Nadia is a Grade 12 student in Badakhshan province. On 24 March, she told Amnesty International: “I was extremely excited. I went to school with huge hopes. I met my classmates and teachers. Everyone was happy. Everyone was excited for the start of the classes. However, after few minutes, our principal came and told us that we need to leave. She was ordered to shut down the girls’ schools. We were all shattered. Some started crying, some stood silent. As much as I did not want to leave the school, I forced myself to move towards the exit gate. It broke my heart to once again leave the school not knowing if I will ever be allowed to return.”

Since 23 March, residents, students, women’s rights activists in Kabul, Nangarhar, Badakhshan have held several protests demanding the Taliban to immediately open secondary schools for girls. On Saturday,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

several young women took to the streets in Kabul. In verified videos accessed by Amnesty, women activists were seen warning that this will lead to the schoolgirls' loss of talent as well as that their isolation will mean trauma and no future."

BBC News, [Afghanistan: protesters urge Taliban to reopen girls' schools](#), 26 March 2022

"About two dozen, mainly female, protesters gathered close to the Taliban's Ministry of Education on Saturday morning, calling on the group to reopen girls' secondary schools [...]
In some provinces, particularly in northern Afghanistan, local Taliban officials have allowed teenage girls to continue to study, but others appear to oppose the idea."

Aljazeera, [Afghan girls stage protest, demand Taliban reopen schools](#), 26 March 2022

"More than two dozen girls and women have staged protests in front of the Ministry of Education in the capital, Kabul, days after the Taliban administration shut secondary schools for girls until further notice, following which the Afghan group has been accused of renegeing on its promise on higher education for girls.

Thousands of jubilant girls across Afghanistan had flocked to learning institutions on Wednesday – the date the education ministry had set for classes to resume for girls of all ages. But just hours into the first day, the ministry announced a shock policy reversal that left youngsters saying they felt betrayed and foreign governments expressing outrage.

On Friday, the United States cancelled planned talks with the Taliban in Qatar that were set to address key economic issues after the group's decision to close schools.

The decision, which the Taliban has yet to explain, means girls above the sixth grade will not be able to attend school.

"Open the schools! Justice, justice!" chanted protesters on Saturday, some carrying school books as they gathered at a city square in Kabul.

They held banners that said "Education is our fundamental right, not a political plan", as they marched for a short distance and later dispersed as Taliban fighters arrived at the scene."

The Guardian, [Taliban U-turn over Afghan girls' education reveals deep leadership divisions](#), 25 March 2022

"As international outrage grew at the U-turn, the official Taliban response was confused and contradictory. The group blamed a lack of teachers on the closures and said they first needed to create an appropriate environment for girls to study, and decide on appropriate uniforms.

A statement issued by the Taliban's education ministry then said school openings would be postponed "until further notice when a comprehensive plan, in accordance with Sharia and Afghan culture, is developed".

Experts say that the decision to close education to girls over 11 is nothing to do with uniforms. Instead, it is a sign of deep divisions within the group about the future direction of rule in Afghanistan [...]

[...] Harun Najafizada, director at Afghanistan International Television, said: "The Taliban's older generation – represented by the group's religious leader Hibatullah Akhundzada and acting prime minister Hasan Akhund – is ideologically opposed to sending girls to school. They can't take it: they see it as immoral and not in line with local culture." He added that a source close to the group's leadership had allegedly heard Akhund saying he did not want to see girls attending school in his native Kandahar

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

province for as long as he was alive – but seemed to not have extended that statement to other provinces such as Kabul, Bamyan or Herat.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghan Girls Grieve After School Ban Reinstated, 24 March 2022

“For Atefa and hundreds of thousands of Afghan girls banned from secondary schools since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, March 23, the day set for their return to the classroom, should have been an exciting new beginning. “I was both worried and excited,” another girl said. “I couldn’t close my eyes last night, and I couldn’t believe the darkness was going to end.”

But that morning, the Taliban announced — to the despair of schoolgirls, parents, and Afghans worldwide — that girls’ secondary schools would remain closed until policies and school uniforms followed “principles of Islamic law and Afghan culture.” Atefa and her friends were sent home after a short visit to their school. “Everyone at school had tears in their eyes,” she said [...]

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Afghanistan: Taliban confirms gender-based persecution, 24 March 2022

“The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) strongly condemns the decision by the Taliban to keep girls’ secondary schools (i.e. above grade 6) indefinitely closed. This decision was confirmed by the Taliban yesterday, on the very day schools were supposed to re-open after a seven-month hiatus.

While the Ministry of Education had said that all schools, including girls’ high schools, would re-open at the start of the spring semester on 23 March 2022, yesterday’s decision comes as no surprise considering its consistency with the Taliban’s ideology and disregard for the Afghan population, exemplified by its violent overthrow of the elected government of Afghanistan in August 2021.

Such a decision reveals the Taliban’s dishonest discourse to persuade the Afghan population and their international interlocutors that it is committed to respecting human rights, including the rights of women and girls. It is also in breach of fundamental human rights obligations under treaties to which Afghanistan is a state party, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).”

UNICEF, Girls in Afghanistan must go back to school without any further delays, 23 March 2022

[Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell]

““The de facto authorities’ decision to delay the return to school for girls from Grade 7 to Grade 12 is a major setback for girls and their futures. [...]

UNAMA, STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL - ON AFGHANISTAN, 23 March 2022

“[...] today’s announcement by Taliban authorities in Afghanistan that girls’ education from the sixth grade has been suspended until further notice. The start of the new school year has been anticipated by all students, girls and boys, and parents and families. The de facto authorities’ failure to reopen schools for girls above the sixth grade, despite repeated commitments, is a profound disappointment and deeply damaging for Afghanistan. The denial of education not only violates the equal rights of women and girls to education, it also jeopardizes the country’s future in view of the tremendous contributions by Afghan women and girls.”

Agence France Presse, Heartbreak as Afghan girls ordered home just hours after schools reopen, 23

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

March 2022

“Crestfallen students, back at school for the first time since the Taliban seized power in August last year, tearfully packed up their belongings and filed out”

Baktar News Agency, New School Year “1401” Start in the Country, 23 March 2022

“KABUL (BNA) The Ministry of Education started the 1401 solar school year today. [...] .At the starts of the ceremony, Mawlawi Noor al-Haq, Deputy Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs, talked about the curriculum and said that the curriculum of the previous government was made by foreigners and contributed by individuals and experts who were in favor of the United States and loyal to that country. Not for the benefit of Afghanistan and its generations. “The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is most aware of the value of science and knowledge, but education should be standard and in accordance with Islamic and Afghan values.” He added [...] Meanwhile, Mawlawi Aziz Ahmad Ryan, director of publications and spokesman for the Ministry of Education, told the media that the Ministry of Education had submitted a plan to reopen all schools in the country under the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, but right now, under the guidance of the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, schools for women from the sixth grade above are closed until further notice. “After compiling a comprehensive plan in this field in accordance with Islamic law and Afghan culture and traditions, as well as the ruling of the Islamic Emirate, female schools and high schools will be officially informed.” He added”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘the Taliban have started to search the whole city of Kabul’, 9 March 2022

“Inside Kabul University, girls are taught in the morning, and boys in the afternoon. Girls are required to wear full body black Hijabs, not thin and in a manner that is not showing. Taking pictures is banned, standing in groups is banned—these are not my words, but the exact words announced by Ministry of Higher education. Also, entering and exiting for boys and girl is done through very specific gates so boys and girls cannot meet while entering and exiting the university.”

Pursuit, Girls Forced to Act as Boys in Afghanistan, 4 March 2022

“Bacha posh involves young girls being dressed and treated as boys for a period – typically from birth until puberty. [...]

When a girl becomes a bacha posh, her hair is cut short, she dresses in peran tomboon (traditional Afghan male clothing), and she takes a male name. As a result her status in the family and in wider society is elevated, and she no longer performs tasks typically reserved for Afghan girls, like housework and cooking. Instead, she can play outside with other boys, go to school or even work. In the eyes of the community, she is male, so she doesn’t need a chaperone and can even escort her female family members outside. [...]

Our recently published research (based on interviews with 10 women and a group discussion) highlights a number of reasons that the women believed had contributed to the practice of bacha posh:

Families experiencing poverty need breadwinners, and it is easier to work as a male.

Societal stigma and shame around only having daughters – for example, one woman told us that her father was encouraged to take on a second wife because he had five daughters and no sons.

Families feared that men would target their daughters for premarital relations (tainting their ‘pure’ status), which would dishonour the family name (baad nami).

Patriarchal societal structures create barriers to women accessing healthcare, education, employment,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and legal systems.”

VOA, US Seeks Muslim Nations Help to Counter Taliban Views on Women, 3 March 2022

“The radical group [the Taliban] has promised to open secondary schools for all girls in Afghanistan this month.”

TOLO News, Students Concerned With Shortage of Public University Professors, 27 February

“On Saturday, the government reopened all public universities after a long delay in cold areas of the country.

Students at public universities in Kabul expressed concerns about the shortage of instructors. Also female students who have come from the provinces complained over a lack of accommodation, saying that they are struggling with serious problems.

On Saturday, the government reopened all public universities after a long delay in cold areas of the country.

[...] Female students who come to Kabul to attend their lessons said they are struggling with accommodation issues. “The female students living in the dormitory have been told to study in their own provinces or otherwise not come to the university. The boys have access to a dormitory, but the girls don’t,” said Hajar, a student.”

Al Jazeera, Afghan public universities reopen with gender segregated classes, 26 February 2022

“Afghanistan’s main universities have reopened six months after the Taliban returned to power, but only a trickle of women have returned to now-segregated classes.

[...]

Some public tertiary institutions in the south of the country resumed last month, but on Saturday Kabul University, the oldest and biggest with a student body of about 25,000 last year, re-opened without fanfare – and few students in attendance.

At least 19 universities and educational institutes were reopened, reported the Kabul-based ToloNews quoting the Ministry of Higher Education.

Basira said there were “some difficulties” – including students being scolded by Taliban guards for bringing their mobile phones to class.

“They did not behave well with us ... they were rude,” she said.

Another English student, Maryam, said only seven women attended her class.

“Before we were 56 students, boys and girls,” she said.

Taliban guards refused journalists access to the sprawling campus and did not allow media teams to linger near the entrance.

No students in Panjshir

A similar picture emerged from campuses across the country, although no students returned to class at Panjshir University.

“I do not know if they will come tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, or not,” said Professor Noor-ur-Rehman Afzali.

Panjshir was the last province to fall to the Taliban last year, and Jaber Jibran, a faculty head, said several classrooms destroyed in that fighting had still not been repaired.

The Taliban have said previously that women students must wear a black abaya over their bodies and hijab on their heads, but stopped short of insisting on the all-covering burqa that was compulsory during their previous rule.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Several students, however, appeared dressed no differently Saturday than they would have before the Taliban takeover, with a simple shawl covering their heads.

"I have never worn any hijab before ... it's new for me," said Sohaila Rostami, a biology student in her last semester at Bamiyam University.

"I used to wear jeans and other normal clothes. It will be difficult for me to observe hijab," she told AFP. In Herat, the ancient Silk Road city near the Iranian border and once one of the Islamic world's most important intellectual centres, students also complained about a lack of tutors.

"Some of our professors have also left the country, but we are happy that the university gates are open," said Parisa Narwan, studying arts.

In Kabul, student Haseenat said campus life for women was now very different to before.

"We are told not to go out of our classes," she told AFP.

"There is no cafeteria any more ... we are not allowed to go to the university's courtyard." "

Ariana News, Afghanistan's public universities reopen after six months, 26 February 2022

"Shukria Hujat, a student at the Faculty of Environment at Kabul University of Education, is one of the students who returned to her class.

Hujat says she is happy to return to class, but was surprised by the changes on campus.

"There have been many changes in the university in terms of curriculum and environment. It is more like a Madrasa than a university. Girls are more concerned with their clothes and behavior than their lessons," Hujat said.

Kabul University is the largest educational center in Afghanistan with thousands of students enrolled there."

TOLO News, Education Ministry Prepares New Plan for Grades 1-6, 23 February 2022

"The Ministry of Education (MoE) said Tuesday that boys and girls in grade 1-6 will continue their education separately and at different times based on a new plan."

"The main points of the plan are as follow: the classes should be separate, the classes should not be at the same time, female teachers are allowed to teach girls and male teachers to teach boys," said Aziz Ahmad Reyan, the spokesman of the MoE.

Based on the plan, the students' clothing must conform to the Islamic laws and regulations. "The clothes of students should be based on Afghan culture. Color is not important," he added."

"According to some numbers given, over 3.5 million Afghan girls have been barred from school across Afghanistan during the past six months."

TOLO News, Karzai: Afghan Girls 'Must Definitely' Return to School, 16 February 2022

"Former President Hamid Karzai suggested all girls "must definitely" return back to schools even if the international community doesn't push this matter, as it is "absolutely" necessary for the well-being of Afghanistan.

According to Karzai, the return of the girls to school and the access of women to work is the demand of the Afghan nation itself. The former Afghan president made the remarks in an interview with France 24. Karzai said there are some initial steps needed to be taken at the national level to pave the way for recognition. "On the issue of recognition by the international community, my proposal has been from the very beginning this--that we the Afghan people need to put our own house in order first," he said."

Gandhara News, Six Months And An Eternity: Afghans Lose Hope Under Taliban Rule, 15 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Afghan women have endured the brunt of Taliban restrictions and discrimination. Most teenage Afghan girls are still waiting to return to school, while women have lost jobs, businesses, and the expanded societal roles they had gained over the past two decades. [...] "Women have been completely marginalized politically," Zahra Rahnavard, a resident of Kabul, told RFE/RL. "[The Taliban] had promised to preserve women's rights, but we see nothing.... Everyone is in a state of despair and hopelessness."

The Guardian, How Afghan Women are Demanding their Education under the Taliban, 10 February 2022
"The country has 34 provinces, but fewer than a third have allowed any of their girls' schools to reopen, and even fewer have restarted all secondary classes. Millions of girls are being robbed of their right to an education. Tracing where girls were allowed back into high schools and why classes resumed – or in a few cases were never stopped at all – may offer insights into how a disparate band of militants can perhaps be nudged on policy. The areas still permitting girls to study – from Zabul in the south to Herat in the west, and Balkh in the north – have differences in wealth, ethnic makeup, popular support for Taliban and past attitudes to women's education. Some are templates for resistance where activists have taken on the Taliban with protests, strikes or appeals to local leaders, putting their jobs and perhaps their lives on the line. The Taliban are cracking down on women's rights activists, and there is growing fear over the fate of six campaigners abducted in Kabul last month. The quality of education has also declined in most schools, teachers privately told the Guardian. A ban on male colleagues meant fewer colleagues and that they lost specialists. There is also the constant threat that the classes may be taken away again. Taliban officials have suggested the five-month-old bar on high-school education for girls is only short-term."

The Guardian, Afghan universities reopen with strict rules for female students, 3 February 2022
"The media were refused permission by the Taliban authorities to cover the universities' opening ceremonies, but students in Kandahar yesterday said they were not optimistic about the future under the restrictions imposed on women since the Taliban takeover. Khalida Rashed, an economics student, said there was concern about the low numbers of female students. "I am happy about the reopening of the university, but women are still facing limitations. The question is that even after girls come to university to continue their education in the current situation, will the Taliban allow them to work after graduation?" she said, urging fellow Afghans, men and women, to support women in seeking their rights. [...] A source in Kandahar University, who commented on the condition of anonymity, said that male and female classes have been separated. The source also added that female students have been asked to follow Islamic dress code. Previously, the Taliban's spokesperson for the ministry for the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice has told reporters that by Islamic dress code they mean burqa and Arabic-style black abaya."

Afghanistan Analysts Network, Who gets to go to school? (2) The Taleban and education through time, 31 January 2022

"In trying to understand Taleban policy on state education, especially for girls, our first report [published on 26 January 2022] heard from people around the country. They painted a picture of primary schools for boys and girls, and boys' secondary schools having generally re-opened after the Taleban captured power on 15 August, but of girls' secondary schools opening only very patchily. The Taleban have said they want to re-open schools for older girls when the environment can be made safe; many fear this could mean a de facto, ongoing closure."

Afghanistan Analysts Network, Who Gets to Go to School? (1): What people told us about education since

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the Taliban took over, 26 January 2022

"This series looks at schools (maktabas), rather than madrassas, which impart religious education. [...] The series begins with a report looking at who has been able to go to school since the Taliban took power on 15 August and what changes they have already made to education in Afghanistan. It also briefly looks at the state of the nation's schools before the Taliban takeover. The report draws on interviews conducted in 40 districts across Afghanistan in the period just before and then in the months following their capture of power. [...] Soon after the Taliban captured Kabul, on 23 August, their Education Commission announced to its "dear compatriots" that following the closure of schools because of coronavirus and the postponement of their reopening "due to the takeover of provincial capitals and Kabul," all primary schools should reopen for lessons on 28 August. As to the start-back date for secondary schools, "instructions will be given later" (statement here see media reporting here).

Those instructions were issued on 17 September, when the Ministry of Education ordered teachers and pupils back to school, but with a proviso (see the Ministry of Education statement, also quoted here):

All Emirati [that is, government] and private schools, madrassas and dar ul-ulums [advanced madrassas] should restart their educational process from 27 Sunbula [18 September], so all male schoolteachers and male pupils must be present in their work. [...]

That specification, that only men and boys should return to educational establishments rang alarm bells, given that during the first Emirate, the Taliban had banned girls' education and women working outside the home, except in healthcare. It also became clear that there would be an additional obstacle to getting girls' secondary schools up and running: "There will be no male teacher for female secondary school pupils and no female teacher for male secondary school pupils," the minister told the press on 7 October: (quoted by Etilaat-e Roz). Female teachers make up just 34 per cent of the workforce, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – a proportion which falls in rural areas where some girls' schools have relied on some male teachers to operate. The minister said they were working on a plan to create a "safe and secure environment" for girls that complied with the rules of Islam and that would be announced "soon". Another obstacle raised in mid-January 2022 by spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahed was facilities. He said that for there to be complete segregation, "[i]n heavily populated areas, it is not enough to have separate classrooms for boys and girls — separate school buildings are needed," as AP reported. Mujahed did not explain why boys should always be prioritised, but if this condition were to be followed through, new school buildings would be needed in some areas.

Many girls' secondary schools that already fulfilled all the Taliban's requirements, ie separate buildings and no male teachers, were still not allowed to open and the Taliban authorities have given no explanation for this. Instead, a patchy, apparently random picture of where girls' secondary schools were able to open and where doors to classes remained firmly shut has emerged.

Schools for older girls were open, said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi who met newly-appointed Minister of Education Sheikh Nurullah Munir in Kabul on 6 October, in Balkh, Jawzjan, Kunduz and Samangan in the north and Uruzgan in the south (as reported by Associated Press and UN here and here). The press also reported the reopening of girls' secondary schools in Zabul on 24 November and in Herat where local communities, including female schoolteachers, led by the teachers union, successfully lobbied the provincial Taliban officials, including governor Mawlawi Nur Ahmad Islamjar (see this BBC report from 6 November).

One Herati schoolgirl in particular, Sotuda Forotan, was introduced by Nobel Peace Prize laureate and activist Malala Yousafzai for The Financial Times' 25 most influential women of 2021, including for a widely-circulated and moving speech she made at a local event attended by local Taliban officials, defending girls' access to education (watch it here). Following media attention, schools in Herat were

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

ordered to shut down about a week later (see reporting from 13 November here), only to reopen again (see AP reporting from 1 December). Local people from other provinces interviewed by AAN also mentioned that government schools for older girls were open in their areas, including Ghazni, Kunduz and Faryab, while others said some boys' schools were still closed. Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told AP on 14 December that secondary schoolgirls were attending classes in ten provinces (without mentioning which).

Nationally, some private schools for older girls are also reported to be still open, although the economy's collapse has meant fewer pupils, which may force their closure anyway. Community schools, including NGO-supported ones that provide education to older girls, seem to have opened as normal.

[...] On 15 November 2021, as the school year was drawing to a close, Ministry of Education spokesman, Nazar Muhammad Erfan, told Azadi Radio that older girls would not be taking exams:

Boys and girls in grades 1 to 6 will take their annual examinations. Boys in grades 7 to 12 will also physically attend their examinations. However, girls above grade 6 will be promoted to the next grade without examinations so that their academic year is not wasted.

Even girls in grade 12 would not have to pass exams to graduate. This outraged many, including high school girls, who felt cheated and mocked. They wanted "knowledge," they said, and not just "a graduation certificate" (media report here).

While some girls have been attending class beyond grade 6 in some areas, the question throughout the autumn and into winter was when, and indeed whether the Taliban would allow older Afghan girls to go back to school nationally. The latest from the Taliban is that the schools will open after Nawruz (see AP reporting from 16 January 2022). Since then, there has been an offer of help from donors: the US Special Representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West, said in a BBC interview on 22 January:

[Concerning the] opening of girls' schools in March, we want to open schools of all levels for girls in March, high schools and public universities all. We believe that education is a fundamental right of women. These and many more are important tests for the Taliban as the world watches, and we and the international community are ready to pay the salaries of female teachers across the country if the Taliban opens all girls' schools.

With Nawruz now only two months away, there is no sign of the promised framework for girls' secondary schools to be re-opened."

The New York Times, 'Why Was I Born a Girl?' An Afghan Poem Inspires U.S. Students, 22 January 2022

"Most of Mawoud's [a tutoring center Fariba now attends in Kabul] 300 students are Hazara, a predominately Shiite Muslim minority ruthlessly attacked by the Islamic State in Afghanistan, ISIS-K. Hazara schools, protests, mosques, a New Year's celebration and even a wrestling club have been bombed by ISIS-K since 2016, killing hundreds. Two Shiite Muslim mosques attended by Hazaras were bombed a week apart in October, killing more than 90 people. ISIS considers Hazaras apostates. [...] Since the Taliban takeover, several commuter minibuses used by Hazaras have been bombed in the Hazara district of west Kabul known as Dasht-e-Barchi. At least 11 people have been killed and up to 18 wounded, most of them Hazaras, the Afghan Analysts Network reported. [...] The Taliban, who persecuted Hazaras in the past, are now responsible for their security. The analysts' independent research agency described the Taliban government response as tepid, saying it downplayed the strength of ISIS-K, which claimed responsibility for most of the attacks. On Jan. 14, Afghan media reported that a young Hazara woman, Zainab Abdullahi, was shot and killed at a Taliban checkpoint just five minutes from the Mawoud center. [...] Mawoud prepares students for Afghanistan's rigorous university entrance exams. But there is no guarantee that girls will be permitted to take the annual exams — or to return to high school, attend a university, or

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

pursue a career in a country where the Taliban have begun erasing most women from public life. The Taliban have said they hope older girls will return to schools and universities, under Islamic guidelines, by late March. Except for some schools in northern Afghanistan, most Afghan girls above the sixth grade have not attended school since August. [...] Mr. Yusefi said that Taliban officials who have visited the tutoring center have not laid down specific rules, as they had at some public schools. He said they have merely stressed adherence to “Islamic values,” interpreted as separating boys and girls and requiring girls to cover their hair and faces. [...] Before suicide bombs killed students at Mawoud in 2018 and at a nearby tutoring center attended by Hazaras in 2020, Mawoud had 3,000 students. Since the bombings and the Taliban takeover, the size of Mawoud’s student body has dropped by about 90 percent, the principal said. [...]”

Khaama Press, Public universities to reopen in 10 days: IEA officials - The Khaama Press News Agency, 19 January 2022

“Deputy Minister of Higher Education of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that all public universities will be reopened in 10 or 15 days.

Speaking at a gathering in Kabul on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, Lutfullah Khaikhwa said that the universities will reopen only in tropical provinces.

Afghanistan’s educational year is divided into tropical provinces and those where it snows and the winter is colder. The educational year in the latter starts in March while in tropical provinces, the year is not ended yet.

Lutfullah Khaikhwa said that universities will reopen only for the students of last semester and those who are going to graduate.

He added that the Ministry is working on a mechanism to reopen universities for the rest of the students as well.

Likewise, other officials of the IEA, Khaikhwa reiterated that the classes of boys and girls will be separated at universities.

It has been nearly six months that 150 public universities in Afghanistan are closed which has affected the educational career of hundreds of thousands of students.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity, 18 January 2022

“Girls and women in Ghazni face a range of barriers to accessing education, including the current Taliban ban on the operation of girls’ secondary schools in 27 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, including Ghazni. [...]”

“My younger sister wanted to go to the university but now she must stay home,” one woman said. “All universities in Ghazni are closed.”

Girls’ primary schools are open, but the knowledge that secondary school is closed distracts them. “The girls in 6th grade are worried,” a teacher said. “Their mental health is affected – they worry about their future. Seeing the older girls not going to school, they have lost morale.” [...]

Primary school teachers come to work while secondary school teachers wait at home to see if their schools will reopen and their employment will resume. A teacher said that nonpayment of teacher salaries even for open schools is affecting the quality of education: “Some teachers who come to school don’t have the motivation to teach their class, because there’s no salary.”

Private schools have had more flexibility to stay open, but the financial crisis has also hit them. “There are some private schools, but they are about to go broke,” a former government worker said. “People cannot pay for their children’s private schools because they have lost their jobs.” [...]

Teachers reported that the Taliban had already made changes to the curriculum. “More religious subjects have been added,” a teacher said, and subjects such as physical education and art that were deemed

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“unnecessary” were removed to make space in the school day. Islamic religious studies were already part of the curriculum, but the Taliban have significantly increased the focus on these studies.”

Al Jazeera, Taliban says all Afghan girls will be back in school by March, 17 January 2022

“Girls’ schools across Afghanistan will hopefully reopen by late March, a senior Taliban leader has told the Associated Press, offering the first timeline for the resumption of high schools for girls since the group retook power in mid-August.

Speaking to journalists on Saturday, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for Afghanistan’s government and deputy minister of culture and information, said the group’s education department would open classrooms for all girls and women in the Afghan New Year, which starts on March 21.

Although the Taliban has not officially banned girls’ education, the group’s fighters have shuttered girls’ secondary schools and barred women from public universities in some parts of the country.

Girls in most of Afghanistan have not been allowed back to school beyond grade 7 since the Taliban takeover, and reversing that has been one of the main demands of women’s rights activists and the international community for months.”

Business Standard, Co-education reason of closure of Afghan universities: Taliban minister, 27 December 2021

“Minister of Higher Education of Afghanistan, Abdul Baqi Haqqani on Sunday said that the reason behind the closure of universities is co-education and economic crisis.

“The Taliban minister said that they have to make separate classes for girls and hire extra lecturers that need more time and extra budget, reported Khaama Press.”

TOLO News, 2021 'Hasn't Been a Good Year' for Afghan Women: HRW, 21 December 2021

“A prominent Afghan women rights activist, Mahboubia Seraj, voiced concerns over the current status of Afghan women.

“When the right of education is taken from girls and women, and they are incapable of doing their activities, and all kind of access is restricted for women, this is the worst situation for women in the country,” she said.

According to her, the main reason for the current crisis in the country is due to women’s isolation from society, including governmental affairs. “I remained here (Afghanistan) to be the voice of women and to warn that no government can survive,” Seraj said.”

WSJ, After Taliban Return, Afghan Women Face Old Pressures From Fathers, Brothers, 15 December 2021

The Taliban, who follow the ultraconservative rural traditions of Afghanistan’s Pashtun belt, have gone beyond what Islamic scholars elsewhere in the world consider to be appropriate, including restricting women’s education and work. While Afghan men in cities such as Kabul generally consider those views too extreme, many do believe that women are better off at home. Emboldened by the Taliban comeback, these men are telling their daughters, sisters and wives to adapt their lifestyles to the new regime and let go of the liberties they enjoyed until August.

TOLO News, UN Alarmed by “Rapid Reversal” of Afghan Women’s Rights, 9 December 2021

“UN Women -- Afghanistan” issued a “Gender Alert” expressing concerns on the Afghan women’s situation, saying that since August 15, there have been rapid reversals for women across all aspects of Afghan society.

The report was meant to “document and analyze” the “rapidly evolving Afghan context” on Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

women rights and gender equality.

"Since 15 August 2021, there have been immediate and dramatic reversals on women's rights and fundamental freedom, particularly impacting their right to work, access to education, basic health and protection services and participation of women and girls in the public sphere and decision-making mechanism," the report said.

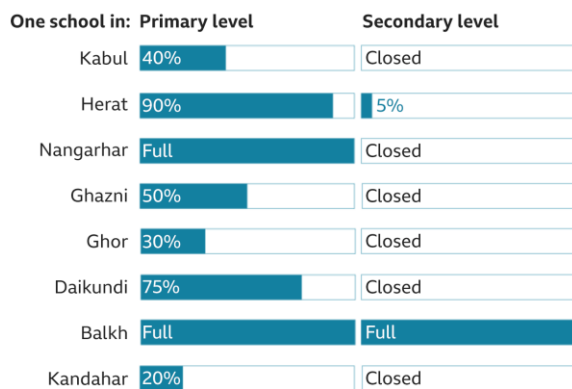
BBC, [Afghanistan: Girls' despair as Taliban confirm secondary school ban](#), 8 December 2021

"Teenage schoolgirls in Afghanistan have told the BBC of their growing desperation as they continue to be excluded from school more than three months after the Taliban takeover.

"Not being able to study feels like a death penalty," says 15-year-old Meena. She says that she and her friends feel lost and confused since the closure of their school in north-eastern Badakhshan province."

How has Taliban takeover affected girls' school attendance?

Attendance for girls at primary and secondary level in November by selected provinces



Source: BBC Research



TOLO News, [Facing Closed Schools, Nangarhar Girls Despair Over Future](#), 29 Nov 2021

"Girls in the eastern province of Nangarhar are concerned about their uncertain future as schools from grade 7 to 12 have remained closed for girls since the Islamic Emirate swept into power in Afghanistan."

TOLO News, [Women Activists Seek Govt, Society Inclusion](#), 29 Nov 2021

"Many challenges lay in front of women in the previous government; right now, the women do not have access to their rights either--rights to education or to work. We ask the Islamic Emirate to fulfill their commitments that they promised earlier," said Diana Azizi, a women's activist."

TOLO News, [Girls' Schools Reopened In Ghor's Capital](#), 17 November 2021

"Herat and Ghor are two provinces in western Afghanistan where girls are allowed to attend secondary and high school. After a long delay, female students from grade 7 to 12 were allowed to attend their schools in Ferozkoh, capital of the western province of Ghor. [...]"

The schools were reopened as a result of efforts made by the Ferozkoh council. The council urged the provincial education officials to reopen the girls' schools.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"We reached an agreement that the high schools for girls in the capital and all districts of Ghor should be reopened," said Sultan Ahmad, head of the Ferozkoh council.

"Fortunately, the schools will be reopened for the girl students. It is very important because if women are deprived of education, the next generation of the society will not have a bright future," said Habib Wahdat, a civil right activist.

Herat and Ghor are two provinces in western Afghanistan where girls are allowed to attend secondary and high school."

UNHCR, [Afghanistan Situation Update](#), 8 November 2021

"On 2 November, Waheedullah Hashimi, the Director of External Programmes and Aid at the Taliban's Ministry of Education, announced that the de facto Afghan government will "soon" begin allowing older girls back into schools, while also urging the international community to help fund this. He added that "no women teachers had been laid off", and that this was "a positive message to the world that we are working on a mechanism. We are not working on deleting them from our schools and universities". On 5 November, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, announced that 10 out of the 14 girls-only schools run by the Maarif Foundation – a Turkish state-funded organisation which runs 80 schools overall in the country – have been reopened. According to Cavusoglu, he had held talks with the Taliban Interim Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi"

Human Rights Watch, [Afghan Girls' Education: 'I Don't Think I Have a Future'](#), 31 October 2021

The Taliban have effectively banned girls from education past primary school by ordering secondary schools, which include grades seven and up, to reopen only for boys. Although Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid claimed on September 21 that the Ministry of Education was preparing for "the education of high school girls as soon as possible," only a few secondary schools have reopened in some provinces. The ban in most of the country and an unclear Taliban policy makes millions of girls understandably fearful for their education. Even if girls' schools reopened immediately, their studies, including preparation for exams, plans to graduate, and university applications, have already suffered a severe setback. And the harm increases every day.

Women across Afghanistan continue to protest, asking for schools to reopen and for women's right to work. "If the Taliban have really changed, they should prove it by letting our daughters go to school and us to go work," said Zainab, a friend in Kabul who participated in one of these protests.

TIME, [Afghanistan's Female Students Were Banned from Studying. Now Some Are Finding New Ways to Learn](#), 27 October 2021

"Remote Opportunities

[...] Banned from in-person classes in Kabul, hundreds of female students have rushed in recent weeks to register for a remote learning program launched by a California-based nonprofit online university, entering a new program that begins November 1, which is geared specifically at women banished from their education by the Taliban.

[...] But University of the People appears to be the sole organization offering large numbers of full scholarships for Afghan women to earn degrees online, without leaving their homes. Although the students can take the courses for free, they are required to pay fees in order to sit exams and formally graduate. The fees are minuscule compared to average tuition at a U.S. university—about \$4,800 for a four-year B.A. degree, and \$3,000 for an MBA. Nonetheless, it is out of reach for the great majority of Afghan women."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Reuters, Afghan minister wants good relations, need more time on girls' education, 12 October 2021

"Afghanistan's [acting] foreign minister acting Foreign Minister [Amir Khan Muttaqi] appealed to the world for good relations on Monday but avoided making firm commitments on girls' education despite international demands to allow all Afghan children to go back to school." [...]

But the Taliban have so far refused to give ground on allowing girls to return to high school, one of the key demands of the international community after a decision last month that schools above the sixth grade would only reopen for boys.

"Muttaqi said the Taliban's Islamic Emirate government was moving carefully but had only been in power for a few weeks and could not be expected to complete reforms the international community had not been able to implement in 20 years."

NY Times, At Afghan Universities, Increasing Fear that Women will never be allowed back, 29 September 2021 [updated 5 October 2021]

"While some women have returned to class at private universities, the country's public universities, which had been scheduled to start their academic year this week, remain closed to everyone, not just women. Even if they reopen, it appears that women will be required to attend segregated classes, with only women as instructors. But with so few female teachers available — and many of them still publicly restricted from working — many women will almost certainly have no classes to attend."

BBC News, Afghanistan life under Taliban rule one month on, 16 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gender segregation will also be enforced, Haqqani said. "We will not allow boys and girls to study together," he said.

Haqqani said that where no women teachers were available, special measures would be adopted to ensure separation.

"When there is really a need, men can also teach [women] but in accordance with Shari'a, they should

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

observe the veil," he said. Classrooms will be curtained off to divide male and female students where necessary, and teaching could also be done through streaming or closed-circuit TV.

Classrooms divided by curtains have already been seen in many places since the Western-backed government collapsed and the Taliban seized Kabul last month. Haqqani told reporters that subjects being taught in universities would also be reviewed but did not elaborate. The Taliban, who subscribe to a harsh interpretation of Islam, have banned music and art during their previous time in power.

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

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

"The Taliban on Sunday gave more details of how segregation of the sexes will be enacted in universities. In an extensive document, the new authorities said men and women must be separated, if necessary by a curtain.

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

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

[Aljazeera, Taliban official says Islam grants women right to education and work](#), 31 August 2022

"A Taliban official has said that Islam grants women the right to education, work, and entrepreneurship, and reiterated that the group is working to create a so-called "safe environment" for girls and women in secondary schools and the workplace.

"I must say that Islam has given women the right to education, Islam has given women the right to work, Islam has given women the right to entrepreneurship [...] if Islam has allowed it, who am I to ban it." [quote by Taliban spokesperson of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, Sadeq Akif Muhajir]

"The comments by Muhajir came more than a year after the armed group took over the country and imposed several limitations on women's freedoms, including a ban on secondary education for girls.

Since returning to power, the Taliban has among other things, shut down girls' secondary schools across the country, ordered women to wear hijabs in the workplace and to cover their faces in public, and has banned women from travelling long distanced without a close male relative."

"But a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) this year found that Afghan women's employment levels fell by an estimated 16 percent in the months immediately following the Taliban takeover. In contrast, male employment dropped by 6 percent. 'In the pessimistic scenario in which restrictions intensify and women do not feel they can safely show up at their workplaces, the scale of job losses for women could reach 28 percent,' the report said.

Working Afghan women have previously told Al Jazeera that while the Taliban has not directly fired female government employees, it has restricted women from entering workplaces and has paid them a notably reduced salary to remain at home."

"The Taliban's return to power has exacerbated Afghanistan's economic woes. The country has been reeling from a humanitarian crisis with more than half of the population facing hunger.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Western-imposed sanctions and the freezing of nearly \$10bn in Afghan central bank assets by the US have largely contributed to the collapse of the economy.”

Inter Press Service, Gender Equality & Women’s Rights Wiped out Under the Taliban, 15 August 2022

“In the year that has passed since the Taliban’s takeover in Afghanistan we have seen daily and continuous deterioration in the situation of Afghan women and girls. This has spanned every aspect of their human rights, from living standards to social and political status. ... The Taliban’s meticulously constructed policies of inequality set Afghanistan apart. It is the only country in the world where girls are banned from going to high school. There are no women in the Taliban’s cabinet, no Ministry of Women’s Affairs, thereby effectively removing women’s right to political participation. Women are, for the most part, also restricted from working outside the home, and are required to cover their faces in public and to have a male chaperone when they travel. Furthermore, they continue to be subjected to multiple forms of Gender Based Violence.”

The Guardian, ‘I was a policewoman. Now I beg in the streets’: life for afghan women one year after the Taliban took over, 14 August 2022

“Hijab order

Samana,

Kabul

I was walking home alone when I turned down a deserted alley and found two Taliban with guns over their shoulders. They shouted I was a prostitute because I was unveiled, and demanded to know why I wasn’t wearing the hijab. They pointed their guns in my face, and one of them had his finger on the trigger. I lowered my head and said: “It won’t happen again.” When I got home, I sat and cried for an hour. I said to myself: this is a warning for what is coming next. Since then, I have fallen into a deep depression. I can’t bear to look at all my colourful clothes in my closet as they remind me of everything I have lost.

Zahra,

west

Kabul

After the hijab order was announced, I was caught by Taliban fighters. They asked why I was not wearing the hijab, and although I have no intention of following their orders, I apologised and thought they would let me go. But they visited my home and told my family the next time I was caught in public uncovered I would be arrested. Since then, my father has rarely allowed me or my sisters to leave the house, and says we can’t go to university. Even my brothers now know what I wear and where I go at all times.

Travel restrictions

Zarlasht,

Kabul

In June, I was travelling with my brother and we were stopped at a checkpoint by Taliban fighters. Firstly, they questioned us separately to understand if we were related to each other, then they asked for our national ID cards. When my brother said we didn’t carry our ID cards with us, they got angry and one of them hit him with a rifle and was about to fire. We were made to sit there for two hours, and then we had to call our families to bring ID cards so we could return home. Since then, I do not dare to leave the house.

University students

Sabira, Bamyan

province

Even though it is not mandatory we are being forced to wear the black hijab to be allowed to enter university. Once we’re inside, women are under constant surveillance. There are hijab notices on the doors and walls. I never imagined that one day, in Bamyan, all female students would be forced to live like

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

this. I can't believe what life is turning into here.

Islamic State attacks

Abassi,

west

Kabul

My friend and I were chatting on the bus on the way to work in the Hazara Shia neighbourhood of west Kabul when suddenly the world around us exploded. We found ourselves in the middle of carnage. Since the Taliban took control, security has deteriorated and our bus had been bombed by IS militants. We later found out that many people were killed. I was wounded in my leg and chest, and my friend in her right leg. When the bomb went off, everything changed for me. After the Taliban took over, things were hard but I continued my work and was determined to live bravely. Now, after the attack, I live in constant fear. The pain of my injuries has been excruciating. I've gone through five surgeries and can't go to the bathroom or dress myself without help. But the psychological wounds are also deep. I have to pass the place where the bomb exploded to get to my doctor appointments, and every time I feel the vehicle shaking, the heat of the explosion and the sound of people screaming. It keeps repeating and repeating in front of my eyes when I try to sleep."

TOLO News, Human rights in afghanistan since political change, 14 August 2022

"The Islamic Emirate's leadership issued a number of decrees regarding women in the country over the course of the past 12 months.

On December 3, 2021, the leader of the Islamic Emirate issued the first six-article decree, emphasizing the provision of women's rights based on Islamic Sharia.

According to this decree, no one has the authority to give a woman to someone in return for making peace or resolving a dispute.

On May 7, 2022, the Ministry of Virtue and Vice issued a second decree requiring the hijab for women. In one of its articles, guardians of women who disobey the decree will face punishment and imprisonment. "If a woman doesn't wear a hijab, first, her house will be located and her guardian will be advised and warned. Next, if the hijab is not considered, her guardian will be summoned. If repeated, her guardian (father, brother or husband) will be imprisoned for three days. If repeated again, her guardian will be sent to court for further punishment, the plan reads," said Akif Mahajar, a spokesman for the Ministry of Vice and virtue."

AAN, Transition to a New Political Order: AAN Dossier takes stock of Afghanistan's momentous year, 12 August 2022

"West Kabul, like many other places where Hazaras/Shia Muslims are in the majority, has been the target of some of the deadliest attacks in Afghanistan, especially since 2016. Attacks which, moreover, aim to kill the softest of targets – children, women in labour and with their newborns, sportspeople and worshippers... Immediately after the Taleban took power in August 2021, the neighbourhood experienced a short-lived respite from attacks, but has since become the scene of a new cycle of assassinations and bombings."

"Since the Taleban took power, Afghan women have been stripped of many of their rights. Women workers have, largely, been sent home from government offices. They are hindered from travelling and suffer an enforced a strict dress code. Oder girls have been banned from school. Public protest dwindled in the face of the new authorities' crackdown on those they viewed as dissidents and rebels. Women's rights activists have proven the bravest of all, but the Taleban's response has been harsh – detaining and, reportedly, beating women protesters who had taken to the streets to demand their rights."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Access to information is now severely constrained in Afghanistan, and violence against journalists continues, with the Taleban identified as the main perpetrator. There are reports of journalists being told, formally and informally, what and how to report and women TV presenters are now compelled to cover their faces on air. In some cases, those who disobeyed have been summoned, interrogated, threatened, tortured and detained.”

Save the Children, One Year Under Taliban Rule, Girls are More Isolated, Hungry, Sad: New Report, 10 August 2022

“[...] The crisis is also taking a dangerous toll on girls’ mental and psychosocial wellbeing. According to interviews with their caregivers, 26% of girls are showing signs of depression compared with 16% of boys, and 27% of girls are showing signs of anxiety compared with 18% of boys. Girls in focus groups said they had trouble sleeping at night because they were worried and have bad dreams. They also said they had been excluded from many of the activities that previously made them happy, such as spending time with relatives and friends and going to parks and shops.”

The National News, How the Taliban has rolled back civil rights after a year in control of Afghanistan, 10 August 2022

“ In the early months after their takeover of Afghanistan last year, the Taliban appeared to have turned over a new leaf, making surprising statements that seemed to support gender equality and education for women. [...] In March, the Taliban officially announced high schools would remain closed until a plan was created to allow them to re-open in accordance with “Islamic law and teachings”. They are still yet to re-open, a year after the takeover. [...] On employment, the Taliban made similar promises of allowing women to continue in the workplace. However, soon after their takeover, they said those steps would need to wait until women could work in what they considered a safe environment. “In Afghanistan, 20 years of progress towards enhanced protection and promotion of women’s rights was rolled back overnight,” Amnesty International said in a recent report. [...] “The Taliban have made it very difficult and expensive for offices to hire women. For instance, they order that there should be gender-segregated spaces for women to work, there is no support within departments for women, and women should not be allowed without a mahram (male guardian),” an Afghan woman told The National in May. “Added to that, women aren’t allowed to represent the organisation in meetings, or conduct outdoor activities such as purchasing and processing documents. So you can see why an organisation will not want to hire women.”[...] Protests against the Taliban’s oppressive views on education and other issues were met with violence, including live ammunition, tear gas and physical beating and lashing of protesters. Under the new government, there are no women in the cabinet and the Ministry of Women's Affairs was shut down. [...] In May, the Taliban officially announced that a dress code of sorts will be mandatory for women. “They should wear a chadori [head-to-toe burqa] as it is traditional and respectful,” Taliban chief Hibatullah Akhundzada said.”

The Guardian, Photographer Fatimah Hossaini: ‘In Kabul, there was so much hope and desire’, 7 August 2022

“The Afghan-Iranian artist narrowly escaped from Kabul to Paris last August, as the Taliban took over. She talks about the terror of that time, why she still longs for home, and her work photographing Afghan women in exile in France. [...]“In Tehran, people are a little depressed with the situation. But in Kabul there was so much hope and desire. A new generation was burning with it. I could see women in every

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

sector: musicians, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians. I could teach my classes at the university without a hijab. I could show my students any image I liked. These things would never happen in Iran.” But life really was about to change. When a newly elected Joe Biden confirmed in April 2021 that American troops would be withdrawn by 11 September, Taliban insurgents began to intensify their attacks on the Afghan state; in May, for instance, a car bomb outside a Kabul school killed more than 60 people, most of them schoolgirls. “Even I could see that the security situation was different,” Hossaini says. “I lost two journalist friends [to Taliban attacks] during those months. [...] But her mind was clear now: it was, she finally conceded, time to go. Like thousands upon thousands of other desperate Afghans, she pitched up at Kabul airport. She would spend the next four days there. “It was crazy,” she says. “Mothers abandoning their children; lovers abandoning each other. People were so desperate, they would do anything to leave”.”

Human Rights Watch, Economic Causes of Afghanistan’s Humanitarian Crisis, 4 August 2022

“Women spoke of how the mahram [male chaperone] requirement is impacting every aspect of their lives, from their freedom to go to buy bread and meet the basic needs of their family, to their ability to influence decision-making in the home. Women linked the mandatory face covering with their increasing invisibility. Some women told me they still go to the market without a mahram, but they live in fear that one day they will be stopped and beaten for the act of buying groceries without a man.

Afghanistan’s healthcare system is barely functioning, which has had a devastating impact on maternal and infant health and women and girls’ access to sexual and reproductive health care – services that were already in short supply. Taliban restrictions, including requiring that male family members escort women to health appointments and bans on male healthcare professionals treating women, are further compromising women’s access to health care.”

SIGAR, July 30, 2022 Quarterly Report to Congress, 30 July 2022

“Taliban Repress Women

The Taliban announced additional restrictions on women, requiring them to cover themselves fully in public, including their faces. Violations will now result in jail time for male heads of household. The policy was later expanded to include women newscasters. The restrictions sparked national protest and international condemnation.

The UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution on the situation of human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, seeking the reversal of Taliban policies that restrict women’s rights, roles, and responsibilities in society.”

Gandhara, ‘Death In Slow Motion’: Amnesty Report Documents Taliban’s ‘Suffocating Crackdown’ on Women, Girls, 27 July 2022

“Since returning to power almost one year ago, the radical group has systematically violated women’s and girls’ rights to education, work, and free movement, Amnesty International said in a report published on July 26. [...]

Despite initially attempting to present itself as a more moderate force compared to its first stint in power in 1996-2001, the Taliban formed an all-male government and banned girls from attending school from seventh grade, imposed all-covering dress that leaves only the eyes visible, and restricted women’s access to work. Amnesty said the Taliban has also decimated protections for those facing domestic violence, detained women and girls for minor violations, and triggered a surge in child marriages.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The report -- titled *Death In Slow Motion: Women and Girls Under Taliban Rule* -- also documented how women who peacefully protested the increasingly oppressive rules have been threatened, arrested, detained, tortured, and forcibly disappeared.

The report comprises the results of a nine-month investigation conducted from September 2021 to June 2022 and included a visit to Afghanistan by the group's researchers back in March. They interviewed 90 women and 11 girls between 14 and 74 years old across the country. Among them were women detained for protesting who described torture at the hands of Taliban guards, including beatings and threats of death. One woman told Amnesty that guards beat her and other women on the breasts and between the legs "so that we couldn't show the world." She said one told her, "I can kill you right now, and no one would say anything."

Amnesty said Afghanistan's economic and humanitarian crisis has deprived women and girls of education and job prospects. The report documented cases of forced marriages of women and girls to Taliban members -- under pressure by the Taliban member or by the women's families."

Khaama Press, *Decades of Progress Erased in Months; Deteriorating Afghan Women's Rights an "Alarm Bell" to the World*, 26 July 2022

"The majority of Afghan women and girls have seen a decline in their rights, their health, and their social and political status practically every day since August 15th, according to Alison Davidian, UN Women representative in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan continues to be the only nation in the world where girls are not allowed to attend high school. She Davidian said that, with the exception of a few sectors and specific jobs, women are not allowed to work outside the home.

"Anywhere in the world, the act of walking outside your front door is an ordinary part of life," said Alison Davidian, UN Women representative for Afghanistan. "But for many Afghan women, it is an act that is extraordinary. It is an act of resistance."

Reliefweb, *Press briefing: The situation of women and girls in Afghanistan*, 25 July 2022

[Statement by Ms. Alison Davidian, Country Representative a.i. for UN Women in Afghanistan, on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, during the daily press briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, 25 July 2022.]

"It has been 344 days since the Taliban took power. For most Afghan women and girls, almost each one of these days since 15 August has brought a deterioration in their rights, their condition, and their social and political status. (...) Over the past 11 months, we have seen an escalation of restrictive policies and behaviours towards women: Afghanistan remains the only country in the world where girls are banned from going to high school; Women are restricted from working outside the home, except for a few sectors and particular roles; There are no women in cabinet and there is no Ministry of Women's Affairs, effectively removing women's right to political participation; Women are required to have a male chaperone when they are travelling more than 78 kilometres; They're also required to cover their faces in public. (...) Women spoke of how the* mahram* requirement is impacting every aspect of their lives, from their freedom to go to buy bread and meet the basic needs of their family, to their ability to influence decision-making in the home. Women linked the mandatory face covering with their increasing invisibility. Some women told me they still go to the market without a mahram, but they live in fear that one day they will be stopped and beaten for the act of buying groceries without a man. (...) Many Afghan women and girls feel that they are now invisible, and that the world has forgotten them—compounding their

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

invisibility.”

The National News “[Female journalists in Afghanistan face new reality under Taliban rule](#)” 25 July 2022

“Almost a year since the US withdrawal, women reporters and presenters have been made to wear face coverings on screen, with some fearing further restrictions”

Jurist.org, [UN Human Rights Council calls for equal rights for women in Taliban-led Afghanistan](#), 9 July 2022

“[S]ince the Taliban took power, women and girls in Afghanistan were experiencing the most significant and rapid roll-back in enjoyment of their rights across the board in decades,” said Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the debate. Bachelet also said that as a “de facto authority exercising effective control” over the country, the Taliban is legally obligated under international treaties to “eliminate discrimination against women and ensure women’s right to equal participation in civic and public life, including politics and decision-making fora.”

AIHRC, [An analysis of the meeting of the Taliban, which was held under the name of "The Great Gathering of Afghan Religious Scholars"](#) in Kabul, 3 July 2022

"A meeting was launched by the de facto Taliban government on June 30, 2022, under the name "Great Gathering of Afghan *Ulama*" in Kabul and continued for three days." [...] "The agenda of this meeting was formed without the participation of other political, social, cultural, and economic groups.." [...] "... no representative of the large community of women in the country was invited." [...] "In the agenda, speeches, consultative programs, and working groups, no attention was paid to the role of women." [...] "The sources and amount of expenses of this meeting were kept hidden from public view." The meeting "even stated with a determination that if anyone makes the slightest move against our Islamic system and government, they should be beheaded and destroyed." "In this meeting, rigorous literature was used against the role of the world community and defined international mechanisms."

AIHRC, [The message of the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan in connection with the deplorable situation of women's human rights in the country](#), 2 July 2022

"In the field of civil rights, Afghan women have lost all their civil and individual freedoms, and the right to move, the right to speak, the right to dominate the clothing and other freedoms of women have been denied." [...] "Playing the role of women in the media has become limited and even impossible. Women avoid going out because of the fear and terror of the rulers in the cities, and the local rulers in the villages do not respect women as human beings. [...] ...they have lost the right to political participation, the right to political freedom, the right to manage, the right to equal resources and power, the right to justice in talent and creativity, and the right to use their votes. [...] ...protesting women are always insulted, prosecuted, arrested, and mentally and physically [...] Women have been insulted in non-governmental offices and educational institutions and severe restrictions have been imposed on them under the pretext of hijab. [...] girls are denied the right to education after the sixth grade of primary school [...] women are prevented from visiting hospitals due to the lack of female specialists and nurses, and the death rate among women has increased sharply. [...] Women have lost their cultural right, including the right to participate in music, theater, cinema and other artistic fields."

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Afghanistan), UN Human Rights Council: [Urgent debate on women and girls' rights in Afghanistan](#), 1 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The Taliban have carried out a full-on assault on the rights of women and girls, including their rights to freedom of movement, expression, work, and education. Peaceful protests by brave Afghan women demanding their rights have been violently repressed in some cases. Many reports have emerged of Taliban's threats, intimidation, restrictions, arrests, forced confessions, abductions, and end forced disappearances targeting women. In March this year, girls' rights to education was indefinitely put on hold. In May, women were ordered not to leave their homes unless their heads and faces were covered by a full veil."

The Independent, A culture of intimidation by men: Afghanistan is unravelling under the Taliban, 4 July 2022

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Men to Represent Women in the Taliban's Grand Assembly: Taliban Leader, 29 June 2022

"Taliban's religious scholar and tribal elders grand gathering, which is to be held tomorrow at the Loya Jirga Hall in Kabul, will convene without the participation of women, said the deputy prime minister of the Taliban, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, on Wednesday [...]

When prompted whether women could attend the Taliban's grand gathering, deputy minister Hanafi responded that male delegates would speak on their behalf.

"The women are our mothers, sisters, we greatly respect them, when their sons are in the gathering it signifies that they are also involved, in a way, in the gathering," he said.

According to civil society groups, if women are not present, the gathering will not be legitimate.

However, it still remains unclear what issues would be discussed at the gathering and whether the issue of reopening girls' schools and women rights are included in the agenda."

ToloNews, Clerics in Kabul Called for Inclusion of Women in Coming Gathering, 28 June 2022

"In Islam 'women are provided with their basic rights. The male and female clerics have the vital role to announce awareness of women's rights through mosques so women can be provided with their rights,'" said Bibi Amri, a university instructor.

"If in this gathering various sectors including clerics and elites are not consulted, it will bring a situation that will not be tolerated by the people," said Mohammad Sarwar Sarwari, a member of Nuhzat-e-Ulema of Afghanistan.

The organizers of the gathering issued a resolution calling on the Islamic Emirate government to include women in the gathering.

"The gathering in which women are absent ... will not be fair. The civil society and men and women clerics relevant to the civil society who are not part of the politics and act as a contact bridge between the Islamic Emirate the people of Afghanistan, their inclusion is necessary in the gathering," said a statement presented by some at Tuesday's gathering.

"As we speak, based on the clerics' view, it means we are talking in accordance with Sharia, so which type of policy has the Islamic Emirate considered which is beyond Islam?" said Sitara Sadat, a civil rights activist. The residents of Kabul province expressed hopes that the gathering will bring positive results for Afghanistan.

"There is no work in this country. These issues should be discussed. Our sisters and mothers are jobless," said Mohammad Javid, a resident of Kabul.

"We hope the result of this gathering benefits the people of Afghanistan so this gathering can solve the challenges and problems of the people, thus we can keep our trust in such gatherings," said Mohammad

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Islam Sanjar, a resident of Kabul.

The international community linked the recognition of the current Afghan government to the upholding of human rights and women's rights in the country."

UN News, Countries urged to 'dig deep' and support Afghanistan in aftermath of deadly earthquake, 26 June 2022

"The earthquake struck at a time when increased restrictions on Afghan women and girls have amplified their needs and also complicated efforts to assist them.

Alison Davidian, Acting Country Representative for UN Women, explained that women and girls are differentially affected by crisis.

"When their rights to move and work are restricted as they are in Afghanistan, they are disproportionately impacted, especially in accessing food, healthcare and safe shelter," she said.

Moving forward, women humanitarian workers as well as women-led civil society groups must be at the centre of response.

"This is the only way to ensure the needs and rights of at-risk and crisis-affected women and girls are effectively identified and addressed," she said"

ToloNews, UNSC Session Discusses Afghan Human Rights, Earthquake, 24 June 2022

"On Thursday, the UN Security Council held a session to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. In the session, many of the participants called attention to the devastating earthquake, the human rights situation, restrictions on Afghan women and girls and the overall crisis ongoing since the collapse of republic government in August 2021.

Pointing to the current situation within Afghanistan, Alakbarov said that the de facto authorities have increasingly restricted the exercise of basic human rights, such as freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion and expression, quelling dissent and restricting civic space in the country.

"These restrictions continue to be aimed particularly at the rights and freedoms of Afghan women and girls, limiting their involvement in social, political and economic life. These include most prominently the ban on secondary schooling for girls and the decision to impose face covering on women, on which you have been briefed in detail by former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Deborah Lyons," said Alakbarov.

He added that UNAMA hears credible allegations of killings, ill-treatment and other violations targeting individuals associated with the former government.

Despite all these challenges, he said that UNAMA will remain in Afghanistan to safeguard the rights of Afghans and the especially rights of women and girls, and that the strategy of engagement and dialogue could be the only way to benefit both the Afghan people and regional and international security...

Yalda [Hakim, an international correspondent] talked about the restrictions for Afghan women under the Islamic Emirate rule and said that it has been 279 days since the Taliban banned teenage girls from school.

"Afghanistan is now the only country in the world where girls are prevented from getting an education, locked out of their classrooms, simply because of their gender. Education is not a privilege, but a basic human right," Yalda said."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"The Taliban has issued a series of directives restrictinformerg women freedom of movement, access to work, as well as regulations of behavior and dress. The Ministry for Women's Affairs was closed down

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

already in September 2021, and the moral police - Ministry for Propagation moved into the premises of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (Samin 2022)."

UNHCR, 2021 Multi sectorial Rapid Assessments Analysis, June 2022

"In relation to non-food items there is a clear need for basic household items. Of note also is the need for undergarments for women and girls, as well as sanitary items, which was raised by both male and female headed households amongst needed items. This is noteworthy as the inclusion of these items in assistance packages has resulted in some sensitivity following the change in authority in August 2021."

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Afghanistan), Oral Statement for the Interactive Dialogue on the UN High Commissioner's Oral Update on Afghanistan, 16 June 2022

"Over the past 10 months, abundant evidence has emerged that the Taliban remains the same human rights abusing entity it was before its August 2021 power seizure. The recent decisions by the de facto authorities to keep girls above grade six out of school and to force women to cover their faces are only two examples of the massive setback for the rights of women and girls."

Alive, Kandahari Women: No to Forced Hijab, 10 June 2022

"The Taliban's priorities has been under a lot of scrutiny, especially its insistence on women covering up since their victory in Afghanistan in August of 2021. The Taliban's latest decree ordered women to cover their faces in public, and directed taxis, rickshaw drivers and buses to avoid picking up women who are not accompanied by a male guardian.

These decrees by the Taliban further restrict women, especially those without any male guardians and who are the breadwinners of their families, from taking care of their families... there was no need for compulsory hijab as everyone was following Islamic rules before the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. Ms. Anwari says, "Afghan women are human beings who have the human right to choose, and not to accept forced hijab. Compulsory hijab is violating human rights. We will never allow anyone to tamper with our choice of wearing a hijab!"

Dr. Fahima Rahmati, a civil rights activist in Kandahar also considers the Taliban ordering women to wear hijab a violation of women's rights and emphasizes that Afghan women should not be deprived of their rights."

Afghanistan Analysts Network, "We need to breathe too": Women across Afghanistan navigate the Taleban's hijab ruling, 1 June 2022

"The order rules that a woman's male guardian (*wali*) should ensure she wears sharia hijab and it is he who will be punished for any violation, with an escalation of response: advice and warning at the first violation, then being summoned to the "relevant department," then three days imprisonment, and finally, on a fourth violation, a court appearance and judicial punishment."

"The commission's proposal follows other moves by the state to restrict the actions of women and girls – banning most women from government offices, making it a legal requirement for women to travel only with a *mahram* (close male relative: either a husband, or a male relative whom she cannot marry, such as a brother, father, son or uncle), gender-segregating universities and keeping schools for older girls closed."

"In **Panjshir**, a young, now unemployed, woman said she had always worn "proper clothing," but now her father had said she should get an abaya and her older brother had said she should start wearing a burqa outside the house. She said that most of her friends who came to her house were now wearing abayas and "longer clothes," while she had seen some women locally wearing burqas. It seems that not all of the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

impetus for change has come from the order itself. She said that due to the large numbers of Taleban fighters in the province, even in the more liberal provincial capital, girls started wearing burqas and abayas "just to be safe from the Taleban because they are so dangerous. Some families have even sent their daughters to Kabul due to fear of the Taleban." When Afghan women feel unsafe, they typically go out less, and cover up more when they do, to try to attract the least attention from men they do not trust."

Gandhara, Women Protest In Afghan Capital Against Taliban Rights Restrictions, 29 May 2022

"Chanting "Bread, work, freedom," some two dozen women took to the streets of the Afghan capital of Kabul on May 29 to protest against the Taliban's harsh restrictions on their rights. [...] Demonstrators marched for a few hundred meters before ending the rally as authorities deployed Taliban fighters in plainclothes, an AFP correspondent reported. "We wanted to read out a declaration, but the Taliban didn't allow it," said protester Zholia Parsi. [...] "They took the mobile phones off some girls and also prevented us from taking photos or videos of our protest," she told the French news agency. [...] But its promises are being treated with skepticism by many Afghans and governments around the world, especially since women have been forced from some government jobs and barred from traveling alone. This month, Afghanistan's supreme leader and Taliban chief Hibatullah Akhundzada ordered women to cover up fully in public, including their faces."

Tolo News, Girls at Badakhshan University Say Covering Faces Unhealthy, 28 May 2022

"Female students in the northern province of Badakhshan said that they have been told by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue to cover their faces inside the university. The students said that they have been struggling with heat because of being obliged to wear black clothes and masks in the university. "There are some girls who have pneumonia problems and cannot use the mask, so we are against wearing masks in the class if it is possible to do so," said Royta Tahiri, a student."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The expert is alarmed that many of the de facto authorities' policies and drive for absolute control are having a cumulative effect on a wide range of human rights and is creating a society that is ruled by fear. The advancing erasure of women from public life is especially concerning."

Gandhara, Taliban's Burqa Decree Exposes Afghan Women To Increasing Domestic Abuse, 26 May 2022

"The Taliban ordered all women to cover their faces when in public earlier this month, urging women not to leave their homes altogether if possible. The militant group said punishments, including arrest or even jail time, would be imposed not on women but their male family members instead."

Al Jazeera, UN envoy tells of serious concern at Taliban's 'erasure of women', 26 May 2022

"UN envoy Richard Bennett is concerned over deteriorating human rights situation, attacks on religious minorities. [...] Bennett's visit coincides with the Taliban – who seized power when they overran the capital, Kabul, in mid-August – enforcing a sharply tougher line on education for girls, women's dress and appearances in public, and follows a statement by the United Nations Security Council calling on the Taliban to "swiftly reverse" policies restricting human rights and freedoms for Afghan girls and women."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNAMA, PRESS STATEMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council further expressed deep concern regarding the announcements by the Taliban that all women must cover their faces in public spaces and in media broadcasts, only leave home in cases of necessity, and that violations of this directive will lead to the punishment of their male relatives."

Al Jazeera, Afghan female journalists defiant as Taliban restrictions grow, 24 May 2022

"Mahira* has become a familiar face on Afghan television, as viewers tune in every night to watch her present the news. Even during the most turbulent recent events, the 27-year-old journalist remained calm and composed as she reported on the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. On Saturday, Mahira appeared on screen, but her face was covered with a black mask following a Taliban decree ordering female news anchors to cover their faces while on air."

United Nations Security Council, Security Council Press Statement on Situation in Afghanistan, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council expressed deep concern regarding the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban, including through imposition of restrictions that limit access to education, employment, freedom of movement, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in public life, and emphasized that these restrictions contradict the expectations of the international community and the commitments made by the Taliban to the Afghan people.

The members of the Security Council further expressed deep concern regarding the announcements by the Taliban that all women must cover their faces in public spaces and in media broadcasts, only leave home in cases of necessity, and that violations of this directive will lead to the punishment of their male relatives.

The members of the Security Council called on the Taliban to swiftly reverse the policies and practices which are currently restricting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Afghan women and girls."

Aljazeera, Taliban enforces order for Afghan women TV anchors to cover their faces, 22 May 2022

"Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have started to enforce a new order requiring all female TV news anchors in the country to cover their faces while on air." "The Information and Culture Ministry previously announced that the policy was "final and non-negotiable"."

Deutsche Welle, Taliban Orders female TV presenters to cover face on air, 19 May 2022

"The Taliban authorities in Afghanistan have asked local television broadcasters to ensure that female presenters cover their faces when on air, an official said on Thursday."

Tolo News, Haqqani: 'We Are Not Forcing Women to Wear Hijab', 18 May 2022

"The acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, said the Islamic Emirate is committed to the rights of everyone and that it is not forcing women to wear hijab but advising them.

In the second portion released of a CNN interview, Haqqani, the acting Interior Minister, said the hijab is not compulsory but is an Islamic order. "If we talk about the edict, there is Hijab, education, and work. Hijab is an order according to the Islamic Sharia," he said. "Within the Islamic government, we are committed to the rights of everyone. We are not forcing women to wear hijab, but we are advising them

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and preaching to them from time to time. Hijab is also (to) create a dignified environment for women's education and work, hijab is not compulsory but is an Islamic order that everyone should implement.""

Afghan Voice Agency, Haqqani: 'We Are Not Forcing Women to Wear Hijab', 18 May 2022

"The acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, said the Islamic Emirate is committed to the rights of everyone and that it is not forcing women to wear hijab but advising them.

If we talk about the edict, there is Hijab, and work. There is an order according to the Islamic Sharia," he said. "Within the Islamic government, we are committed to the rights of everyone. We are not forcing women to wear hijab, but we are advising them and preaching to them from time to time. Hijab is also (to) create a dignified environment for women's education and work, hijab is not compulsory but is an Islamic order that everyone should implement."

Ariana News, 'It's regressive. It's wrong' – UK's UN envoy on IEA hijab, 13 May 2022

"Following a United Nations Security Council meeting on Thursday about an order by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) for women to cover their faces in public, the representative of the United Kingdom spoke out in strident terms against the order. The decree marks a return to a signature policy of the IEA's past hardline rule and an escalation of restrictions. "It's regressive. It's wrong," UK's Ambassador to the United Nations, Barbara Woodward, said. "I think it underlines the Taliban's (IEA) inability to lead Afghanistan out of its current economic and social and humanitarian crisis." U.N. special envoy for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, briefed the 15-member council, said Norway's U.N. mission, which requested the closed-door meeting "to address the increased restrictions on human rights and freedoms of girls and women." Then on Saturday the group's supreme leader, Haibatullah Akhundzada, said that if a woman did not cover her face outside home, her father or closest male relative would be visited and face potential prison or firing from state jobs. Most women in Afghanistan wear a headscarf for religious reasons but many in urban areas such as Kabul do not cover their faces.

"It's hard to see that the international community and importantly the Afghan people will ever respect the Taliban (IEA) as legitimate authorities if this is the future for Afghanistan," Woodward said."

Gandhara, G7 Decries Taliban's Burqa Order For Afghan Women, Warns Hard-Line Group Is Further Isolating Itself, 12 May 2022

"Foreign ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) have expressed their "strongest opposition" and "deplored" the Taliban-led government in Kabul's recent decree telling women to wear the head-to-toe burqa in public and other "increasing restrictions," saying the hard-line group in control of Afghanistan since August is "further isolating" itself internationally. The ministers from the seven leading industrialized countries called on the Taliban "to urgently take steps to lift restrictions on women and girls, respect their human rights, and meet the expectations of Afghans and the world" with respect to their participation in public life and free speech. Such freedoms, they said in a statement, are "crucial for long-term peace, stability and development of the country." "We condemn the imposition of increasingly restrictive measures that severely limit half the population's ability to fully, equally and meaningfully participate in society, including the recent announcement on women's appearance in public along with new punishments for family members to enforce compliance with these restrictions," the G7 statement said."

The National News, UN Security Council to meet over Taliban order for women to cover faces, 11 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The UN Security Council will meet on Thursday to discuss an order by Afghanistan's Taliban for women to cover their faces in public. The Taliban announced the decree, made by its supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, in Kabul on Saturday. It said: "Those women who are not too old or young must cover their face, except the eyes, as per Sharia directives, in order to avoid provocation when meeting men who are not mahram [close male adult relatives]". It signifies a return to a signature policy of the Taliban's past hardline rule.

Deborah Lyons, the UN's special envoy for Afghanistan, is expected to brief the 15-member council on the escalation of restrictions, Norway's UN mission said.

The Norway mission requested the closed-door meeting "to address the increased restrictions on human rights and freedoms of girls and women".

The Guardian, The Guardian view on Afghan women: the Taliban turn the screws, 10 May 2022

"On Saturday, the Taliban once more ordered women to cover their faces in public. While Afghan women have courageously protested against the injunction, the reaction internationally has this time been muted. That it follows other punitive restrictions creating what some have called "gender apartheid" – preventing teenage girls from studying and women from working outside healthcare or education, or travelling outside their home town without a male guardian – makes it all the more appalling."

" Though the Taliban justify the burqa as a matter of tradition, this has only been the case in the most conservative rural areas. For many Afghan women, this is a wholly alien and unwelcome imposition. Yet, equally, their greatest concern may not be the edict to cover their faces per se, but the fact that this is the latest blow removing their ability to work, earn, or be present in the public sphere, and handing control of their bodies to the men in their families. Authorities also suggested that women should not leave their homes if possible, emboldening enforcers on the ground. Women cannot even decide independently what risks they are willing to take, since if their faces are seen in public their male "guardians" face fines, jail time and losing their jobs. (Women who work for the government will also be fired.)"

ToloNews, Women and Girls Drive in Herat City, 10 May 2022

"According to Wafa, driving in a traditional city like Herat has not been easy for women and girls. "It has been many years since we have been allowed to do the same as men who drive and solve their problems," Shima added. Since the political change in the country, driving education and the distribution of driving licenses to women and girls in Herat have stopped. Herat Traffic Management said it is waiting for the order of the General Directorate of Traffic to resume driving licenses for women."

Gandhara, Afghan Women Protest New Burqa Decree Despite Taliban Threats, 10 May 2022

"The women marched through the streets of the capital, Kabul, on May 10 holding signs calling for justice despite intimidation attempts by Taliban operatives, who threatened them with violence. "We were faced with harsh behavior by the Taliban. It was terrifying...They even told us if we move one step forward, they will fire 30 rounds at us," one woman said in a video made by the group, called Afghanistan's Powerful Women's Movement."

Khaama, The Taliban Harshly Suppressed the Second Day of the Women's Protest in Kabul, 10 May 2022

"A handful of women in Kabul have staged demonstrations in response to the Taliban's decision to "make hijab mandatory," with Taliban militants allegedly dispersing protesters and detaining journalists."

" The demonstration began at the Ansari square of Shahr-e-Naw and continued just outside of the Ministry of Interior, where the Taliban surrounded them and detained journalists, according to Zhulia Parsi, one of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

the protesting girls. The journalists have been detained, according to Zhulia Parsi, and she has no idea where they are being held. "The Taliban snatched the girls' smartphones and took them away," she claimed. Taliban forces reportedly ripped down the banners and dispersed the protesters, according to Zhulia. The Taliban wanted to take the women inside the ministry and force them to confess, Zhulia Parsi told the reporters."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: 'The Taliban are the enemies of women's freedom', 10 May 2022

"These days we are witnessing that words are not enough, and there is no change in this illiterate, cruel, bigoted and rough group. The right to decide how to dress is the most important, fundamental and primary right of a woman. How can women's rights be respected while a large number of men decide on the way of dressing of women without considering their wants and opinions? What kind of respect is it that I, as a woman, can't decide on my very own and personal part of my life, which is dressing? There is no respect for women's rights in Afghanistan. Imposing black Hijab and veils by the Taliban is a clear violation of women's rights. The Taliban are the enemies of women's freedom, and they are always trying to suppress and imprison women and remove them from public life."

Khaama, Women's Movement for Justice and Freedom: We Do Not Accept Forced Hijab and Dictatorship, 9 May 2022

"On Monday, May 9, members of the movement organized a gathering in Kabul, the Afghan capital, declaring the mandatory hijab "misogyny" that has sunk society into darkness and authoritarianism."

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), How the Taliban are 'eliminating women' in Afghanistan, 9 May 2022

"If there was any hope that the Taliban would pay heed to repeated calls from Afghanistan's civil society and the international community to uphold women's rights, the Islamic fundamentalist group's latest decree for women to cover their faces in public has dashed it. The latest order to make veil compulsory is one of the harshest controls on women's lives in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power in August last year. It is also reminiscent of the Islamist outfit's strict Shariah-based rule in the late 1990s."

Al Jazeera, Afghan students run underground book club to keep dreams alive, 9 May 2022

"On Saturday [7 May 2022], the group's Supreme leader Haibatullah Akhunzada ordered women appearing in public to be covered from head to toe, bringing back the memory of the Taliban's brutal rule between 1996 and 2001."

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France condemns the Taliban decision to require women to wear head-to-toe coverings in public spaces, 9 May 2022

"France condemns in the strongest possible terms the Taliban's deeply shocking, unacceptable decision to require women to wear head-to-toe coverings in public spaces. This latest, extremely troubling restriction follows several other bans ordered by the Taliban since it seized power by force on August 15, particularly the ban on Afghan girls from attending secondary school and the ban on women from traveling alone. This decision demonstrates yet again that the Taliban is pursuing a policy of repression and the systematic exclusion of half the population of Afghanistan, which seriously compromises the country's sustainable development and its relations with the rest of the world. France will continue to closely monitor the increasingly troubling human rights situation in Afghanistan. It will continue to stand steadfastly with the Afghan people and especially Afghan women and girls, whom it assures of its absolute solidarity."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

BBC News, Afghanistan: Women's faces become latest Taliban restriction after face veil rule, 8 May 2022

"At a press conference, the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue announced that all women would have to cover their face in public, and laid out an escalating set of punishments for anyone refusing to comply."

"In recent weeks, however, they have been introducing more hardline measures, many of them governing women's everyday lives - for example, assigning separate days for them to visit public parks to men, and barring them from undertaking longer distance journeys without a male guardian."

Al Jazeera, Afghan women deplore Taliban's new order to cover faces in public, 8 May 2022

"While the Taliban have always imposed restrictions to govern the bodies of Afghan women, the decree is the first for this regime where criminal punishment is assigned for violation of the dress code for women. The Taliban's recently reinstated Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice announced on Saturday that it is "required for all respectable Afghan women to wear a hijab", or headscarf."

"Punishment was also detailed: Male guardians of offending women will receive a warning, and for repeated offences they will be imprisoned."

The Guardian, Afghanistan face veil decree: 'I've lost the right to choose my clothes', 8 May 2022

"Yet on Saturday, the Taliban's sinisterly named ministry for the propagation of virtue ordered that Nafisa, along with millions of women across Afghanistan, should ideally not leave the house at all. If they do, they must be fully veiled and never show their faces in public."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: Taliban issue severe hijab decree for Afghan women, 7 May 2022

"Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a young lawyer reports on a new Taliban decree issued Saturday on the wearing of hijabs by Afghan women... "According to this ruling, it is "obligatory" on all "mature and noble" women in Afghanistan to cover all parts of their bodies, including their faces, except for their eyes. This is the most extremist interpretation of the hijab in the Islamic world that the Taliban intend to apply to Afghan women.""

BBC News, Taliban to force Afghan women to wear face veil, 7 May 2022

"Afghan women will have to wear the Islamic face veil for the first time in decades under a decree passed by the country's ruling Taliban militants. Any woman who refuses to comply and ignores official warnings to male members of her family could see a male guardian jailed for three days."

Al Jazeera, Taliban orders Afghan women to cover their faces in public, 7 May 2022

"Afghanistan's supreme leader has ordered the country's women to cover their faces in public – one of the harshest restrictions imposed on them since the Taliban seized power last year and an escalation of growing restrictions on women that is drawing a backlash from the international community and many Afghans."

"Speaking to Al Jazeera, Fawzia Koofi, former Afghanistan parliament deputy speaker, said the Taliban's decrees regarding women can only be regarded as "oppression and repression".

The Guardian, Taliban order all Afghan women to cover their faces in public, 7 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The Taliban have ordered all women to cover their faces in public in Afghanistan, the latest sweeping restriction by a government that has taken away women's right to travel long distances alone, work outside healthcare or education, and receive a secondary education." In a cruel twist, the decree makes women's relatives and employers the enforcers. If their faces are seen in public, their male "guardian" will be fined, then jailed. If the woman who goes out uncovered or her relative work for the government, they must be fired.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), UNAMA statement on the hijab directive by Taliban authorities, 7 May 2022

"UNAMA is deeply concerned with today's announcement by the Taliban de facto authorities that all women must cover their faces in public, that women should only leave their homes in cases of necessity, and that violations of this directive will lead to the punishment of their male relatives. Information that UNAMA has received suggests this is a formal directive rather than a recommendation, and that it will be implemented and enforced. This decision contradicts numerous assurances regarding respect for and protection of all Afghans' human rights, including those of women and girls, that had been provided to the international community by Taliban representatives during discussions and negotiations over the past decade. These assurances were repeated following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, that women would be afforded their rights, whether in work, education, or society at large. The international community has been eager for signals that the Taliban are ready for positive relations with the wider world. The decision six weeks ago to postpone secondary schooling for Afghan girls was widely condemned internationally, regionally, and locally. Today's decision by the Taliban might further strain engagement with the international community. UNAMA will immediately request meetings with the Taliban de facto authorities to seek clarification on the status of this decision. UNAMA will also engage in consultations with members of the international community regarding its implications."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Women in some areas of the country said their freedom of expression in choice of attire was limited by conservative social mores and sometimes enforced by the Taliban in insurgent-controlled areas as well as by religious leaders. [...] The August Taliban takeover prompted numerous, small-scale protests by women demanding equal rights, participation in government, and access to education and employment. Taliban fighters suppressed several women's protests by force. In the weeks immediately following the August 15 Taliban takeover, several peaceful protests were staged in cities throughout the country, primarily by women activists, without interference by the Taliban. Further protests were increasingly met with resistance and violence by the Taliban, however, and as of December the Taliban suppressed protests against the group and its policies. On September 5, a march by dozens of women towards the presidential palace calling for the right to work was broken up by the Taliban with tear gas and pepper spray. In a similar incident three days later in Kabul, the Taliban reportedly used whips and batons to suppress a group of women demonstrating for equal rights. On September 8, the Taliban issued instructions banning unauthorized assemblies, motivating civil society, particularly women, to shift their efforts behind closed doors and to online platforms. The UN Human Rights Commission stated on September 10 that peaceful protests in many parts of the country were met with an increasingly violent response by the Taliban after their takeover. The Taliban frequently used force to suppress protests, including firing live ammunition overhead to disperse crowds. [...] Women active in government and politics before August 15 continued to face threats and violence and were targets of attacks by the Taliban and other insurgent groups. In September the Taliban announced a "caretaker government," dominated by ethnic Pashtun members

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

with no women and only a few members of minority groups, none at the cabinet level. [...] On September 17, the Taliban closed the Ministry of Women's Affairs and announced that the reconstituted "Ministry of the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice" would be housed in its building."

Human Rights Watch, Responding to Taliban Attacks on Women's Rights, 30 March 2022

"March 25: Taliban begin blocking women from air travel without a male family member.
March 27: Taliban issue new rules banning women from parks in Kabul four days a week."

Tolo News, Haqqani Tells Tribal Elders to Respect Women's Rights, 30 March 2022

"In a meeting with tribal elders from southeastern provinces, the acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, emphasized that women must be granted their Shariah rights.

The Ministry of Interior quoted Haqqani in a series of tweets as saying that they are committed to the general amnesty announced by the supreme leader of the Islamic Emirate, Mawlawi Hebatullah Akhundzada.

He made the remarks in a meeting with the tribal elders from the southeastern provinces of Khost, Paktia and Paktika.

"I support you in reconciliation and jirga (council). Get over the hatred against each other," he said.

Haqqani urged the tribal elders to take the rights of women seriously, in line with supreme leader Mawlawi Hebatullah Akhundzada's decree, and to "eliminate those traditions which are for the disenfranchisement of women."

"Both sides—the groom and bride--will benefit from it. The problems of both sides are considered. An amount of 350,000 Afs is the maximum rate of Mahr (an amount of money the groom must pay the bride for wedding)," said Anas Haqqani, a senior member of the Islamic Emirate.

This comes as international organizations have repeatedly voiced concerns over restrictions on women's activities in social, economic and political areas since the fall of the former government."

DW, Afghanistan: Taliban restrict women's rights as isolation looms, 30 March 2022

"New, stricter, rules are announced almost every day. For example, since Sunday, women are only allowed to board an airplane in the company of a man.

According to a letter sent by the Taliban to the airlines operating in Afghanistan, this applies to both domestic and international flights. However, the Associated Press reported Tuesday that women have been traveling alone from Kabul airport, a sign that some of the Taliban's orders are being ignored.

The Taliban are also set to reintroduce a dress code calling for women to wear burqas that fully cover their bodies. Since March 29, all female employees working in government authorities and ministries have been required to cover their bodies completely.

This week, some rules for public life also became stricter. Visiting public parks, for instance, will soon be divided by gender. In the future, women will be granted access only three days a week and access to the parks will be limited to men on the remaining four days.

There are also new rules for male employees working for authorities and ministries requiring them to grow a beard, wear traditional Afghan clothing and pray together."

Amnesty International, Amnesty International Global Petition Calls on International Community to Stop the Taliban's Suppression of Women's and Girl's rights, 8 March 2022

"Since taking power, the Taliban have dismantled the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). They have also blocked female

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

employees of government institutions and NGOs from returning to work, prevented three million girls from accessing education and imposed severe restrictions on women's and girls' rights."

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"The Taliban removed previous legal and institutional guarantees of equal treatment after deposing the elected government. Women who had worked in government, education, and the media were dismissed. The MVV has restricted women's ability to travel on public transport or without a chaperone."

The New Humanitarian, Afghanistan's crises, by the numbers, 15 February 2022

"At home, repression and severe restrictions – on women and girls in particular – have grown since the Taliban's August 2021 takeover, rights groups say. "We are witnessing the attempt to steadily erase women and girls from public life," UN rights watchdogs warned.

The Taliban have explicitly sought to restrict women's freedoms, including control over appearance."

Bangkok Post, Afghan Women Defy Taliban, 9 February 2022

"One after the other, quickly, carefully, keeping their heads down, a group of Afghan women step into a small Kabul apartment block -- risking their lives as a nascent resistance against the Taliban. They come together to plan their next stand against the hardline Islamist regime, which took back power in Afghanistan in August and stripped them of their dreams. At first, there were no more than 15 activists in this group, mostly women in their 20s who already knew each other. Now there is a network of dozens of women -- once students, teachers or NGO workers, as well as housewives -- that have worked in secret to organise protests over the past six months. When the Taliban first ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, they became notorious for human rights abuses, with women mostly confined to their homes. Now back in government and despite promising softer rule, they are cracking down on women's freedoms once again. [...] There is enforced segregation in most workplaces, leading many employers to fire female staff and women are barred from key public sector jobs. Many girls' secondary schools have closed, and university curriculums are being revised to reflect their hardline interpretation of Islam. Haunted by memories of the last Taliban regime, some Afghan women are too frightened to venture out or are pressured by their families to remain at home. [...] 'These women... had to create something from scratch,' says Heather Barr of Human Rights Watch. 'There are a lot of very experienced women activists who have been working in Afghanistan for many years... but almost all of them left after August 15.' '(The Taliban) don't tolerate dissent. They have beaten other protesters, they have beaten journalists who cover the protests, very brutally. They've gone and looked for protesters and protest organisers afterwards,' she adds. Barr believes it is 'almost certain' those involved with this new resistance will experience harm."

Al Jazeera, In Afghanistan, Taliban diktat sparks debate about women's attire, 26 January 2022

"Many Afghan women in the capital Kabul have protested against a poster campaign launched by the Taliban, encouraging women to wear a burqa or hijab. The Afghan Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice plastered posters across Kabul's cafés and shops earlier this month to encourage the wearing of the burqa, a full-body veil that also covers the face. It did not issue an official directive. [...] Today, the streets of downtown Kabul are filled with women wearing various styles of the veil. While some dress in burqas that cover their faces, others wear headscarves and an array of mixed traditional and western fashion. [...] Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice spokesperson Muhammad Akif Muhajir told Al Jazeera that because the hijab or burqa is a "Qurani order", Muslim

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

women should wear it. “If Sharia orders them [women] to do something they should act upon it,” he said, adding that the hijab or burqa could be “anything that a woman uses to cover her body... a hijab or the blue burqa or in some parts women use big shawls to cover themselves”. Despite there being no policy to impose the wearing of the burqa, nor punishments for women who do not adhere to the advisory, there have been sporadic reports of Taliban soldiers trying to enforce it. [...] In protest against these restrictions – including the burqa – some Afghan women gathered to demonstrate in front of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs last week. Videos on social media showed a small group of women denouncing various restrictions, as some ripped a white burqa off a woman and kicked it to the ground, saying it came from “backward Pakistani and Arab culture”.”

Operational Data Portal UNHCR (Iran), Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 23 January 2022

“Taliban leaders in Afghanistan are institutionalizing “large-scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls”, independent UN human rights experts warned on Monday (Link). The group of around three dozen Human Rights Council-appointed experts highlighted a “wave of measures” such as barring women from returning to their jobs, requiring a male relative to accompany them in public spaces, prohibiting women from using public transport on their own, as well as imposing a strict dress code on women and girls. “Taken together, these policies constitute a collective punishment of women and girls, grounded on gender-based bias and harmful practices,” the experts said. These policies have also affected the ability of women to work and to make a living, pushing them further into poverty. “Women heads of households are especially hard hit, with their suffering compounded by the devastating consequences of the humanitarian crisis in the country”, they explained. The experts noted the increased risk of exploitation of women and girls, including of trafficking for the purposes of child and forced marriage, as well as sexual exploitation and forced labour.”

Al Jazeera, UN: Taliban attempting to exclude women, girls from public life, 17 January 2022

“Taliban leaders in Afghanistan are institutionalising large-scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls, a group of 36 UN human rights experts have said. “We are concerned about the continuous and systematic efforts to exclude women from the social, economic, and political spheres across the country,” the experts said in a statement Monday. “These concerns are exacerbated in the cases of women from ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities such as the Hazara, Tajik, Hindu and other communities whose differences or visibility make them even more vulnerable in Afghanistan.” The Taliban have introduced a series of restrictive measures against women and girls since the takeover of the country in August. Many women have been barred from returning to their jobs. Taxi drivers have been directed not to pick up female passengers who are not wearing a specific hijab. Women fear repercussions if they leave the house without a male relative. “These policies have also affected the ability of women to work and to make a living, pushing them further into poverty,” the experts said. “Women heads of households are especially hard hit, with their suffering compounded by the devastating consequences of the humanitarian crisis in the country.””

The Guardian, Taliban forces pepper-spray women’s rights protesters in Kabul, 16 January 2022

“Taliban forces have fired pepper spray at a group of women protesting in Afghanistan’s capital to demand rights to work and education.(...) About 20 women gathered in front of Kabul University on Sunday, chanting “equality and justice” and carrying banners that read “women’s rights, human rights”, an AFP correspondent reported.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The protest was later dispersed by the Taliban fighters, who arrived at the scene in several vehicles, three of the protesters told AFP. (...)

The hardline Islamist group have banned unsanctioned protests and have frequently intervened to forcefully break up rallies demanding rights for women."

Washington Post, Portraits of fear and loss - Taliban rule through the eyes of four women in Afghanistan, 12 January 2022

"Women who had been active in public life have hunkered down in hiding. With the economy tanking, dreams of running businesses and getting degrees have been replaced with the daily struggle to survive. Restrictions permeate nearly every aspect of women's lives, despite Taliban promises to protect their rights.

Secondary schools remain closed for girls and women.

Their faces are disappearing from public life. Some didn't even wait for Taliban orders to act. In August, at one hair salon in Kabul, photos of women on window posters were blacked over in advance to avoid attracting the militants' attention. In November, women were banned from appearing in television dramas.

Last month, taxi drivers were told not to accept women wishing to travel more than 45 miles without a male chaperone. But in a time of fear and uncertainty, some have faced problems walking alone even for short distances in their neighborhoods."

Gandhara, Taliban Religious Police Erect Banners Ordering Women to Wear Islamic Hijab, 10 January 2022

"The Taliban's religious police have erected banners in Kabul that order women to wear the Islamic hijab. [...]

However, the installation of the posters has provoked an angry reaction from Afghan women. [...]

One woman who lives in Nangarhar Province told RFE/RL that Afghan women "cover our faces. We do not wear chadors and hijabs. This is not our custom." [...]

"By doing this, the Taliban want to instill fear in the hearts of the people," Lina told RFE/RL. "They can rule by force and impose a foreign culture on the people. I am afraid of the day when the Taliban will whip women over their heads."

The Guardian, Taliban stop Afghan women from using bathhouses in northern provinces, 7 January 2022

"The Taliban sparked outrage this week by announcing that women in northern Afghanistan would no longer be allowed to use communal bathhouses. The use of bathhouses, or hammams, is an ancient tradition that remains for many people the only chance for a warm wash during the country's bitterly cold winters. Women, who regularly use the bathhouses for ritual cleaning and purification required under Islamic law, said this was another example of the Taliban tightening its grip and infringing their basic rights. They fear the ban will be extended to other parts of the country."

Gandhara, Women protesters injured in stampede after Taliban militants fire in the air, 28 December

"A number of Afghan women have been injured in a stampede caused by Taliban guards firing in the air during a protest in Kabul against discriminatory measures including new travel restrictions on women.

"The protest on December 28 came amid rising anger -- both within the country and internationally -- over the Taliban's moves to restrict the rights of women."

DW, Afghanistan: Taliban clamp down on women's taxi use, 26 December

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Taliban authorities in Afghanistan on Sunday gave new guidance to taxi drivers, advising them against taking fares from women who do not follow a strict Islamic dress code by wearing the hijab, or Islamic headscarf.

“The Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice also told drivers they should not take women who wish to travel more than 72 kilometers (45 miles) without a male relative as a chaperone.”

Al Jazeera, No long-distance travel for women without male relative: Taliban, 26 December

“In Afghanistan, the Taliban authorities say women seeking to travel long distances should not be allowed on road transport unless they are accompanied by a close male relative. “The guidance issued on Sunday by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, which also called on vehicle owners to refuse rides to women not wearing headscarves, has drawn condemnation from rights activists.”

Al Jazeera, “We’re not giving up”: A radio station for Afghanistan’s women, 9 December 2021

“From Taliban-controlled Kabul, Radio Begum is broadcasting the voices of women that have been muted across Afghanistan.

Station staff fill the airwaves with programming for women, by women: educational shows, book readings and call-in counselling. [...]

The Taliban granted permission for the broadcaster to stay on the airwaves in September, albeit with new curbs. [...]

The Taliban is yet to formalise many of its policies, leaving gaps in how they are implemented by the group across the country.”

Gandhara, Taliban Issues New Rules Banning Women In TV Dramas, 22 November 2021

The new eight-point set of “religious guidelines” issued on November 21 by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice are the latest restrictions on life under the Taliban.

The ministry also ordered channels not to broadcast movies, comedies, or entertainment programs that “insult” or “humiliate” individuals or are against the principles of the group’s interpretation of Islamic law and Afghan culture.

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Update, 8 November 2021

“The situation for women in Afghanistan remains worrying. On 6 November, the bodies of four women, including one of a women’s rights activist, were discovered in Balkh province in northern Afghanistan; the three other bodies have not yet been identified, the Balkh Information Department Director, Mawlawi Zabihullah Noorani, stated. Since mid-August, women have held regular, nationwide protests against the Taliban, demanding that their rights be restored and protected, and since September, several female activists have been reportedly detained and tortured by Taliban members. On 4 November, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Taliban rules were prohibiting most women from operating as aid workers in the country.”

Kabul Now, Female civil activists murdered in Balkh; Taliban arrest two suspects, 6 November 2021

“The Taliban security forces have arrested two suspects in Mazar-e-Sharif, capital city of the northern Balkh province, in connection to the murder of four women whose dead bodies were found last Thursday, November 04, inside a residence.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Thomson Reuters Foundation news, IN PICTURES: Four Afghan women tell of lives upturned by Taliban, 13 October 2021

“When the Taliban seized Afghanistan on Aug 15, we asked women from various professions to take a photo marking what could be their last day of work, and to share their thoughts.

As the Taliban mark two months in power, we contacted the women to ask how their lives are now. Whether they have fled Afghanistan or stayed, all have seen dramatic changes. [...]

Shabnam Popalzi, former journalist and presenter at Parliament TV

I am at home in Kabul. All my friends are in the United States or Europe these days so I stay up until the early hours so that I can talk to them and try to find a way out of the country.

I have not left my home for weeks because I'm too scared to go out on the streets. The Taliban have taken everything from me, including the job I love.

I don't think there is any future for women like me in Afghanistan. But western countries won't help me leave because I worked for local media rather than the international media.

I've always promoted women's rights and freedom of speech. How can the international community say that they can't help me? Is this how they pay back 20 years of our efforts to build a modern Afghanistan?

It isn't fair to abandon us without a future, or to be killed by the Taliban.

Kabul has drastically changed. The coffee shops and restaurants, which used to be full of young women, are empty - or just have male customers. There are few women on the streets and women's faces have disappeared from advertising hoardings.

Most women wear black hijabs in the street now. It's very sad.

It's a basic right to choose what you wear. I don't feel comfortable in long dresses. I prefer jeans and shirts. The way we dress as Afghan women is part of our fight for our rights.”

United Nations, Afghanistan: ‘Palpable’ fear of ‘brutal and systemic repression’ of women grows, 21 September 2021

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

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Not Keeping Its Word: Afghan Woman Quits Job After Pressure From Taliban, 11 September 2021

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

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

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Afghan Women At Forefront Of Nonviolent Resistance To Taliban, 10 September 2021

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

[...]

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

[...]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

BBC News, Life in Kabul under Taliban: Where is your male escort?, 4 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Pakistani Visas, Taliban Taxes, Afghan Bodybuilders, 17 June 2022

"Afghan Bodybuilders Told To Cover Up Radio Azadi reports on the Taliban ordering Afghan bodybuilders to cover up during training and competitions. The order by the Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice is the latest attempt by the militant group to police the appearance of Afghan men and women in public. The restriction on bodybuilders has been criticized by athletes. "The Taliban order has no religious justification, but it creates many problems for us," said Mohammad, an aspiring bodybuilder. While the Taliban has effectively banned all women's sports, bodybuilding is the first male sport the hard-line Islamists have sought to regulate."

Deutsche Welle, Afghan women athletes: prisoners in their own homes, 25 April 2022

"These women continue to hide in their homes, "waiting, in a sense, for the Taliban to knock on the door and arrest them," Rezayee says. "The Taliban have sent them threatening letters. They've been intimidated and they can't go outside."

Judoka Amira describes the athletes' dramatic situation this way, "We don't need a prison for women in Afghanistan. Our houses have become prisons for us." Afghanistan, says Mina (name changed), another judoka who remained in the country, "has become a fatherless country where violent children have the power to do whatever they want with women and girls." The Taliban have not yet officially banned women's sports by law."

International Rescue Committee, A skateboarder from Kabul learns there is nothing she can't achieve, 12 April 2022

"Belqisa Nazari [Skateboarder from Kabul] [...] We didn't leave because we wanted to. The situation has gotten harder, especially for women who used to go out of the house for their jobs—or simply to practice skating like us. We found out our lives were in danger and that we might be threatened if we stayed in Afghanistan [...] We had a great life before the Taliban. Although there were some restrictions, we could go out to our jobs and everywhere else. People say it's an unstable country and full of terrorists but they don't know that Afghanistan has a lot of athletes, especially women athletes, most of whom brought us a lot of valuable medals. But unfortunately now they are all in bad situations."

Gandhara, 'Prisoners in Our Homes': How the Taliban Takeover Changed the Lives of Afghan Women, 8 March 2022

"This time, the Taliban has claimed that it will not ban any sports if it complies with its interpretation of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Islamic law. But it has not confirmed if it will allow women to play any sports. A senior Taliban official recently said it is "unnecessary" for women to play sports. With no clear order from the Taliban, many women are too fearful to play sports. "Previously, I used to train about 200 girls in volleyball, handball, and cycling," said Maryam, a former athlete who is now unemployed. "Now, not even one of them is practicing." Hundreds of athletes and sports administrators have fled their homeland since the Taliban forcibly seized power, including top male athletes as well as female soccer, volleyball, and basketball players."

CTV News, 'We have nothing now': Female taekwondo star banned from sport by Taliban, 27 January 2022
"[...] the story of Anzorat Wali. The empty room is where she and her older sister Nilab practise taekwondo. Anzorat has a black belt, and a fistful of medals that jingle. [...] And it all stopped the day the Taliban arrived. [...] They practise at home because all the gyms are closed to Afghan women and girls. Taekwondo has become a world reserved for boys only. Boys have rights. Girls don't. [...] The two of them used to train by jogging around the neighborhood. Everybody knew about the Wali sisters. The Taliban took that away. Now, they rarely go outside, trapped in their home by fear. [...]"

The Guardian, Female boxer who was on Afghan's national team is losing its skills, 20 January 2022
"About two weeks after they took Kabul, the Taliban sent two gunmen to our doorstep. They told us: 'Forget your dreams. The Islamic emirate is here now, you should stop boxing, and not go to the stadium.' I had been a member of the Afghan national boxing team when the Taliban arrived. It took me three years to make the team, my family and friends had supported me a lot, and I had done a lot of training before I was finally able to do it. My sister had been part of the youth team for several months. In August [2021], me and my sister and the other team members went to the Olympic headquarters to prepare for a match, and the guards from the previous government took our identity cards to register us. We went to pick them up some days later, and we think some of the Taliban who were there followed us home. The next day, at around 3.30pm, some of them came to our house and asked for the girls who did boxing. We said we didn't know what they were talking about, and had nothing to do with any sports. But they said: 'We saw you at the stadium.' Then they told us to stop boxing."

Kake, Afghan Sportswomen 'Terrified' and Fearing for their lives, 23 December 2021
"Afghanistan's first female Olympian, Friba Rezayee, says she is "very angry" that her country's plight is "falling off the world agenda" as she continues to help those still trying to escape. "Rezayee was one of many to oppose the Taliban takeover of the country in August and says those still left in the country are being forgotten. The former judoka, who competed at the 2004 Olympic Games, says she is in regular contact with over 100 female Afghan athletes -- including members of the judo and volleyball team -- and says some women are still in hiding over fears they will receive punishment from the new regime after fighting for equality over the last two decades."

Sky News, Kim Kardashian and Leeds United help Afghan junior women's football team arrive in UK after escaping Taliban, 18 November 2021
"Kim Kardashian and Leeds United have helped an Afghan junior women's football team arrive in the UK after fleeing the Taliban."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The social media influencer paid for a flight that brought more than 30 teenage girls and their families - about 130 people in all - to Britain.

The players in Afghanistan's women's youth development team were among hundreds of female athletes that have left the country since the Taliban took over and started curbing women's freedoms.

"The Afghan female footballers are well-known figures in the country," said Khalida Popal, a former captain of Afghanistan's national women's team who has led evacuation efforts for female athletes.

"Their lives were in great danger because of people in the country who opposed their activism and wanted to stop their sport and educational activities."

Some of the girls were beaten, had their houses burnt down and had family members "taken" by the Taliban, she and the players said."

CyclingTips, Serious allegations arise over Afghan cyclist evacuations, 11 November 2021

[...] As the Taliban tightens its grip on the country, persecution faces those that had been symbolic of the "new Afghanistan". Counted on that list: cyclists, especially female ones, that were public faces of Afghanistan's progress, and are now in hiding, or in exile, or living in fear. [...]

Shannon Galpin – who established the first Afghan women's cycling team a decade ago and has travelled to Afghanistan more than 20 times, often working in Bamiyan province – explains that there are two further levels of discrimination to navigate here: ethnic and gender-based. The Hazara – who are Shi'ite Muslims and seen by the Sunni Taliban as infidels – are a majority in Bamiyan, so female cyclists in Bamiyan are endangered on three fronts.

[...]

And it is the cyclists of Bamiyan – along with the original national team members – that are most identifiable and most at threat, Galpin says, due to media attention, a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for the women's national team, and their role in documentaries prior to the Taliban's return."

BBC, UK to resettle teenage Afghan women footballers and families, 10 October 2021

"Dozens of Afghan girls with promising football careers, who fled the Taliban, have been told they can come to the UK to be resettled, along with their families.

The 35-member squad - aged 13-19 - fled Kabul last month and have been staying for the past few weeks in a hotel in Pakistan, where their temporary visas were due to expire on Monday." [...]

"Most of them are from Herat in western Afghanistan and had made their way to Kabul when the Western airlift started, staying in safe houses.

"Seventy percent of them had received death threats," said Ms Gill. "They were terrified.""

Deutsche Welle, Fleeing Afghan women footballers seek new home from Pakistan, 1 October 2021

"A group of 32 Afghan women football players and their families are seeking safe haven from the Taliban in third countries after fleeing to Pakistan, the former Afghanistan women's team captain said on Friday. Women's team captain Khalida Popal told DW that some of the players "had their houses burned down and some family members were taken by the Taliban."

Some 135 people — 32 players and coaches as well as their families — "were displaced from their provinces" because of their involvement in women's football, Popal added."

Financial Times, The Afghan cricketers living in fear of the Taliban, 28 September 2021

"Here, women can never go into sports. No and never," said a cricketer on the women's team, who is still in the country but hopes to leave. "The men's cricket team makes a lot of money, so [the Taliban] will

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

promote it.” “If they want us to wear long clothes and play, we will accept all that,” she added. “It hurts a lot when your dream crashes. I don’t want my dream to remain unfulfilled. Not just mine. It’s . . . my entire team’s dream to play again.”

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The fate of thousands hanging in the balance, 21 September 2021
“In this report, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) have documented incidents of human rights violations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August”. The report references a number of sources,

Including: [...]

· The Guardian, Afghan women to be banned from playing sport, Taliban say, 8 September 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/08/afghan-women-to-be-banned-from-playing-sport-taliban-say>

The Guardian, Dozens more female footballers and family members escape Afghanistan, 15 September 2021

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

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Afghan Cricket Board Says Women's Team Could Still Play, 11 September 2021

“The head of the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has told an Australian broadcaster that the Afghan national women's team could still be allowed to play cricket. ACB Chairman Azizullah Fazli told SBS Radio Pashto late on September 10 that the governing body would outline "very soon" how women would be allowed to play -- a development that, if true, would mark a reversal of the Taliban's hard-line stance on the issue.”

BBC News, Afghanistan women’s cricket team: Players hiding in Kabul fear Taliban rule, 1 September 2021

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

"Every woman playing cricket or other sports is not safe right now," she says. "The situation is very bad in Kabul.

"We have a group on WhatsApp and every night we are talking about our problems and sharing plans about what we should do. We are all hopeless."

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

her.”

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

International Rescue Committee (IRC), The all-female mobile health team working against the odds in Afghanistan, 19 August 2022

“Despite their critical work, these humanitarians — like many women in Afghanistan — must have a male chaperone accompany them nearly everywhere they go. This can prevent them from doing their work even in life-and-death emergencies, such as the earthquake that struck Afghanistan on June 22nd and killed 1,000 people.”

The Guardian, ‘I daren’t go far’ Taliban rules trap women with no male guardian, 15 August 2022

“Those without a male relative to act as a mahram are in legal limbo and unable to travel long distances. Hasina* cannot send her two daughters to school, because they are teenagers and high school is banned for girls in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

But she cannot take them out of the country to finish their education because she is a divorced single mother, and women are barred from long-distance travel without a male “guardian” to escort them.

Wazhma* lies awake worrying what she will do if her sick, elderly mother needs emergency medical help at night. Her father is dead, she is unmarried and her teenage sister is disabled.

She is terrified that as women out alone at night, even on their way to a hospital, they would be stopped and harassed by the Taliban.

Most Afghan women have had to learn to endure new restrictions and controls over the last year, but there is one group whose lives have been particularly curtailed.

Women who live in households without a close male relative, whether through tragedy, circumstance or choice, now exist in a legal limbo, because they do not have a close male relative to act as a mahram, or “guardian”.

In the Taliban’s extremist reimagining of Afghanistan, women are not fully autonomous citizens of their own country. Instead a man is deemed responsible for their presence in public, including how they dress and where they travel.

Officially, any woman travelling more than 75km (46 miles) or leaving the country needs a mahram. If a woman is found to have broken the Taliban’s dress codes, their male relatives face punishment.

The rules have been enforced sporadically, with some officials turning a blind eye to solo travel. Raihana* was barred from boarding a plane earlier this year for a work trip but says women have since been allowed back in the air alone.

“It was in March, they had just circulated the new notice that no woman can travel to another city without a mahram. I wasn’t allowed to board the plane, and had to wait in the airport for two to three hours, with 20 or 30 other women,” she said. “This went on for a few weeks then they abolished [the rule]. Now we can travel again.”

But many others across Afghanistan have reported restrictions on women’s movements that go far beyond the official regulations. They told the Guardian that Taliban fighters have barred them from even short journeys, including commuting to work, sometimes using indirect tactics such as threatening drivers who take solo female passengers.

Health workers said they had personal experience of women being barred from accessing medical help without a mahram in at least two districts, one in central Afghanistan’s Bamiyan province and one in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

southern Helmand.

[...]

The mahram rule has also contributed to an economic catastrophe for families without adult men, amid a broader economic collapse. The regulations make it harder or more frightening for women to find jobs, or commute to work."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"In December 2021, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue issued guidance indicating that women must be accompanied by a mahram, or male chaperone, for journeys longer than 72km. Taliban official Zabiullah Mujahid said in a previous interview that the Taliban's mahram requirements would not apply for daily activities such as traveling to work or school. However, this statement was undermined by a decree issued on 7 May 2022 by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue that required women to cover their faces in public and stipulated that they should not leave their homes unless necessary. The Taliban have also instructed airlines to prevent women from flying domestically and internationally without a mahram and they have ordered driving instructors in Herat to cease giving driving lessons and licenses to women."

"Taliban restrictions on movement also have the potential to pressure women and girls to enter into marriage, whether by their own choice or as a result of pressure or coercion from their family members. One woman who was arbitrarily arrested for being in public with a man who was not her mahram, explained: "If you want to go outside, you have to have a father, brother or husband with you... A father can't always go out with the daughter, a brother might be busy... This will pressure girls and women to marry, just so that they always have a mahram.""

BBC News, Taliban break up rare protest by Afghan women in Kabul, 14 August 2022

"About 40 women marched through the Afghan capital demanding rights, before the Taliban broke it up by firing into the air. The fighters seized their mobile phones, stopping one of the first women's protests in months. ... In the year since the Taliban returned to power, they have issued various orders restricting the freedom of women - barring them from most government jobs, secondary education and from travelling more than 45 miles (70km) without a male guardian. In May, the militants decreed that Afghan women will have to wear the Islamic face veil for the first time in decades. If a woman refuses to comply, her male guardians could be sent to jail for three days - although this is not always enforced. There have been minor sporadic protests over the past year, but any form of dissent is being crushed. ... Girls have been banned from receiving secondary education, the ministry for women's affairs has been disbanded, and in many cases women have not been allowed to work."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Taliban's New Chaperone Rule Deprives Afghan Women of Foreign Scholarships, 8 July 2022

"But Afghan women are now being deprived of studying abroad because the Taliban is not allowing women to travel outside Afghanistan without a male chaperone.

The restriction follows a Taliban ban on education for teenage girls, which has kept millions of secondary-school students from the classroom since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August.

"I had a hellish experience because of this restriction," says Hadia Tuba, who recently went to Pakistan to begin her university education on a scholarship from Islamabad.

The young Kabul resident says the day she crossed the Torkham border crossing connecting eastern Afghanistan to northwestern Pakistan was the hardest in her life.

"The Taliban stopped me at the border and questioned me for the entire day," she told RFE/RL's Radio

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Azadi. "Eventually, I was let go after a stern warning [that I should never travel alone]."

Tuba says the intimidation she felt was difficult to describe.

"I will never forget what happened, but I don't like to talk about it," she said.

The restriction has forced entire Afghan families to leave the country. Sonia Ahmadi was forced to bring her parents and siblings with her when she went to the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad to attend Ferdowsi University.

"It is a major problem that no woman is allowed to travel alone, whether by road or by air," she told Radio Azadi. "The gender discrimination against women is pushing Afghanistan backward."

ToloNews, Widows in Uruzgan Face Dire Economic Situation, 7 July 2022

"Some widows who lost their husbands over the past several years of conflict in the southern province of Uruzgan say they are facing a dire economic condition.

They said they the breadwinners of their families and are must beg for money on the streets of the provincial capital city of Tarn Kot.

"My children are sick. I don't have money to buy them medicine and there is no breadwinner," said Haseena, a widow.

"I am from Kandahar and came here. I have three children and I should feed them," said Asma, a widow. These widows said that their children are deprived of education due to poverty. They called on the relevant organizations to provide them with work opportunity.

"I hope to find work, I will be happy. My children are thirsty and starving," said Sador Gul, a widow.

"They may help us by providing a sewing factory or a shop," said Hameeda, a widow."

[...]

"With the fall of the former government and freezing of Afghan assets by the US, the country's already feeble economy became severely worse."

Humanitarian Response, Engaging Marginalised Women in Afghanistan in Decision Making and Accountability, 24 June 2022

"Participants in many workshops said that they or their households missed receiving assistance or getting on eligibility lists for assistance because aid organisations share information about times and locations of those activities through male shura members and men who head households. This communication pathway excludes many of their households from getting information and assistance."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"Women cannot travel alone. Already in December 2021 came the directive that women who travel longer than 72km. must be accompanied by a male family member (BBC News 2021). From different parts of the country it is reported that women have been denied health care because they did not has male companion (mahram). Women who visit health centers with the sick children, are rejected because they come unaccompanied (Nader & Amini 2022). Another measure that restricts women's freedom of movement is that they no longer receive it driver's license (Free Press Journal 2022). Furthermore, the Taliban has banned that women can fly without a male companion. The order for a companion applies to both domestic and international flights. The airlines were informed of the restrictions in a letter from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (Reuters 2022)."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Alive, Kandahari Women: No to Forced Hijab, 10 June 2022

"The Taliban's latest decree ordered women to cover their faces in public, and directed taxis, rickshaw drivers and buses to avoid picking up women who are not accompanied by a male guardian.

These decrees by the Taliban further restrict women, especially those without any male guardians and who are the breadwinners of their families, from taking care of their families."

"When I try to explain I don't have one, they won't listen. It doesn't matter that I am a respected professor; they show no dignity and order the taxi drivers to abandon me on the roads," she said.

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Societal pressures and the Taliban practice of arranging marriages for widows forced women into unwanted marriages. HRW conducted telephone interviews with residents in Herat in September and found that women in Taliban-controlled areas increasingly felt pressured to marry for their own safety in view of restrictions upon their movements and activities imposed by the Taliban.

On August 13, the Taliban entered Herat, seizing government offices and the police station. A Taliban fighter reportedly threatened to kill a widowed mother of five if she did not marry him, and she was forced to do so in September with the consent of a mullah. She has said that her life is a nightmare and "it is like he is raping me every night."

On December 3, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhunzada announced a public decree banning the forced marriage of women. The decree set out the rules governing marriage and property for women, stating that women should not be forced into marriage and widows should have a share in their late husband's property. The decree mandated that courts should consider these rules when making decisions, and religious affairs and information ministries should promote these rights."

DW, Afghanistan: Taliban restrict women's rights as isolation looms, 30 March 2022

"New, stricter, rules are announced almost every day. For example, since Sunday, women are only allowed to board an airplane in the company of a man.

According to a letter sent by the Taliban to the airlines operating in Afghanistan, this applies to both domestic and international flights. However, the Associated Press reported Tuesday that women have been traveling alone from Kabul airport, a sign that some of the Taliban's orders are being ignored."

AlJazeera, Taliban bans forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021

"The Taliban has issued a decree barring forced marriage in Afghanistan, saying women should not be considered "property" and must consent to marriage, but questions remain about whether the group that returned to power in mid-August would extend women's rights around work and education.

The decree was announced on Friday by the reclusive Taliban chief, Hibatullah Akhunzada – who is believed to be in the southern city of Kandahar. "Both (women and men) should be equal," said the decree, adding that "no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure".

The decree did not mention a minimum age for marriage, which previously was set at 16 years old.

The group also said a widow will now be allowed to re-marry 17 weeks after her husband's death, choosing her new husband freely.

Widows

Longstanding tribal traditions have held it customary for a widow to marry one of her husband's brothers or relatives in the event of his death.

[...] The development was hailed as a significant step forward by two leading Afghan women, but questions remained about whether the group would extend women's rights around work and education.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[...] Roya Rahmani, the former ambassador for Afghanistan to the United States, echoed her optimism and added that it was likely partly an attempt to smooth over international fears regarding the group's track record on women's rights as the Taliban administration seeks to get funding released.

"An amazing thing if it does get implemented," Rahmani told the Reuters Next panel, adding details such as who would ensure that girls' consent was not coerced by family members would be key.

"It's a very smart move on the part of Taliban at this point because one of the (pieces of) news that is attracting the West's attention is the fact little girls are being sold as property to others in order to feed the rest of the family,"

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

Khaama Press, Father Demands Crippling Dowry, Daughter Ingests Poison in Northern Afghanistan, 27 July 2022

"(...) Heavy dowries and extravagant wedding costs have led to family conflicts in Afghanistan's traditional society, and young people are concerned about marriage's high cost.

The bride's family has numerous expectations, and the demands from the groom's family are so exorbitant that a person cannot afford to be married for many years, according to a groom who married in a mass wedding in central Afghanistan earlier this month and asked to remain unidentified.

According to sources, a single-day reservation at a wedding hall costs between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and several engaged couples were forced to wait for years due to the financially crippling expense given the unemployment rate."

Al Jazeera, Afghan women deplore Taliban's new order to cover faces in public, 8 May 2022

"As an unmarried woman who looks after her mother, Marzia does not have a mahram. She is the sole breadwinner in her small family. "I am unmarried, and my father died very long ago, and I look after my mother," she said. "The Taliban killed my brother, my only mahram, in an attack 18 years ago. Would they now have me borrow a mahram for them [to] punish me next time?" she asked.

Marzia has repeatedly been stopped by the Taliban while travelling on her own to work in her university, which is a violation of an earlier edict that forbids women from travelling alone. "They regularly stop the taxi I am in, asking where my mahram is," Marzia said."

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

CNN, Taliban decree on women's rights, which made no mention of school or work, dismissed by Afghan women and experts, 4 December 2021

"The Taliban released a so-called "decree on women's rights" on Friday that failed to mention access to education or work and was immediately panned by Afghan women and experts, who said it was proof that the militant group was uninterested in upholding basic freedoms for millions of Afghan women who have largely been constrained to their homes in recent months.

The decree, which sets out the rules governing marriage and property for women, states that women should not be forced into marriage and that widows have a share in their husbands property. "A woman is not a property, but a noble and free human being; no one can give her to anyone in exchange for

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

peace...or to end animosity," said the Taliban decree, released by spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid."

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban abuses cause widespread fear, 23 September 2021

"Women leaders were eventually able to have some discussions with two Taliban officials, but without significant concessions or assurances on the issues the women were concerned about: their freedom of movement, especially whether they would need to have a mahram with them at all times; whether they would be able to work, in what occupations, and how soon; and whether girls and women would be able to continue their education, at all levels and in all disciplines.

The response from the officials was to lecture them that they should leave their homes only when absolutely necessary and with a male family member. For unmarried women who did not have a male family member, they suggested the solution was to marry. Employment for women, the women were told, would be permitted only in areas in which the Taliban felt it was necessary for women to do jobs, presumably some education and healthcare roles working with girls and women. The officials emphasized that the Taliban had made a concession by allowing girls even primary education and said girls could have basic education by learning to read and write, and that would suffice. They urged the women to support the Taliban and warned of harsh action if they opposed the Taliban or protested."

The Guardian, They came for my daughter': Afghan single mothers face losing children under Taliban, 8 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

What is the situation of women in women's shelters?

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"The shelters for abused women were closed down shortly after the takeover because they were considered to be Un-Islamic (Afghan source, conversation in Islamabad March 2022)."

UNHCR, UNHCR AFGHANISTAN 2021 MULTI SECTORIAL RAPID ASSESSMENTS ANALYSIS, 21 April 2022

"Some 84 per cent of IDPs indicated that they are renting shelters. IDP returnees (24%) are also renting accommodation in their place of origin upon return. Evidently, given that shelters may have been damaged by conflict, IDP returnees have needs pertaining to shelter rental. Qualitative findings from UNHCR's CBPM have found that the presence of IDPs who rent homes drives-up rental prices and contributes to community tensions. The rapid assessment data shows that 20 per cent of host community

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

members are also renting shelters, creating a protection concern linked to the issue of rent, beyond just individual needs.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“On September 19, Taliban gunmen entered a women’s shelter in Kabul by force, interrogated staff and residents for several hours and forced the head of the shelter to sign a letter promising not to allow the residents to leave without Taliban permission. The Taliban told the shelter operator they would return married shelter residents to their abusers and marry the single residents to Taliban soldiers.

Additionally, sources in September reported the Taliban were conducting “audits” of women’s shelters and women’s rights organizations, including those that provided protection services. These audits were enforced with intimidation through the brandishing of weapons and threats of violence. Equipment, including computers, paper files, and other documentation, was confiscated, and staff reported being aggressively questioned regarding their activities and possible association with the United States. Essential service providers either reduced or ceased their services altogether, citing fear of putting battered women, an already vulnerable demographic, at greater risk of violence and harm.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

“The Taliban ended the limited formal protections from domestic violence offered by the republic. Shelters for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) were closed by the Taliban, with some residents reportedly being sent to prisons. Individuals who were convicted of GBV were among those released by the Taliban during their takeover.”

OHCHR, Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022

“Various vital, and sometimes lifesaving, service providers supporting survivors of gender-based violence have shut down for fear of retribution, as have many women’s shelters, with potentially fatal consequences for the many victims in need of such services.” Other efforts aimed at dismantling systems designed to prevent and respond to gender-based violence have included discontinuing specialized courts and prosecution units responsible for enforcing the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and preventing many women aid and social workers from being able to fully perform their jobs and assist other women and girls. While these measures have affected women and girls of all spheres of life, the experts highlighted their particular concerns for women human rights defenders, women civil society activists and leaders, women judges and prosecutors, women in the security forces, women that were former government employees, and women journalists, all of whom have been considerably exposed to harassment, threats of violence and sometimes violence, and for whom civic space had been severely eroded. Many have been forced to leave the country as a result.”

TOLO News, Amnesty Intl Calls to Reopen, Support Women's Shelters, 6 December 2021

“The “Taliban must allow” the reopening of shelters and other institutions for Afghan women in order to protect the women from “further violence,” a human rights watchdog said on Monday.

Amnesty International in a statement expressed concern over the situation of Afghan women. [...]

Before the fall of the former government, at least 27 institutions supportive of women were active in Afghanistan, but all of them are now closed.

“The Islamic Emirate replaced the Ministry of Women's Affairs with the Ministry of Virtue and Vice but

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

pledged to form a department to run women's affairs. The department will be active under the supervision of the Vice and Virtue Ministry.

"We are trying to facilitate girls' and women's activities under the umbrella of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, so they can work," said Akif Mahajar, a spokesman for the ministry."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Survivors of gender-based violence abandoned following Taliban takeover – new research, 6 December 2021

"Essential services for women and girl survivors of gender-based violence in Afghanistan have been decimated following the Taliban's takeover of the country, Amnesty International said today.

In 26 new interviews, survivors and service providers told Amnesty International that the Taliban closed shelters and released detainees from prison, including many convicted of gender-based violence offences. Many survivors – as well as shelter staff, lawyers, judges, government officials, and others involved in protective services – are now at risk of violence and death. [...] Amnesty International interviewed survivors and individuals involved in protective services in the provinces of Badghis, Bamiyan, Daikundi, Herat, Kabul, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Paktika, Sar-e Pul, and Takhar. [...]

As the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, the system of protective services collapsed. Shelters were closed, and many were looted and appropriated by members of the Taliban. In some cases, Taliban members harassed or threatened staff. [...]

As shelters closed, staff were forced to send many women and girl survivors back to their families, and other survivors were forcibly removed by family members. Other survivors were forced to live with shelter staff members, on the street, or in other unsustainable situations.

Zeena* was regularly beaten by her husband and brother before she took refuge in a shelter. When the Taliban arrived, she and several other women fled. They are now in hiding. She said: "We came only with the clothes we were wearing. We don't have a heater, and we go to sleep hungry... My brother is my enemy, and my husband is my enemy. If he sees me and my children, he'll kill us... I am sure they are looking for me because they know the shelter has closed."

One shelter director, currently in hiding with some survivors from her shelter, told Amnesty International: "We don't have a proper place. We can't go out. We are so scared... Please bring us out of here. If not, then you can wait for us to be killed." [...]

Amnesty International also received credible reports that survivors have also been transferred by the Taliban into the detention system, including to Pul-e-Charkhi prison, near Kabul. [...] Many working within the system of protective services said that although they faced significant risks before the Taliban's takeover, their lives are now in greater danger, and they are in desperate need of protection.

One service provider who was based in Badghis explained: "All of these women who worked on this [the support system] – now we need a shelter... We live each day in anxiety and fear."

A service provider who was based in Nangarhar said: "I am getting threats from the Taliban, ISIS, perpetrators and the family members... on a daily basis."

Another service provider who was based in Bamiyan said: "I was getting three calls each day from men who had escaped the prison. After I received a call from the Taliban as well, I switched to a new number."

The Guardian, 'I don't know where to go': uncertain fate of the women in Kabul's shelters, 1 October 2021
"Women in refuges have been sent home to their abusers or to prison since the Taliban takeover. Those

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in the few shelters still open fear what lies ahead [...]

The shelter is one of nearly 30 such facilities in Afghanistan. Built up over the past 20 years, they operated as a discreet and often hidden part of the international community's commitment to advancing the rights of Afghan women. Most of the women's cases were resolved within months, but some spent years at the shelter, learning new skills so they could reintegrate into society.

Over the past six weeks, this crucial lifeline has all but disappeared. Most of the shelters have closed their doors at the request of the Taliban, meaning women have either been sent home, often back to their abusers, or moved to secret locations. [...]

Of the three shelter directors who spoke to the Guardian, none are taking in new women. [...]

Mahbooba Seraj, a veteran women's rights activist and manager of a shelter for 30 women in Kabul, says the Taliban are still figuring out what to do about women's refuges. "They're afraid that women in the shelters will leave, and end up on the streets and enter prostitution, which is very possible," she says by phone from Kabul. "And they do not want that."

Two weeks ago, 15 Taliban police officers, including secret police, visited Seraj's shelter over several days, noting residents' names and snooping around. The women wore veils so they could not be identified, Seraj said.

Seraj told the Taliban that their visit was exceptional – a man had never crossed her shelter's threshold before. "They looked at me as if they didn't believe me. And one policeman asked, 'Even the Americans?' I laughed and said, 'Neither American nor Afghan. Period.' Why they thought Americans visited is beyond me."

Children

Access to education

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

UNFPA, 'Giving up is not an option' - Young Afghan forced out of school remains hopeful, 25 August 2022

"The Taliban's series of directives that effectively restrict women and girls from participating in public life. To fill her time and still feel productive, Ms. Fasihi joined the Youth Peer Educators Network (Y-PEER), a regional initiative led by and for youth, supported by UNFPA. The training opened her eyes to various issues young Afghans face on a daily basis, especially among young girls, such as early marriage and early pregnancy. The unprecedented poverty resulting from the economic crisis that came with the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has brought to the fore discussions about child marriages."

UNICEF, *Delivering for the children of Afghanistan*, 19 August 2022

"A year since the Taliban seized power and UNICEF pledged to 'stay and deliver,' life in Afghanistan – already weakened by decades of insecurity and natural disasters, and now distanced from the global community – has further deteriorated. The country is in crisis, and it's a child rights crisis.

Millions of children continue to need essential services, including primary healthcare, lifesaving vaccines against polio and measles, nutrition, education, protection, shelter, water and sanitation. UNICEF has been on the ground in Afghanistan for over 70 years with 13 offices nationwide and a range of partners that support us in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, especially children. But as winter

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

approaches, urgent funding is needed to secure children's futures, to guarantee their rights, and to ensure that vital support is given equitably to all of Afghanistan's children.

More than half the country – 24 million people, including 13 million children – are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Crushing poverty is driving parents to pull children out of school and into dangerous forms of work. Mistaking explosive remnants of war for playthings, hundreds of children have been killed and maimed this year. Depleted by chronic hunger, malnutrition and disease stalk infants and children. Natural disasters – from drought to earthquakes – have pushed the most disadvantaged further into deprivation.

Meanwhile, in an alarming roll-back of their rights, more than 1 million girls from grade 7-12 have been barred from high school since last August. Prolonged school closures and absences often result in children, particularly girls, not returning to complete their education – with lasting impacts on children.

[...] More than 3 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition, making them vulnerable to preventable disease. Of them, over 1 million children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition – the most lethal form of undernutrition. UNICEF and partners are working to identify and treat severely wasted children, including through nutrition counselling and treatment services. UNICEF also supports multiple micronutrient supplements and multiple micronutrient powders programmes.”

BBC News, Afghanistan: What's changed a year after Taliban return, 16 August 2022

“In March, schools re-opened for a new academic year, but the Taliban reversed an earlier promise and girls are currently not permitted to attend secondary school. The Taliban has blamed a lack of female teachers and the need to arrange the segregation of facilities. This has affected an estimated 1.1 million pupils, according to the UN and has provoked widespread international criticism. Primary school education for girls has been permitted. Some public universities reopened for both men and women in February. But women's participation in the labour force has dropped since the Taliban takeover last summer, according to the World Bank... However, with the Taliban imposing more restrictions on women's movements outside the home since their return to power, the percentage of females working in Afghanistan shrank to 15% in 2021. An Amnesty report in July said that the Taliban had "decimated the rights of women and children" in Afghanistan. It highlighted the abuse and torture meted out to some women who had taken part in protests against the new restrictions imposed on them.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), MoHE to Implement New Curriculum in Accordance with Islamic Law, 12 August 2022

“the Islamic Emirate leadership has created a “directorate of academic curriculum” within the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education amid pressures by the global leaders, including international community, on Taliban to resume girls' education... Ahmad Taqi, a spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, said the directorate is aimed at reviewing and developing the academic curriculum of all universities across Afghanistan in light with the Islamic laws... This came at a time girls schools from grade six and above remain suspended since March this year, as the Islamic Emirate announced its leadership are developing a new educational system that is in accordance with the Islamic law.”

TOLO News, Over 400 Private Schools Closed Due to Economic Challenges: Union, 10 August 2022

“The union for private secondary schools said that more than 400 private schools have been closed over the last year due to economic challenges. With the closing of schools, many teachers have become jobless. “We are currently witnessing the closing of more than 400 private schools across Afghanistan,”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

said Zabiullah Foqani, a member of the union. “The institutions of higher education and education are in a difficult situation,” said Parwiz Khalili, a university instructor.”

Save the Children, One Year Under Taliban Rule, Girls are More Isolated, Hungry, Sad: New Report, 10 August 2022

“[...] After the Taliban’s takeover last August, thousands of secondary school girls were ordered to stay home, reversing years of progress for gender equality. Girls interviewed by Save the Children expressed disappointment and anger over the fact they can no longer go to school and said they felt hopeless about their future because they don’t have the rights and freedoms they had previously.

More than 45% of girls said they’re not attending school – compared with 20% of boys – listing economic challenges, the Taliban’s ban on girls attending secondary school classes as well as community attitudes as the key barriers preventing them from accessing education.

Parishad*, 15, lives in northern Afghanistan and doesn’t go to school because her parents cannot afford to feed their children, let alone pay for her books and stationery. Her family’s situation has rapidly deteriorated in the past 12 months and they were evicted from their home because they couldn’t pay the rent. The landlord offered to buy one of Parishad’s siblings, but her parents refused.

“Some days my father cannot bring food. My brothers wake up at midnight and cry for food. I don’t eat, and I save my food for my brothers and sisters. When my brothers and sisters ask for food, I get upset and cry a lot. I go to my neighbour’s house and ask for food. Sometimes they’ll help and give me food and sometimes they say they don’t have anything to give me,” Parishad said.

“When we left our old house to come to this house, I was deeply upset and I said, ‘why are we leaving again, why are we facing these problems again?’ I was deeply angry, and it was a very difficult time and I cried.

“I would love to go to school. When I see other girls going to school, I wish I could go to school too. Every month we change houses and it’s difficult for us to go to school. We also don’t have any stationery and we need money to buy books. I can’t tolerate it. I can’t do anything about it.””

Human Rights Watch, Economic Causes of Afghanistan’s Humanitarian Crisis, 4 August 2022

“The Taliban have closed almost all girls’ secondary schools, depriving girls of the right to education. This and escalating poverty that has made it very hard for girls to attend the girls’ schools that remain open have heightened the risk of child marriage. Humanitarian groups and the media have reported families “selling” girls – i.e. taking cash or other compensation in exchange for their daughters for marriage, out of desperation to obtain food or repay debts.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Economic Crisis Underlies Mass Hunger, 4 August 2022

“Afghanistan’s humanitarian crisis cannot be effectively addressed unless the United States and other governments ease restrictions on the country’s banking sector to facilitate legitimate economic activity and humanitarian aid, Human Rights Watch said today. The US and other governments and the World Bank Group revoked the credentials of the Central Bank of Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover on August 15, 2021. [...] An Afghan humanitarian official told Human Rights Watch in mid-July, [...] “A functioning banking system is an immediate and crucial need to address the humanitarian crisis.” [...] US and World Bank decisions to restrict Afghanistan’s banking sector have significantly amplified the crisis by hampering most legitimate economic activities, including humanitarian efforts. The Central Bank of Afghanistan is unable to carry out basic central banking functions, including holding currency auctions,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

importing banknotes, and processing or settling legitimate commercial and humanitarian transactions. Because of these incapacities, even basic economic activities remain severely curtailed. [...]

The Taliban leadership should recognize that their poor human rights record is imperiling hopes to reach any agreements to resolve the banking crisis, Human Rights Watch said. [...] Taliban authorities are reportedly prepared to accept independent monitoring of the central bank by outside auditors, a key demand of the US government and World Bank. But they continue to reject key demands from governments to remove sanctioned officials from the central bank's leadership and to reverse their position denying secondary education to girls and women."

Tolo News, Khalid Hanafi: Youth Under 18 Should Not be Enrolled in Military, 3 August 2022

"While visiting the province of Badakhshan, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, acting minister of the Ministry of Virtue and Vice, called on officials to not recruit underage youth to serve in the Islamic Emirate forces but instead should send them to madrassas (religious schools) for study. "Those who are underage should not be among the Mujahiden, and they should be removed and should be sent to madrassas to study," he said."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Japan supports Afghanistan in the field of education, 2 August 2022

"He (Okada Takashi, the ambassador of Japan) promised that Japan has a serious intention to help Afghanistan in the field of education.

Acting Minister of Education has thanked Japan for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and said that education is the right of every Afghan citizen and the Islamic Emirate has a responsibility to provide standardized, balanced and fair services in the field of education to their countrymen with their allies.

He said that the international community is obliged to extend the hand of cooperation and friendship to Afghanistan, which has come out of a 40-year crisis.

Meanwhile, with the rise of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, the gates of girls' schools above the sixth grade have not yet been opened."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNICEF Afghanistan Twitter, 2 August 2022

"In this tiny one-room class in Afghanistan, 3 hours from the nearest formal school, 29 girls and boys crowd together every day for their only opportunity to learn. But as they prepare to graduate primary school, they're asking, what about our younger siblings?"

Pajhwok, World's support urged in reopening of Afghan girls schools, 2 August 2022

"Women rights advocacy groups on Tuesday during a gathering in Kabul renewed their demand for the reopening of girl high and secondary schools and called for giving place to ulema, qualified individuals and experts in the government. Representatives from NGOs and some organizations — Noori Education, Development and Capacity Building Organisation, International Women Office for Peace and Freedom and Afghan Women Organisation for Peace and Freedom were present in the gathering in capital Kabul. Some teachers and students also participated in the gathering. They expressed deep concern over the closure of girls secondary and high schools and demanded their reopening. SaadiaSeerat, representative of the Noori Education, Development and Capacity Building Organisation, said: "Following the recent political developments in the country, unfortunately, the education process has been damaged more than any other sector. About a year has passed since the doors of schools have been closed to girls and girls above the sixth grade are not allowed to go to school." She expressed concern over the closure of girls' schools and said: "We Afghan women — teachers and students — are gathered at today's press

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

conference to defend women's rights, to discuss and exchange opinions about the current deadlock." The participants of the meeting also passed a resolution, asking the acting government to take steps for the reopening of girls schools above class sixth. The resolution states: "We ask the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to open the doors of all schools and scientific and educational centers to all girls as soon as possible... The closure of schools should not continue any longer... there is no Shariah justification for closing schools above the sixth grade for girls". The resolution also demanded the Islamic Emirate consult ulema, qualified people and experts and gets them involved in the government for good governance. The resolution also stated: "If the girls' schools are reopened, there is no opposition to the previous curriculum; we Afghan learners want to continue our lessons keeping in mind the Islamic principles and observing the Sharia hijab." According to the resolution, the international community, especially the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), is urged to support the demands of Afghan girls particularly their right to education."

Tolo News, Students Call for Girls' Schools to Be Reopened, 2 August 2022

"Following international calls for the reopening of girls' schools above the sixth grade, some students from schools and universities have now asked the Islamic Emirate to reopen girls' schools as soon as possible. "We ask the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to provide the opportunity of education for all the people of Afghanistan, including boys and girls," said Khatera, the organizer of the gathering.

The gathering's organizers said in a resolution that the closing of girls' schools is not justified by Sharia and that it will do significant harm to Afghan society. "The current position of the government to close schools above the sixth grade for girls does not have any form of Sharia consideration, according to the principles of Islam," said Sadia Sirat, a student. However, some women's rights activists stated that no one would benefit from the closing of girls' schools. "Keeping the doors of schools closed is not useful for the government but has its own problems, and this leads the people of Afghanistan to lose trust in the government," Ai Noor Uzbek, a women's rights activist told TOLONews. Girls' schools above sixth grade were shut down for about a year, and the Islamic Emirate has not decided whether or not to reopen them."

Pajhwok, 40 people killed, wounded in Afghanistan last week, 1 August 2022

"[...] Girls' education above 6th grade: The school year started in March this year but the same day, the government of Afghanistan postponed the opening of girls' high and secondary schools. At the time the government said it was working on a plan and after its completion, all girls high and secondary schools would be reopened, something yet to happen. Last week, Pakistan president Arif Alvi said the Afghan girls and boys should be provided education through the internet or television, saying Pakistan would pave the way for their education through Allama Iqbal Open University and other public sector universities. The US Secretary of State once again asked the caretaker government of Afghanistan to allow secondary education for girls, and a number of religious scholars and tribal leaders of Paktia and Parwan also asked the government to allow girls above the sixth grade."

Tolo News, Student Enrollment Plummets at Private Universities in Kunduz: Officials, 1 August 2022

"The Union of Private Universities in Kunduz Province said that the number of students attending private universities has dropped by 65 percent in recent months. Officials at these universities added that in seven private universities of Kunduz the total number of students was around 5,000, whereas under the previous government the number exceeded 11,000. They blame the decrease in the participation of students at private universities on the country's current situation, particularly the economic crisis. "In the past, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

number of students attending universities reached 10 to 11,000, but after the political change in the country the number dropped to 4 to 5,000,” said Samiullah Danishyar, head of the Union.

Meanwhile, officials at private universities in Kunduz said that the number of female students had dropped by 70%. They warned that if the situation continues like this many of the country's private institutions will close. “If the situation continues like this up to the end of the year, with the people facing such economic challenges, around 60 to 70 of the universities will leave the market, and it is huge crisis for the education sector,” said Samiullah Danishyar, head of the Union. “We ask the Islamic Emirate to launch some programs to motivate people to get an education,” said Mubarak Shah Amiri, chancellor of a private university in Kunduz. According to some students at private universities, most of the students have left university due to economic problems and their uncertain fate. “In recent months, the number of students dropped from 40 to 10 students. If the situation continues like this, most of the students will leave universities,” said Ataullah Safi, a student. “We ask the officials to provide more facilities to the private and public universities, so that people become more interested in education,” said Imdadullah Omari, a student. Currently, seven private higher education institutions are operating in Kunduz province.”

AVA, Eid message issues by supreme leader of Afghanistan, 6 July 2022

"He also said that the Islamic Emirate pays special attention to the education process, especially to the education of children in terms of religion, and next to that, to education of modern sciences.

Regarding people's complaints, he said that the Islamic Emirate has a Complaints Hearing Office under the vice and virtue ministry. In case of any injustice, people can contact the office and register their complaints.

He has also directed the complaints hearing staff to take people's complaints seriously and to follow up on them and resolve any problems.

[...] Regarding the rights of citizens, Akhundzada said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to providing the rights of its fellow citizens, because according to him: “Islam has commanded us to protect and protect the rights of all people, still within the framework of the pure Sharia in the field of women's rights. God willing, he will try.””

ATN News, Herat girls call for reopening of their schools, 6 July 2022

AAN, Donor's dilemma: How to provide aid to a country whose government you do not recognise, 5 July 2022

"The call for international recognition [by Taleban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada in his Eid ul-Fitr message on 1 May 2022] was highlighted in the closing statement of a gathering of more than 4,000 *ulema* (religious leaders) and elders which was held in Kabul on 29 June to 2 July 2022. The statement, however, made no reference to reopening girls' schools (see media reports here and here).

ToloNews, Students in Kabul Say They Lack Buildings, Teachers, 29 June 2022

"[...] schools in Bagrami district of Kabul. The school is named Kandosang, which lacks buildings and other resources.

“We ask the Islamic Emirate to facilitate classes for us. It has been more than six years that there are no classes (buildings), no chairs, no textbooks. We want to be educated to make our country,” said Marzia, a student.

Some teachers have been working as volunteers in this school to teach the students.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"I come to teach here because the students have their hopes on us. They want to study," said a teacher. "Our students come in the morning and the sun is very hot as they finish their lessons. Many of them face health issues, such as diarrhea," said a teacher. Some elders and officials of the school expressed criticism over the lack of attention of the former government toward education in the district. "We have a lot of shortages. The parents of the students come and see that their children are studying in an open area under the sun. The school lacks buildings," said Gulistan Ahmadzai, headmaster of the school."

AVA, UNICEF continues to provide assistance to Afghanistan, 18 June 2022

"Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy of the Ministry of Economy wrote in a tweet that the Director General of the Child Protection Organization promised to support the children of Afghanistan, especially in the educational sector."

ToloNews, Top UNHCR Official Voices Concerns Over Closed Girls' Schools, 15 June 2022

"It has been over 270 days that the girls' school above grade six have remained closed in Afghanistan. Earlier, the Islamic Emirate said it is working on a plan to facilitate the reopening of the schools but there has yet to be any progress in this regard."

Ava Press, Despite decades of war in Afghanistan, women are still stable, 14 June 2022

"Despite decades of war in Afghanistan, women remain stable," said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who led a delegation to Afghanistan, meeting with a group of businesswomen. She also noted that many children, especially girls, have been deprived of education. [...] The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Kylie T. Kliment tweeted today (Tuesday, June 14) that she met with a group of women from Herat province during her visit to Afghanistan. "Despite decades of war in Afghanistan, women are still stable," she wrote. She made the remarks during a visit to the Women's Trade Center in Herat. "Millions of children in Afghanistan have dropped out of school, a large percentage of whom are girls," he added. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) led a team to Afghanistan two days ago to closely monitor the situation of women, refugees and the human rights situation in Afghanistan."

Care International, Women, girls in Afghanistan hope for the return of education for all, 7 June 2022

"In Afghanistan, most schools closed as the country's government changed in August 2021. Over the following months they gradually opened for boys in all grades, but girls above grade six have been home for nearly 10 months. There were plans that schools would open for all high school girls at the beginning of the Persian new year in March 2022, but that did not materialize."

Tolo News, Schools Face Shortage of Teachers, Textbooks, Uniforms, 5 June 2022

"The students said that these challenges have affected their education. "There are no lessons in the school even if I go to the school [...] I am also the breadwinner of the family," said Parwiz, a student."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Global Annual Results Report 2021 GOAL AREA 2 Every child learns, 1 June 2022

"Millions of children living in extreme poverty, hunger, and amidst conflicts, such as in Afghanistan, Haiti

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and Lebanon, were faced with new emergencies within existing crises [...] In 2021, there were a total of 14 countries in need of Level 2 and Level 3 emergency responses.⁵² Out of the five Level 3 emergencies, the pandemic continued to be the most far-reaching with 153 of UNICEF programme countries and territories impacted heavily. Other Level 3 emergencies in 2021 included crises in Afghanistan [...] The political transition in Afghanistan in mid-2021 resulted in an estimated 9.7 million children in need of humanitarian assistance, and now it threatens the learning and livelihoods for millions of children, especially girls. After the takeover by the de facto authorities in Afghanistan in August 2021, UNICEF prioritized support to the community-based education (CBE) programme, which resulted in the establishment of 6,456 new CBEs, bringing the total number of CBEs to 7,604 operating across the country, 680 of which are in areas in the south where children have not had access to primary (formal) education for the past two decades. By the year's end, CBE classes were providing access to learning for 245,995 children (53 per cent girls) [...]

In Afghanistan, despite the challenges faced during the year, interventions improving the quality of education in the areas of teacher development and learning assessment continued to be supported. In total, 513 academic supervisors received training on new skills of supervision and mentorship, and technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Education for the development of standardized test items as part of the roll-out of the National Assessment Framework for Afghanistan (NAFA). In addition, 804 teachers (150 females) were trained on conducting diagnostic learning assessment and tailoring remedial support for low-performing students."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Global Annual Results Report 2021 Gender Equality, 1 June 2022
"In Afghanistan, millions of girls are being denied access to schools. With outsize repercussions on women and girls, climate change threats have multiplied and there have been escalating political and socioeconomic tensions in fragile settings, amplifying gender inequalities and compromising health, livelihoods and safety [...] In Afghanistan, education access for disadvantaged girls was ramped up through over 7,000 community-based education classes that benefited almost 240,000 students (over 50 per cent girls)."

Tolo News, Schools in Uruzgan Lack Buildings, Students Learn in Open Air, 29 May 2022
"Residents of Uruzgan province say that due to the lack of school buildings, students from the province's more than 30 schools continue their education in the open."

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Afghanistan: Taliban confirms gender-based persecution, 24 March 2022

"The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) strongly condemns the decision by the Taliban to keep girls' secondary schools (i.e. above grade 6) indefinitely closed. This decision was confirmed by the Taliban yesterday, on the very day schools were supposed to re-open after a seven-month hiatus. While the Ministry of Education had said that all schools, including girls' high schools, would re-open at the start of the spring semester on 23 March 2022, yesterday's decision comes as no surprise considering its consistency with the Taliban's ideology and disregard for the Afghan population, exemplified by its violent overthrow of the elected government of Afghanistan in August 2021."

United Nations Security Council, Security Council Press Statement on Situation in Afghanistan, 24 May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The members of the Security Council expressed deep concern regarding the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban, including through imposition of restrictions that limit access to education, employment, freedom of movement, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in public life, and emphasized that these restrictions contradict the expectations of the international community and the commitments made by the Taliban to the Afghan people.

They also reiterated their call on the Taliban to adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay."

Tolo News, Haqqani: 'We Are Not Forcing Women to Wear Hijab', 18 May 2022

"The acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, said that soon good news will be heard about the education of girls and that a mechanism is being developed in this regard."

BBC News, Afghanistan: The secret girls school defying the Taliban, 18 May 2022

"Primary schools for girls have reopened under the Taliban, and have in fact seen a rise in attendance following the improvement in security in rural parts of the country, but it's not clear when or if older girls will be allowed back into class. The Taliban have said the correct "Islamic environment" needs to be created first, though given schools were already segregated by gender, no-one seems sure what that means. Now, multiple sources told the BBC, a handful of hardline but highly influential individuals in the group appear to still be opposed to it. In private, other Taliban members have expressed their disappointment at the decision not to open girls' schools. The Taliban's Ministry of Education seemed as surprised as anyone when the leadership overruled their plans in March, and some senior Taliban officials are understood to be educating their daughters in Qatar or Pakistan. In recent weeks, a number of religious scholars with links to the Taliban have issued fatwas, or religious decrees supporting girls' right to learn."

Ariana News, IEA says girls' schools will reopen soon, 16 May 2022

"Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), and deputy minister of the IEA's Ministry of Information and Culture, said progress has been made at a meeting of religious scholars and girls' schools would reopen soon. Speaking to reporters in Kabul on Sunday Mujahid said: "Good progress has been made at the meeting of the country's scholars regarding the reopening of girls' schools and other major political issues, and girls' schools will be reopened in the near future." He said that the meeting, attended by tribal leaders and influential people of the country, is focusing on major political, security and social issues. "The Ulema are consulting on the reopening of girls' schools, and progress will be made soon," said Mujahid. Meanwhile, Anas Haqqani, a senior member of the Islamic Emirate, said on Wednesday that a meeting of religious scholars would be held to discuss the issue of girls going to school. Officials at the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Emirate have said that they will reopen girls' schools in the near future within the framework of Islamic principles."

Tolo News, 15 Foreign Ministers Issue Statement on Afghan Women's Rights, 15 May 2022

"The Foreign Ministers of 15 countries in a statement expressed their 'deep' concerns over restrictions on girls' access to education in Afghanistan and called on the "Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students." The statement was issued by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States. Meanwhile, the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

US envoy for Afghanistan human rights and women, Rina Amiri, in an interview with the DW also voiced concerns over the restrictions being imposed by the current Afghan government on women. "The Afghan women expect the Taliban to focus on the security and facilitation of a good life for the people and not to interfere in the normal life of people," said Farah Mustafavi, a women's rights activist. But the Islamic Emirate denied the restrictions on the women. "We deny such claims about the violation of women's rights. The Islamic Emirate protect the rights of all Afghan citizens," said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate. Earlier, the US Department of State said that it has leverage to use against the Islamic Emirate if there was no revision in its policy regarding women."

BBC News, Afghanistan pupils in fear after spate of Islamic State attacks, 13 May 2022

"Milad, and most of the residents in his neighbourhood, Dashte-e-Barchi, are members of the Shia Hazara minority. The area has been repeatedly attacked by the local branch of the Islamic State group, who are suspected of being behind the bombing at Milad's school.

"I was in the classroom about to leave when the explosion happened. We crouched down on the floor with our hands on our heads," Milad told the BBC. The school opened up straight after the attack, but some pupils are yet to return, their families too afraid. Headteacher Ghulam Haider Hussaini told the BBC he was determined not to allow the violence to deter his students."

Al Jazeera, Afghan students run underground book club to keep dreams alive, 9 May 2022

"Immediately after coming to power, the Taliban promised women's rights and freedom of the press. But nine months since the takeover, high schools for girls remain closed and public spaces shrinking for Afghan women as the group has expanded curbs."

"The risk of running a book club is tremendous amid increasing restrictions on women, with girls above the age of 12 no longer allowed to go to school and universities forced to segregate classes."

ToloNews, Schooling Facilitated for 1000s of Children in Logar: MoE, 8 May 2022

"The residents of Logar said that many children are deprived of schooling due to lack of access. "There was war previously. Many children couldn't go to school. All of them have been deprived of an education," said Mohammad Jamshid, Zarinzoi."

Tolo News, UNICEF Concerned by Impact of School Ban on Girls' Learning, 4 May 2022

"The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is concerned about the impact on girls' learning from the decision to ban schooling for females over the sixth grade, a senior UNICEF official said. Same Mort, chief of Communication, Advocacy and Civic Engagement in Afghanistan, said the closing of schools will affect the mental health of the female students. "One month since the new term started for some children but not all children in Afghanistan, UNICEF is deeply concerned by the impact of this decision on girls learning--on their mental health and on their ability to contribute to the Afghan economy into the future," she said. Mort said the UNICEF is supporting education in Afghanistan. "When girls are out of school, they are much more susceptible to early marriage and child labor. They are much more likely to be victims of exploitation and abuse, that is why UNICEF continues to advocate to get all children into school and learning at all levels in all regions," she said. Meanwhile, Shamayil Tawana, a female rights activist, urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for girls beyond grade six. "All Afghans demanded the Taliban reopen the schools and not deprive Afghan girls from their Sharia rights," she said. The Ministry of Education said that the reopening of school for girls is an important issue for the Islamic

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Emirate. "This issue is important for the Islamic Emirate as much as it is important for the international community. The meetings are underway about this," said Aziz Ahmad Riyan, a spokesman for the ministry. The closure of schools for girls above grade six triggered reactions at the national and international levels. However, officials of the current government said the problem will be solved soon."

Pajhwok, Girls' schools to be reopened soon: Anas Haqqani, 4 May 2022

"KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Anas Haqqani, a member of the Islamic Emirate's Qatar office, on Wednesday said girls' schools would be opened [...]"

Tolo News, Schools in Balkh Lack Teachers, Textbooks: Officials, 3 May 2022

"Officials at the education department in Balkh said that province schools lack about 1,500 professional teachers, and also textbooks. Based on figures of the department, over 500,000 boys and girls are educated in 600 schools across Balkh province, where all schools are open. [...] Abdul Jalil Shaheedkhil, head of the education department. He added that local officials in Balkh province have taken steps to remove the challenges and bring reform to the education system. "We recognized 95% of imaginary teachers (non-existent teachers on the payroll) in Balkh province, which is a great achievement to save the budget of the Islamic Emirate," said Abdul Jalil Shaheedkhil. Although some schools remained without buildings in Balkh province, and the lack of textbooks is another challenge ahead of students, they still hope to complete their education. "It improves our country, when we come to classes. Men are not the only people who can build the country, women also able take part in the improvement of the country," said Frishta, a student."

Tolo News, Afghan Girls Banned From School Suffer Psychologically: Experts, 3 May 2022

"Female students above grade six say the closing of their schools is causing them mental health trouble. The students said they are counting the seconds until school will be reopened. Saeeda, a student in grade 10, said she dreams of being a doctor in the future. Saeeda said she is afraid to not reach her dreams now because girls beyond grade six are not allowed to go to school. "I am very disappointed that the schools were not reopened. It is the right of every girl to have access to education," said Saeeda, a student in grade 10. "We seriously don't know what type of situation this is. We should go to school to make our future," said Setayish, a student. Psychologists say that the banning of these girls from school is causing mental stress. "When someone likes something and is prevented from doing it, it causes mental stress and anxiety. The girls who like education and are not allowed to engage in it, it causes them mental pressure," said Jamshid Rasa, a psychologist. Sociologists said banning girls from education can pave the ground for early and forced marriages in the country. "The banning of girls from going to secondary and high school will cause a surge in forced marriage," said Bahauddin Baqayi, a sociologist."

Ariana News, IEA unveils segregation plan for male and female university students, 24 April 2022

"The Ministry of Higher Education of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has announced that male and female students will be segregated and attend lectures on alternate days of the week."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), IEA Separates Weekdays for Male, Female University Students, 24 April 2022

"Ministry of Higher Education of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan separated weekdays of male and female students of universities in Kabul University and Kabul Polytechnic University in a bid to further end co-education."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Some kidnappers killed in raid to rescue Rauf: Mujahid, 24 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_ Two years ago, Rauf, 11, was kidnapped while he was on his way to school in -e-Sharif, the capital city of northern province. The child was rescued on Saturday and handed over to his family by Deputy Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Salam."

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan – Terrorist attacks, 22 April 2022

"France condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks of April 19 and 21 on schools in Kabul as well as yesterday's attacks on the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif and in Kunduz province. These attacks, for which Daesh (IS-K) claimed responsibility, killed several dozen people and wounded more than a hundred, including young children."

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), A Bleak Future with Education Under Attack in Afghanistan, 20 April 2022

"Multiple bomb blasts on April 19 outside a high school and an education center in Kabul's Dasht-e Barchi neighborhood left at least six people dead and twenty wounded, including children, and casualties could be much higher. This is just the latest assault on education in Afghanistan, which have traumatized families and dimmed hopes for their children's future."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Girls' Schools not Aligned with Sharia Law: IEA Reasoned behind Schools Closure, 20 April 2022

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan disclosed the core reason behind girls' schools' closure adding that the secondary schools' girls were not aligned with the Sharia law. Deputy chief of the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) of the IEA Moulayee Rahmatullah Najib said that girls' schools in Afghanistan have problems with Sharia law, the curriculum is in opposition to Sharia law and jurisprudence, and that the way Afghan girls would go to schools was in opposition with Sharia and Afghan culture/tradition."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Qatar, Turkey Condemn Kabul Blasts on School, 20 April 2022

"Foreign Ministries of Qatar and Turkey in their respective press release condemned the terrorist attack on a secondary school in the west of Kabul adding the attack will have a negative impact on human rights in the country. "We condemn these inhuman terrorist attacks in the strongest possible terms," said the Turkish Foreign Ministry in the press release."

UN news, Afghanistan: UN condemns deadly blasts at two schools in Kabul, 19 April 2022

"Ramiz Alakbarov, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in the country, issued a statement strongly condemning the "horrific" attacks. "Violence in or around schools is never acceptable. For the people of Afghanistan, already beleaguered by forty years of war, schools should be safe havens, and places where children can learn and flourish," he said. Mr. Alakbarov underlined that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: School bombings a 'reprehensible attack' on religious and ethnic minorities, 19 April 2022

"A series of bomb blasts today in Abdul Rahim Shaheed High School and near the Mumtaz Education Center, both of which are located within the predominately Hazara Shiite neighbourhood of Dasht-e-Barchi in West Kabul, killed six and injured at least 11 others, including children."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Norwegian Refugee Council (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Statement on the deadly bombing of a boys' high school in Kabul, 19 April 2022

"Afghanistan has been one of the deadliest and most challenging countries for children to receive an education for way too long. Insecurity, direct attacks, poverty, and the recent suspension of girls' return to secondary school have robbed thousands of students of their basic rights to learning over the past decades.

We call for full access to education for all students in Afghanistan – girls and boys alike. Children need to be provided with a safe environment and protected from facing deadly threats while pursuing their dreams of a better future."

Pajhwok Afghan News, 40pc of Takhar schools without buildings: Official, 13 April 2022

"Forty percent of schools in northern Takhar province are without buildings, hampering the education of as many as 30,000 students [...]"

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"The expansion of Taliban control in rural areas before the group's takeover left an increasing number of public schools outside of pre-August 15 government control. The Taliban operated an "education commission" in parallel to the pre-August 15 Ministry of Education. Although their practices varied among areas, some schools under Taliban control reportedly allowed teachers to continue teaching but banned certain subjects and replaced them with Islamic studies; others provided only religious education, and only for male students.

In September the Taliban announced it would review subjects to be taught to ensure compliance with the Taliban interpretation of sharia, while also committing in October and November not to change the curriculum to a madrassa-style education. Public universities did not open for the academic year starting in September and remained closed as of December. [...] UNICEF reported that approximately 3.7 million children, 60 percent of them girls, were not in school due to discrimination, poverty, lack of access, continuing conflict, and restrictions on girls' access to education in Taliban-controlled areas, among other reasons. Under the pre-August 15 government, only an estimated 16 percent of the country's schools were for girls, and many of them lacked proper sanitation facilities. Key obstacles to girls' education included poverty, early and forced marriage, insecurity, a lack of family support, lack of female teachers, and a lack of nearby schools.

An education director in Jawzjan Province said in March that Taliban militants stopped an estimated 20,000 female students from studying beyond sixth grade. Even before their takeover of Kabul, in Taliban-controlled districts within the provinces of Kunar, Helmand, Logar, and Zabul, the Taliban had largely prohibited women and girls from attending school as provincial education officials attempted in vain to negotiate with the Taliban for girls to have access to education. Violent attacks on schoolchildren, particularly girls, hindered their access to education, particularly in areas controlled by the Taliban. The Taliban and other extremists threatened and attacked school officials, teachers, and students, particularly girls, and burned both boys' and girls' schools. In February Taliban militants set fire to a girls' school in Takhar Province, burning all equipment, books, and documents. There were reports that both insurgent groups and government forces used school buildings for military purposes. School buildings were damaged, and students were injured in Taliban attacks on nearby government facilities.

Following their takeover, the Taliban severely restricted or prohibited female education across all age levels, citing a need to ensure proper facilities were in place for segregated education in line with the Taliban's interpretation of sharia. The Taliban's lack of a clear education policy regarding women's ability

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to teach and girls' ability to attend schools, combined with nonpayment of teachers' salaries, led to low enrollment rates even where schools were open. In September the Taliban stated that girls would be able to go to school in line with Islamic law, without further clarifying how it would respect their access to education. According to UNICEF, the Taliban instructed primary schools in late August to reopen for both girls and boys. On September 18, the new Taliban ministry of education issued a statement resuming secondary education for boys but gave no indication as to when girls might return to classes. As of December schools in nine of the country's 34 provinces – Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Kunduz, Urozgan, Ghazni, Faryab, Zabul, and Herat – had allowed girls to attend secondary school before closing for the winter break, according to UNICEF and other reports. In December the Taliban asserted that this number had grown to 12 provinces and pledged that all girls could return to school in March 2022 after the break. As of December all public universities remained closed. Several private, all-female universities reopened for fall classes in October. Taliban leaders stated they were committed to allowing girls and women access to education through the postgraduate level, although only in accordance with their interpretation of sharia and within the confines of Afghan culture, which includes segregation of genders and strict behavioral and dress codes.

On November 16, the head of the so-called Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice stated there was no theological basis in Islam for preventing girls and women from having access to all levels of education. Other Taliban representatives expressed the group's intent to provide educational access at all levels to women and girls. At year's end many Afghan girls remained excluded from the educational system."

Ariana News, IEA should engage with Afghan politicians: Muslimyar, 8 April 2022

"Muslimyar [Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, former head of Afghanistan's upper house of parliament] said that the closure of girls' schools is a disappointing decision and IEA should prioritize people's demands.

"Closure of schools is a disappointing decision. I as an Afghan call on Taliban (IEA) to allow education based on Islamic system and our principles and [IEA] should prioritize people," he said.

This comes after the IEA recently established a commission to invite Afghan politicians who fled the country after the IEA took control to return home."

UNOCHA, Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths' opening remarks at the High-level Pledging Event for Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

"Many humanitarian donors rightly point to the need for the de facto Taliban authorities to play their part and again we have heard this today. Many are especially frustrated by the recent decision to restrict access to education for girls and I completely share this frustration, as we all do."

UNAMA, Security Council Press Statement on Afghanistan, 28 March 2022

"The members of the Security Council heard a briefing on 25 March by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, regarding the right to education for all Afghans, including girls. The members of the Security Council expressed their deep concern regarding the reported decision by the Taliban to deny girls above the 6th grade access to education in Afghanistan. They reaffirmed the right to education for all Afghans, including girls, and called on the Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students without further delay."

UNICEF, Girls in Afghanistan must go back to school without any further delays, 23 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell]

“‘The de facto authorities’ decision to delay the return to school for girls from Grade 7 to Grade 12 is a major setback for girls and their futures. [...]”

UNAMA, STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL - ON AFGHANISTAN, 23 March 2022

“[...] today’s announcement by Taliban authorities in Afghanistan that girls’ education from the sixth grade has been suspended until further notice. The start of the new school year has been anticipated by all students, girls and boys, and parents and families. The de facto authorities’ failure to reopen schools for girls above the sixth grade, despite repeated commitments, is a profound disappointment and deeply damaging for Afghanistan. The denial of education not only violates the equal rights of women and girls to education, it also jeopardizes the country’s future in view of the tremendous contributions by Afghan women and girls.”

Juris, Afghanistan dispatch: new restrictions imposed on students and faculty at Afghan universities, 15 March 2022

“The Taliban-led Ministry of Higher Education has recently re-opened the doors of universities to students and professors after nearly seven months of closure. However, this is contingent on students and universities across Afghanistan adhering to a set of new rules and procedures that violate freedom of speech. The Ministry of Higher Education’s new procedure is in direct contravention of existing Afghan laws and regulations. The procedure, in particular, prohibits students and professors from discussing or publishing information about their universities to local and foreign media. They are not permitted to speak to the media about academic obstacles or the learning environment. The procedure applies to both governmental and private universities. Previously, private universities were ordered to implement new policies that separated male and female students, required male professors to teach only male students and female professors to teach only female students, and allowed old male professors to enter female classrooms in the absence of female professors. It seems that all of the above is now codified in one procedure and sent to public universities across Afghanistan. Additionally, students from Baghlan and Badakhshan universities also tell local media that they are instructed not to use smartphones inside the university compound. Kunduz and Al Biruni university professors have also been warned not to share anything on social media. Kabul university students and professors are also instructed to comply with the above. The education sector of Afghanistan has been adversely affected since the seizure of power by the Taliban in August last year. A large number of professors either left their jobs or left Afghanistan for a safer country. With this being said, there are reports that the number of students in both public and private universities have considerably decreased. Local media report that higher education in private universities is actually on the verge of collapse due to the absence of professors as well as students.”

IOM (DTM), Afghanistan - Baseline Mobility and Community Based Needs Assessment (November-December 2021), 11 March 2022

“Four out of five children (84%) in Kandahar do not go to school.”

The Guardian , ‘Robbed of hope’: Afghan girls denied an education struggle with depression, 10 March 2022

“As female students are denied schooling and career prospects, medical staff warn of a rise in mental health problems. Since August, secondary school girls from grade 7 and up have effectively been banned from education. While the Taliban claims the restrictions are temporary, saying they want to create the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

right Islamic environment for girls to learn, Afghanistan remains the world's only country where girls are barred from education. While the overall sales of antidepressants and sleeping pills have gone down, the number of women buying such medication has increased. [...] Teachers and activists have already opened ad hoc schools, similar to the secret schools of the previous 1996 to 2001 Taliban regime. Gatherings are mostly held in people's homes."

Borgen Magazine, How UNICEF is Funding Afghanistan's Teachers, 10 March 2022

"UNICEF is beginning to provide stipends of \$100 to around 194,000 of Afghanistan's teachers. The economic restrictions Afghanistan is navigating have caused many public-sector workers to lose their income, with one of the most-impacted groups being teachers. The UNICEF support will last two months, as the funding is "emergency funding." However, if Afghanistan's government does not find a way to resume salaries for teachers the funding may extend. UNICEF has said that it will require an additional \$250 million to continue funding. Still, the work of teachers is vital and they have the determination to find the funding. UNICEF's assistance will verify each teacher's identity to check their payment statuses and to monitor the effectiveness of the financing to see what needs more help. It might not seem like a lot, but \$100 is more than the teachers have been earning for four months. When teachers are not struggling to obtain basic needs for daily life, it will revitalize the attentiveness needed for teaching. UNICEF's funding can guarantee Afghanistan's teachers can work to bring high-quality education to them and break cyclical poverty."

OHCHR, Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

"The de facto authorities have indicated that children of all ages – girls and boys - will return to school in the new solar year that commences later this month. Nation-wide implementation of this commitment at all levels of education is urgent and essential to ensure that all children have equal access to quality education."

UNAMA, Briefing to the United Nations Security Council by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ms. Deborah Lyons, 2 March 2022

"They [the Taliban] also point to public universities being reopened and their desire to see Afghans, all boys and all girls, educated to a high international standard. On this issue, the Minister of Education recently stated that the plan to reopen schools for girls and boys had been finalized and is now awaiting cabinet approval. We all anticipate with great hope and determination the reopening of the schools on 22 March."

Al Jazeera, In remote Bamiyan, a school run by an Afghan woman offers hope, 22 February 2022

"The school runs for two hours daily in the morning offering an opportunity to the impoverished community at a time the country has been facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis."

"The community suggested gathering the children and teaching them basic English, Dari, maths, geography and the holy Quran," Freshta, who only gave one name, told Al Jazeera.

"It became something bigger, year after year," the 22-year-old, who started the school at the age of 12, said, adding that students, ranging from ages four to 17, mostly come from the cave village of 50 families. Freshta is the only teacher and her work is voluntary. She sometimes received donations from occasional visitors from the capital Kabul, but the school has survived thanks to her hard work.

Freshta is the only teacher and her work is voluntary. She sometimes received donations from occasional visitors from the capital Kabul, but the school has survived thanks to her hard work.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The worsening economic situation has hit hard the village of the young teacher, who said most people are unemployed now. “This has been the biggest change here, in the past months,” she said. Freshta plans to find a job as a midwife as her father has struggled to make ends meet. She often also sells self-embroidered handkerchiefs in the local baazar to earn extra income.

UNICEF, UNICEF provides support to all public school teachers in Afghanistan for 2 months, 20 February 2022

“[...] As part of efforts to ensure all school-age girls and boys in Afghanistan go to school and learn, UNICEF and partners are providing emergency cash support to all public education teachers for the months of January and February. The EU-funded payment – amounting to the equivalent of \$100 a month in Afghani, per teacher, male and female, will benefit an estimated 194,000 public school teachers nationwide in recognition of their crucial role in the education of millions of children in Afghanistan. The teachers include all those from public Primary and Secondary schools Technical & Vocational Institutions and Teachers’ Training Centres. [...]”

Khaama Press, Europe pledges \$11 M to Afghanistan’s educational sector, 16 February 2022

“Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that European representatives pledged \$11 million to Afghanistan’s educational sector and added that the money will increase based on the needs. [...]”

AVA Press, IEA meets with EU delegates to discuss wide range of issues, including education, 16 February 2022

“The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) delegation led by Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met Tuesday with the European Union representatives in Doha, Qatar, to discuss a number of issues including the right to education for women. Special Envoy of the for Afghanistan, said in a series of tweets that the Afghan delegation referred to the opening of universities for men and women and its commitment to reopening primary and secondary schools for boys and girls no later than March – across the country.”

TOLO News, No High School Graduates in 5 Paktika Districts in 20 Years, 13 February 2022

“There have been no high school graduates in the past 20 years in five districts of the southeastern province of Paktika, tribal elders said, saying the lack of high schools and the poor education system are the reasons thousands of youth are deprived of an education. According to the students of these districts, the families who are in a good economic condition send their children to the provincial capital city, Sharana, to continue their schools but those families struggling with severe economic conditions are unable to send their children to the capital for continuing education. The districts Worombai, Tarwi, Dila Khoshamand, Naka and Barmal are where the education system was not properly active due to security tensions during the former Afghan governments. “No school has been constructed in our district. Our youth migrated to other countries,” said Zahid, a student in Barmal district. “There was no school in Khoshamand district during the former government’s time. The Islamic Emirate should construct us a school,” said Mohammad Daud, a student in Khoshamand district. The tribal elders called on the Islamic Emirate to construct schools and provide educational opportunities for the residents of these districts. “We don’t have any high school graduates in far areas and some districts of Paktika. We call on the Islamic Emirate officials to construct schools for us,” said Abdul Rahim, a tribal elder in Khoshamand. The provincial education department confirmed the issue, saying that there were no high school graduations

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in the past 20 years in these districts. "Our focus is currently on the areas that lack absolute access to this right (education), we try to provide them their rights in a proper way," said the head of the Paktika education department."

Afghanistan Analysts Network, Who Gets to Go to School? (3): Are Taleban attitudes starting to change from within? 7 February 2022

"In the last of our three reports on the Taleban and education, especially of girls, we turn to what seems to be a relatively new trend. Guest author Sabawoon Samim* has been looking at views of girls' education within the Taleban movement and finds it notable that some Taleban are now seeking out school and even university education for their sons and their daughters. He looks at how and why a significant membership of a group that banned girls' education when it was last in power appears to be changing its attitude towards schooling. The series editor is Kate Clark."

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), How serious are the Taliban about full education for girls?, 31 January 2022

"Girls and young women in Afghanistan are supposed to be able to go to school again as of March [2022], according to Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban government spokesman and deputy culture and information minister. However, education for girls and women is a "question of capacity," Mujahid told The Associated Press earlier this month. "We are trying to solve these problems by the coming year so that schools and universities can open." He made it clear that girls and boys would have to be completely segregated in schools. He added that the biggest obstacle is finding or building enough dorms, or hostels, where girls could stay while going to school. In heavily populated areas, he said, it wasn't enough to have separate classrooms for boys and girls — separate school buildings were needed. [...] However, the Taliban have always stressed two basic conditions — gender segregation in schools as well as in public life, and the curriculum must conform to the Taliban's religious beliefs, she said, adding that statements to that effect have been kept very vague. "And that seems to be the crux of the matter — girls will probably be able to go to school, the only question is what they will learn there," she said.

Kambiz Ghawami, executive chairman of the German Committee of the World University Service, which advocates education worldwide, is also skeptical about open education policies under the Taliban. The Taliban have said more than once that education is not necessary, Ghawami told DW, adding that in particular for girls and young women the educational situation is bleak. Teachers have not been paid for months, he said, so most of them have turned their backs on the profession to make money elsewhere. [...] According to recent UN statistics, eight million children are currently not going to school, girls as well as boys."

Afghanistan Analysts Network, Who Gets to Go to School? (1): What people told us about education since the Taleban took over, 26 January 2022

"This series looks at schools (maktabs), rather than madrassas, which impart religious education. In literature and discourse, school education is often referred to as 'secular' or 'modern'. These terms are not used in this series of reports unless in quotations: given the extensive religious syllabus of Afghan schools, they are hardly secular, while calling schools 'modern' implicitly downgrades madrassa education as 'backwards' or, more positively, 'traditional'. [...] There is also the question of when and if new schools will open or higher grades added for boys and girls where they do not yet exist. The desire for more Afghan children to have the opportunity to go to school seems likely to increase, and not only because this is where the historical tendency is pushing. The end of the conflict means it is now feasible to open schools

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in districts previously wracked by conflict or isolated by war from government services. All eyes are now on Nawruz, the spring equinox and the start of the new Afghan year of 1401 and, in most provinces, the new school year: Will the Taleban government allow all the nation's schools to reopen and all schoolchildren to return to class, including older girls?"

OHCHR, OHCHR | Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022

"Taliban leaders in Afghanistan are institutionalizing large scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls, a group of UN human rights experts* said today. [...] Of particular and grave concern is the continued denial of the fundamental right of women and girls to secondary and tertiary education, on the premise that women and men have to be segregated and that female students abide by a specific dress code. As such, the vast majority of girls' secondary schools remain closed and the majority of girls who should be attending grades 7-12 are being denied access to school, based solely on their gender."

Khaama Press, Schools and universities to reopen in March this year: Mujahid, 16 January 2022

"Deputy Minister of Information and Culture and spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Zabiullah Mujahid said that schools and universities for girls and boys will reopen in the upcoming new solar year-March 2022.

Speaking with Associated Press on Saturday, January 16, 2022, Zabiullah Mujahid said that the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education are working hard to reopen higher schools and public universities in two months.

The spokesman said that higher schools in most of the provinces have been reopened and in some provinces, they are still closed due to economic issues.

He reiterated that girls and boys will be separated in classrooms and they are working to build more hostels for girls around Afghanistan.

It has been nearly six months that 150 public universities have been closed across Afghanistan while in 40 private universities boys and girls study.

Girls are only allowed to attend classes up to sixth grade in public schools."

AVA Press, Female Students in Baghlan Want Access to Education, 19 December 2021

"Abdul Raqib, the head of education in Baghlan province, assured that the entrance exams for female students, even though schools are closed, adding that they are trying to make the entrance exam more transparent for students. However, despite the repeated demands and protests of, the doors of girls' schools are still closed. With the rise of the Taliban, the doors of girls' and boys' schools were closed, but after about forty days, the boys' and girls' schools below the sixth grade were reactivated. Since then, however, girls in high school have not been able to go to school."

TOLO News, UN Calls for More Action, Clarity for Afghan Women's Rights, 14 December 2021

Citing UNICEF findings, she said that of 4.2 million Afghan children already out of school, 60% are girls, and nearly 9 million children are at risk of being deprived of an education because teachers' salaries are not being paid and schools are being closed.

BBC News, Afghanistan: Girls' despair as Taliban confirm secondary school ban, 8 December 2021

"BBC interviews with students and headteachers in 13 provinces show girls' frustration at still being barred

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

from secondary school, despite assurances from the Taliban that they would be able to resume their studies "as soon as possible".

Teachers, nearly all of whom had not been paid since June, said the situation was affecting girls' wellbeing, with one blaming the closures for the underage marriage of three of her students.

One headteacher from Kabul, who stays in touch with her students via Whatsapp, said: "The students are really upset, they're suffering mentally. I try to give them hope but it's hard because they are exposed to so much sadness and disappointment."

Teachers also reported a worrying drop in attendance among girls in primary schools, who have been allowed to return. They said that increased poverty and security concerns meant families were reluctant to send younger girls to school."

AVA Press, [Reopening of Girls' Schools Requires a New Procedure, Says Taliban](#), 8 December 2021

"The girls will not be allowed to attend school until a new policy is approved in the New Year," said Ministry of Education officials.

"The current situation is a temporary delay," said acting Deputy Education Minister Abdul Hakim in an interview with the BBC today Wednesday, December 8.

According to him, this situation will continue until a new guideline above the sixth grade is created and approved for female students, adding that the Taliban is creating a safe environment for girls to go to school.

Meanwhile, the girls' schools above the sixth grade were still closed since the Taliban came to power. The Taliban have repeatedly reassured people that they will reopen girls' schools, however, now that the school year is over, they have not reopened.

In the meantime, this situation worries the citizens and the families of the . They believe the Taliban have no plans to reopen schools and that girls' schools may be closed in the New Year."

AVA Press, [Malala Yousafzai Calls on US to Support Afghan Girls and Women](#), 7 December 2021

"Malala Yousafzai, a human rights defender and Nobel laureate, called on the United States to support and girls.

According to [sic], Afghan women and girls need support more than ever.

Malala Yousafzai made the remarks during a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony on Monday, December 6.

Afghanistan is the only country where girls do not have access to education and are deprived of this right, she stressed.

The human rights defender delivered a 15-year-old Afghan girl's letter to the US president and read the message of Afghan girls.

"This is the message of Afghan girls now," said. "We want to see a world where all girls can have access to safe and quality education."

In the meantime, reading part of the Afghan girl's letter, she said that the longer schools and remain closed, the less hope they have for the future.

"Educating girls is a powerful tool for building peace and security in Afghanistan," Malala read the letter. Yousafzai expressed hope that the US, along with the [sic], would take immediate action to ensure that Afghan girls return to their schools as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Malala emphasized the need to focus on girls' education and the opening of schools, saying that with the fall of the previous government, the Taliban had banned girls from entering the sixth grade to twelfth grade.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Although the interim government of the Taliban has repeatedly promised to reopen girls' schools, this promise has not yet been fulfilled."

TOLO News, Students, Teachers Call On Govt to Open Girls' Schools, 7 December 2021

"After the collapse of former government, schoolgirls from grade 7 to 12 have been allowed to continue their studies in eight provinces of Afghanistan.

Several school-aged girls in the northeastern province of Kunar have called for the reopening of schools for girls grades 7-12 in the province.

They urged the new government to let girls continue their education in Kunar, as they have been allowed in some other provinces. [...]

Along with students, a number of teachers and tribal elders in Kunar province claimed that the Islamic Emirate is behaving inconsistently toward Afghan students across Afghanistan. [...]

Meanwhile, the head of the education department in Kunar province, Mawllawi Muhebullah Haidari, said the department is prepared to reopen schools for girls if they receive permission.

"We ask elders (government leaders) to give permission, we are ready to open the schools," said Haidari.

Based on the reports, nearly 70.000 girls are attending in Kunar's schools.

After the collapse of former government, schoolgirls from grade 7 to 12 have been allowed to continue their studies in eight provinces of Afghanistan. Schools in the remaining provinces are still shut."

UNICEF, Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 Overview, 6 December 2021

"Recent political developments have greatly exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The volatile situation has heightened the underlying vulnerabilities in the country, where 24.4 million, including 12.6 million children are already in need of humanitarian assistance. Child protection risks remain high with continued insecurity and attacks against civilians, and families are resorting to child marriage and child labor to cope with the socioeconomic deterioration. Over 10 million school-aged children need education assistance, in addition to the 4.2 million children already out of school."

OCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 (Part Two), 2 December 2021

"Conflict and COVID-19 have also interrupted schooling for more than 9.3 million children since 2020."

AP News, Unique effort reopens girls' schools in an Afghan province, 1 December 2021

"When the Taliban seized power in August, most schools were closed because of COVID-19. Under heavy international pressure, the Taliban soon reopened schools for girls in grades 1-6, along with boys' schools at all levels. But they have not allowed girls in grades 7-12 to return, saying they must first ensure classes are held in an "Islamic manner." The Taliban also barred most women from government jobs, their largest place of employment. [...]

Herat is the only place where girls' high schools are open across the province, although schools also have reopened in a few individual districts in northern Afghanistan, including the city of Mazar-e Sharif."

TOLO News, Facing Closed Schools, Nangarhar Girls Despair Over Future, 29 November 2021

"The provincial education department said that it has been attempting to facilitate girls' access to education beyond grade 6. Girls in the eastern province of Nangarhar are concerned about their uncertain future as schools from grade 7 to 12 have remained closed for girls since the Islamic Emirate swept into power in Afghanistan. The students urged the government to provide them with educational opportunities."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

TOLO News, 50% of Private Education Centers Closed Nationwide Since Takeover, 29 November 2021

“Over 50 percent of private education centers have been closed within the past three months across the country, the Union of Private Education Centers said on Sunday. The union said the deteriorated economic status of families is the main reason for the closure of these educational centers.”

AVA, Some Female Teachers in Afghanistan Teach Students Secretly, 27 November 2021

“The newspaper reported on Thursday (November 25th) that the teachers were opposed to the schools being closed. For this reason, some teachers provide education for girls in secret places. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, some teachers called the plan vital, stressing that they had decided to secretly teach female students after the Taliban did not allow them to go to school.”

TOLO News, Afghan Students with Scholarships to Pakistan Schools Lack Visas, 22 November 2021

“Afghan students who won Pakistani educational scholarships but have not yet been able to obtain visas gathered for a protest in front of the country’s embassy in Kabul on Monday.

The banners carried by the students are painted with the slogans: “The students have nothing to do with politics. We want our visas.” [...]

These students won scholarships for bachelors, masters, and PhD degrees at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. [...]

According to the students, classes began nearly two months ago.”

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report, October 2021, 15 November 2021

“Education

Female teachers and education administration workers have continued to remain at home with exceptions being reported in some provinces across the country. Most restrictions on the implementation of interventions by partners have been removed, except on resuming Accelerated Learning Centres (ALC) and Girls’ Access to Teacher Education (GATE) classes. The discussion to re-open GATE classes continues, and in a few provinces, as Teacher Training Centres (TTC) are opening and agreements have been reached to ensure that students who were in their final month(s) of their academic year can sit their exams. This will be a crucial step forward as more female teachers will be required to ensure all girls can return to school.”

Ariana News, High school girls will go to next grade should schools stay shut this year, 15 November 2021

“Ministry of Education (MoE) officials said Monday that plans to reopen schools for girls from Grade 7 have not yet been finalized.

Dr Arfan, spokesman for the MoE said that girls above Grade 6 will however be promoted a year should the plan not be finalized this year.

“Girls up to class six are going to participate in exams, and the girls that are not attending schools will be upgraded based on their previous exams,” said Arfan.

This comes after Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials closed senior schools for girls after they took control in mid-August.

However, they have said they are working on a way to reopen schools for high school girls but within Islamic principles.”

AVA Press, With Schools Closed, Kandahar Girls do Art at Home, 13 November 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The girls, who are sisters, turned one of the rooms in their house into a painting and drawing center, and from this room they are promoting the art of painting and drawing. They said they don't want their last few years' struggles to be forgotten.

The girls urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen for girls.

"I ask the Islamic Emirate to reopen all the educational institutions so that all girls can go and learn their lessons," said Shugofa Amiri, a painter.

"They have given us 10 to 12 rules which are very strict. They told us that you should not come without Mahram," said Masoma Amiri, a painter.

The sisters have learned the art of painting and drawing in one of the art centers in Kandahar's city and are trying to display their products. Now this art center is closed.

Meanwhile, the Department of Information and Culture said that work has begun on providing facilities for the female students.

"There is also a procedure for girls' education. The centers are allowed to teach them based on the Islamic regulations," said Abdul Shukur Spand, the and Culture Director of Kandahar.

On the other hand, painters in Kandahar called on the Islamic Emirate to spare no efforts in providing facilities for them.

"A large number of male and female students were coming here in order to learn drawing and painting skills," said Amanullah , a teacher of fine arts at a center in Kandahar.

In the last three months, most of the girls' training centers were closed in the capital and other provinces, but in recent weeks some provinces have provided education for girls."

TOLO News, Girls' Schools for Grades 7-12 Reopen in Herat, 8 November 2021

"Teachers said they have not received their salaries for over four months and face economic problems.

After nearly three months, girls' schools have reopened for all female students in the western province of Herat, according to an elected council of Herat teachers.

For the past several months only girls up to grade 6 were allowed; now girls and young women in grades 7-12 are allowed to attend school in Herat.

According to the council, the decision was made after a month of discussions between the council and officials of girls' schools with the local officials of the Islamic Emirate in Herat.

The council said this decision allows over 300,000 more girls to continue with their education."

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, UNICEF to directly fund Afghan teachers, bypassing Taliban authorities, 3 November 2021

"The United Nations children's agency said it was planning to set up a system to directly fund Afghan teachers, after the international community placed a freeze on funding to the Taliban-led administration.

"UNICEF is setting up a system that will allow direct payments to teachers without the funds being channelled through the de facto authorities," Jeannette Vogelaar, UNICEF Afghanistan's Chief of Education, told Reuters in an email.

In preparation, she said, UNICEF would begin registering all public school teachers.

"The best way to support the education of girls in Afghanistan is to continue supporting their schools and teachers. UNICEF is calling upon donors not to let Afghanistan's children down," Vogelaar added.

Afghanistan's public services, in particular health and education, have been plunged into crisis since the Islamist Taliban movement took over the country on Aug. 15.

Many foreign governments have placed a ban on funding outside of humanitarian aid that is channelled

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

through multilateral agencies.

That has generally been limited to urgent supplies such as wheat and blankets, leaving public service workers including teachers without pay for months. Billions of dollars in Afghan central bank funds held overseas have also been frozen.

The international community has raised alarm that the Taliban might restrict female education, and high schools for girls in many parts of the country have remained closed even while those for boys have been allowed to open.

A Taliban official told Reuters this week there would be "good news" soon on older girls being allowed to go back to school, and that they were working with UNICEF and other international organisations on the issue.

"We are working especially with UNICEF and some other international organisations ... to come up with a good solution ... we have meetings on a daily basis," said Waheedullah Hashimi, Director of External Programmes and Aid at Afghanistan's Ministry of Education.

"We have a problem that economically we are not good ... that is why we are requesting the international community, international organisations, especially those who have funds for emergency situations, to help us in this regard," he added."

TOLO News, [Afghan Girls Call for Reopening of Schools](#), 29 October 2021
"In the last two months, school-age girls and young women from grades 7 to 12 are still deprived of education in many of the provinces.

These students called on the Islamic Emirate to reopen girls' schools across the country. [...]

According to the United Nations Educational Organization, over 4 million students have been deprived of education in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, a number of Kandahar residents urged the Islamic Emirate to rebuild all those schools that have been destroyed in fighting between the former government and the Islamic military forces in the provinces.

Kandahar residents said that dozens of schools have been destroyed in the city and in other districts and thousands of students have been deprived of learning. The Ghazi Mohammad Akbar Khan school in Arghandab district of Kandahar province is an example of the war's devastation in Kandahar. The school has been destroyed in recent battles between the former government military forces and the Islamic Emirate. "Anyone who sees this school says 'we ask our leaders to let the children go back to school,' but they said that a large part of the school has been destroyed," said Barialai, the principal of the school. Officials at the Kandahar education department said that plans are underway for the reconstruction of schools in Kandahar."

Khaama Press, [Women protest over closed schools for girls in Afghanistan](#), 26 October 2021
"A number of women took to the streets of Kabul on Tuesday, October 26 to protest against the closed school for girls and accused the international community of being silent about what is going on in Afghanistan.

The women who had gathered at the gates of UNAMA in Kabul said that the international community, human rights group, and the United Nations are completely indifferent to the restrictions imposed by the Taliban in particular on the Afghan women.

The protestors said that the silence of the UN against the ongoing situation in Afghanistan is "shameful". The women chanted "rights to education, rights to work, are the fundamental rights of women" and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“history will be ashamed of the silence of the UN”.

Deutsche Welle, Afghan girls set up 'secret school' amid Taliban restrictions, 22 October 2021

“After coming to power, the Islamist group imposed a ban on girls' education, prompting some Afghans to set up an "underground school." DW spoke to some of the girls who are determined to continue their studies. [...]

After the Taliban overthrew Ashraf Ghani's government and captured the capital, Kabul, in late August, they reimposed restrictions on girls' education. In some cities, girls are not allowed to attend schools after sixth grade, and in some areas, older girls are not allowed to sit with male students.

The measures are arbitrary but in stark contrast to the Islamists' initial statements that they would respect fundamental human rights. [...]

Running the "secret school" under these circumstances is not an easy task, but many parents are determined to educate their daughters and are ready to take risks.

The students of this school take different routes to join their classes at different times during the day so that they are not noticed by the authorities.

There are no desks and chairs in the classroom; girls sit in a circle on the floor. DW spoke to some of these girls, but for security reasons, their identities have been concealed.”

Thomson Reuters Foundation news, In northern Afghanistan, girls' schools working despite ban elsewhere, 12 October 2021

“While girls across most of Afghanistan remain at home while brothers go to high school, classes in some northern areas have been open for all students, highlighting regional differences starting to emerge two months after the Taliban seized power.

Secondary schools remain closed for girls in much of the country, but in Mazar-i-Sharif, close to the border with Uzbekistan, local authorities have taken a different approach.

Zabihullah Noorani, head of the culture and information directorate in the northern province of Balkh, said lessons in many schools were continuing for both boys and girls.”

Reuters, Afghan minister wants good relations, need more time on girls' education, 12 October 2021

“Afghanistan's [acting] foreign minister acting Foreign Minister [Amir Khan Muttaqi] appealed to the world for good relations on Monday but avoided making firm commitments on girls' education despite international demands to allow all Afghan children to go back to school.” [...]

“Muttaqi said the Taliban's Islamic Emirate government was moving carefully but had only been in power for a few weeks and could not be expected to complete reforms the international community had not been able to implement in 20 years.”

Thomson Reuters Foundation news, Despite promises by the militants to let girls go to school, many Afghans fear girls' opportunities will be severely limited, 11 October 2021

“Secondary school girls in Afghanistan have had to remain at home since the Taliban took control of the country on Aug. 15, even though their brothers have returned to class.

The Islamist movement, which barred girls from education when last in power 20 years ago, has promised it will allow girls to go to school as it seeks to show the world it has changed.

But when it announced older boys could resume school in September, along with primary-age children, it gave no indication of when adolescent girls could return to class.

Some secondary schools for girls have recently reopened in the northern province of Kunduz, but there

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

has been no statement by the Taliban.

Head teachers, who are in talks with officials over the conditions for resuming girls' education elsewhere, expect an announcement shortly.

But even if the Taliban keep their word, many people fear girls' education and future opportunities will be restricted under the militant group's rule."

Al Jazeera, Anxious wait for Afghan girls as opening of high schools stalled, 5 October 2021

"Millions of teenage girls across Afghanistan are anxiously waiting to return to the classroom, as high schools continue to remain closed, raising fears about the future of female education under Taliban rule. The country's new rulers allowed boys in the same age group – seven to 12 – to attend classes last month, but said that "a safe learning environment" was needed before older girls could return to school. At that time, the Taliban's Deputy Minister of Information and Culture Zabihullah Mujahid said the group was working on a "procedure" to allow teenage girls back into the classroom."

Khaama Press, School graduates of 2000-2020, of no use: Taliban's higher education minister, 4 October 2021

"The acting minister of the higher education of the Taliban Abdul Baqi Haqqani said that those who have graduated from high schools during the past twenty years are of no use.

The acting minister is meant by the graduates who have studied during the non-Taliban era when they were fighting the US-backed governments of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani.

Abdul Baqi Haqqani made the statements in a meeting with the university lecturers in Kabul.

Haqqani said that they must hire teachers who instill the students and incoming generations the values that are of use in the country and Afghanistan can utilize their talents in the future.

Earlier, the acting minister of higher education had said that the Master's and Ph.D. holders of modern studies are less valuable than those who have studied in madrasas and have religious studies in Afghanistan.

The statement of Haqqani comes as the period-2000-2020- is said to be one of the most important and rich eras when it comes to the level of education in Afghanistan.

The writer of this report is one of those who first went to school in 2000, graduated, got his BA degree in journalism, and is now working as a professional Afghan journalist in Kabul."

Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, SCA brings hope to children of war survivors, 4 October 2021

"The construction of a school by the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) in a war frontline has built hopes and brought smile to the face of children and residents of Olkhel village in Wardak Province.

The children of Olkhil village, who have long been deprived of their right to education and have always lived in turmoil in search of shelter against the bullets and flames of war, are now happy and excited about the construction of a school in their village. The village that has witnessed years of fighting between the former government's security forces and its armed opposition groups, its residents has bitter memories about their village being used as a war frontline before the recent political transition in the country. [...]

Hazrat Omar Farooq School is an elementary school whose building is designed with six classrooms, four administrative rooms, a computer lab, a laboratory, ten separate toilets for girls and boys, and a 300-meter surrounding wall. The school will going to be equipped with a solar power system. A drinking water well has also been dug in the school and is to be connected to a solar power system. This school is built for both boys and girls students and has 13 teachers. The school is located 7 km from the capital city of Maidan Shahr and about 35 km from the capital province Kabul."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

ABC News, Taliban official's comments on education, jobs fuel more fears for Afghan women's rights, 29 September 2021

"When the Taliban controlled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, they largely barred women and girls from public life without a male relative and excluded them from schools and universities entirely. Kabul University chancellor Mohammad Ashraf Ghairat suggested a return to that policy Tuesday, tweeting, "As long as a real Islamic environment is not provided for all, women will not be allowed to come to universities or work. Islam first."

After media outlets reported on his comments, he issued a second tweet, criticizing the New York Times in particular for what he called a "bad misunderstanding" of his comments."

Al Jazeera, Girls to return to secondary schools 'soon as possible': Taliban, 21 September 2021

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

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The fate of thousands hanging in the balance, 21 September 2021

"In this report, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) have documented incidents of human rights violations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August". The report references a number of sources,

Including: [...]

- Gandhara/RFEL, Taliban Imposes New Dress Code, Segregation of Women at Afghan Universities, 6 September 2021, <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/taliban-dress-code-segregation-women/31446726.htm>

- The Times of India. 18 September 2021. "Taliban resume boys-only schools, makes no mention of girls". <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/taliban-resume-boys-only-schools-makes-no-mention-of-girls/articleshow/86311733.cms>.

- Al Jazeera. 17 September 2021. "Taliban says classes resume for Afghan boys, no mention of girls". <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/17/taliban-saysclasses-resume-afghan-boys-no-mention-girls>. [...]

- France 24. 11 September 2021. "Sports ban, segregated education: Afghanistan women worried by first Taliban measures".

<https://www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20210911-sports-ban-segregated-education-afghanistan-women-worried-by-first-taliban-measures>.

Reuters, Some Afghan girls return to school, others face anxious wait, 18 September 2021

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

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

The Guardian, Taliban ban girls from secondary education in Afghanistan, 17 September 2021

"The Taliban have effectively banned girls from secondary education in Afghanistan, by ordering high

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

schools to re-open only for boys.

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

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

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

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

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

Human Rights Watch, How the International Community Can Protect Afghan Women and Girls, 2 September 2021

"Access to Education

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

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

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

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

Violence and abuse (including child labor)

Tolo News, Child Labor Increases in Helmand, Say Residents, 21 August 2022

"Child labor has increased in the southern province of Helmand, residents said, adding that it is due to a sharp rise in poverty in the country."

"Families of the children stated that because of economic hardships, they were forced to send their

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

children to work.”

“‘Due to economic challenges, every family is forced to send their children to hard labor,’ said Abdul Satar, another resident of Lashkargah city.

Officials from the labor and social affairs directorate of Helmand said that at least 20% of children in the province are engaged in labor.”

“The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Afghanistan previously referred to the situation of Afghan children as being more worrying than ever.”

Khaama Press, Child, 6, Tortured to Death by Father in Southern Afghanistan, 27 July 2022

“With a significant increase in family violence and personal enmity, reports of domestic violence leading to homicides have soared in number.

Only about a month ago, a man killed nine members of his family including his pregnant wife and four children, in southwestern Afghanistan.

In addition, according to provincial Taliban officials in the province of Faryab, in northern Afghanistan, recently, a pregnant woman was fatally stabbed by her husband in Maimana.

Moreover, a man in the same province of Helmand used a knife to behead both his wife and their three-month-old infant.”

Khaama Press, Girl, 15, Killed by Unknown Armed Men in Northern Afghanistan, 24 July 2022

“According to the sources, the armed men killed a young girl after breaking into a house in the Kohistan district of Faryab province on Saturday night, July 23. On the other hand, the provincial Taliban officials have not yet spoken on the matter.

While the Taliban has taken no action to combat these crimes, reports of armed attacks by armed people have recently escalated, with women being the primary victims.

Earlier this month, an unidentified man stabbed a 50-year-old woman to death in her own home in the central Afghan province of Kapisa.

In Kandahar Province’s Ayno Mina city, a man allegedly shot his ex-wife, killing two men and a woman.

Over 100 women and girls have reportedly been killed, abducted, or committed suicide in the previous six months, according to a report by the Afghanistan International news channel.

In recent months, there has been an upsurge in domestic violence, personal enmity, and family blood feuds, which have resulted in homicides, target killings, and honor killings.”

UN News, Thousands of children endure 'horrific conditions' in conflict zones: UN report, 11 July 2022

"The report highlights almost 24,000 verified grave violations against children, an average of some 65 violations every day. The killing and maiming of children was the most verified grave violation followed by the recruitment and use of children and the denial of humanitarian access.

The places where most children were affected by grave violations in 2021 were Afghanistan [...]."

Jurist.org, UN officials will investigate killing of children in armed conflict in Ukraine, Ethiopia and Mozambique, 12 July 2022

"United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres [...] also highlighted countries such as [...], Afghanistan [...] as having the highest number of violations against children."

AVA, Concern of the United Nations about the conditions of children in war-torn areas, 12 July 2022

"The United Nations has published a report describing the conditions of children in war-torn areas like

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghanistan as terrible.

In this report, it is said that 24,000 cases of serious violations against children have been highlighted in 2021.

According to this report, more than 8 thousand children have been killed or maimed, including in Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen. Out of nearly 24,000 cases of serious violations against children (an average of 25 cases per day), more than 5,200 cases are related to girls and more than 13,600 cases are related to boys. According to this report, 1,600 children have been victims of multiple assaults. Remains of unexploded ammunition, improvised bombs and landmines have been the main cause of killing and maiming more than eight thousand children. Also, according to this report, children are still being recruited by armed groups, whose number reaches more than 6,300 people. The regions where the most children were affected by severe violations in 2021 were Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. Virginia Gamba, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, said in the report that the terrible conditions suffered by children in armed conflicts cannot be described in words.

Ms. Gamba added that those who survive these crises will be affected by deep physical and emotional scars for the rest of their lives. "This report is a call to intensify work to better protect children during armed conflicts and ensure that they are given a real chance to recover and flourish," She said. Meanwhile, in 2021, two types of offenses showed a sharp increase: kidnapping and sexual violence, including rape, which according to this report both increased by 20 percent."

UNICEF, [Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report](#), 15 June 2022

"The risk of explosive ordnances continues to pose a significant danger to children as previously inaccessible locations continued to open, resulting in a high number of child casualties."

Tolo News, [Poverty Forcing Afghan Children into Hard Labour](#), 8 June 2022

"According to 2020 statistics from the National Statistics Office, more than 700,000 children in the country are engaged in hard labor. Poverty in the country has forced many children in the capital to work instead of going to school. They say they are concerned about not getting an education."

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), [Global Annual Results Report 2021 GOAL AREA 2 Every child learns](#), 1 June 2022

"In 2021, UNICEF supported nearly 1,000 child survivors of landmines and ERW to receive direct survivor assistance; a 25 per cent increase from those reached in 2020. This is largely attributable to the resumption of the survivor assistance programme in Afghanistan, where 398 child survivors received assistance."

Pajhwok, [115 people killed, injured in Afghanistan last week](#), 30 April 2022

"Casualties

At least 31 people were killed and 84 others injured in Afghanistan last week. Casualties from natural disasters not included in these figures.

Five people were killed and 58 others injured in a bomb blast inside a mosque in Kabul City's Allauddin

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

area on Friday afternoon, according to health officials.

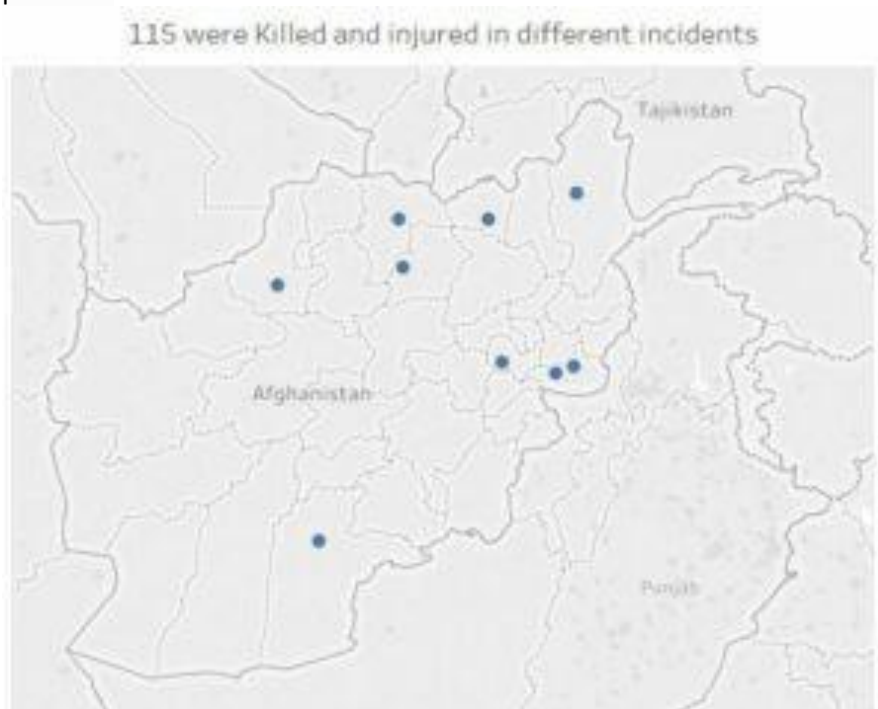
Kabul police, however, said 10 people were killed and 30 others injured in the blast. No group has claimed responsibility for the blast.

Eleven people were killed and 17 others injured in two separate blasts in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, last week. Daesh claimed responsibility for the two blasts.

A child was killed when armed men opened firing on a rickshaw in Jalalabad City last week. One child was killed, two others and a woman were injured in a warhead blast in Sararud district.

Mining Department Director was killed and two others injured in a roadside blast in Faizabad City, the capital of northeastern Badakhshan province last week. Unknown gunmen killed a teenage boy in front of his home in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province.

According to local sources, five coalminers were killed in the Dara-i-Suf Paen district last week. Four people wounded in a landmine blast in Kunduz while a body was recovered in the Pashtonkot district of Faryab province.



The previous week, 128 people were killed and 161 others injured in Afghanistan.”

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) [News](#), [UNAMA statement on deadly attack in Kabul](#), 29 April 2022

“KABUL – The United Nations in Afghanistan condemns in the strongest terms today’s deadly attack in a Sufi Mosque in the Darulaman area of Kabul, which reportedly resulted in scores dead and wounded. Today’s attack on the Khalifa Sahib Mosque is the latest in a series of indiscriminate assaults on civilian targets in the capital and provinces, and directly affected at least two UN staff members and their families who were inside the mosque at the time of the attack. “Today’s attack, carried out on the last Friday of the Holy month of Ramadan and on the eve of the Eid-ul-Fitr, totally disregards human lives and religious sanctity. No words are strong enough to condemn this despicable act, targeting a place of worship, as

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Muslims across Afghanistan prepare to celebrate the Eid,” said Mette Knudsen, the UN Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan. “Recent attacks against civilians, targeting ethnic and religious minorities, represent a disturbing trend in Afghanistan. These violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws must end immediately.” The latest attack in Kabul follows a spate of attacks in recent weeks in mosques and schools in the major cities of Kabul, Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif, which appear to have specifically targeted members of the Hazara, Shia and Sufi minorities, including yesterday’s attack in Mazar-e-Sharif which also resulted in several killed and injured.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 9-15 April 2022, 20 April 2022

“Meanwhile, in Takhar province, Taliban forces engaged in internal clashes in Baharak and Chahab districts, resulting in at least nine fatalities. While the exact reason for the infighting remains unknown, locals in Chahab claimed that Taliban forces from the Uzbek and Pashtun ethnic groups fought against a Tajik Taliban commander (Hasht-e Subh, 11 April 2022) (for more information on Taliban infighting and the latest disorder trends in Afghanistan, see this joint ACLED and Afghan Peace Watch report). These trends contribute to the 110% increase in violence in Takhar last week relative to the past month flagged by ACLED’s Subnational Surge Tracker. The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Takhar in the past month.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban intelligence forces detain, beat journalist Mohib Jalili in Kabul, 18 April 2022

“On Saturday, April 16, more than seven armed men from the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) arrested Jalili, who was on his way home and works as a presenter with the independent 1TV station, in District 15 of the capital Kabul, according to the journalist, who spoke to CPJ by phone, a tweet by a local press freedom advocate, and the Afghanistan Journalists Center, a media watchdog group.

While Jalili was detained at a GDI office, Taliban intelligence agents beat him with a gun, resulting in a large welt on his left arm; called him names, such as the “devil journalist who ruins the Taliban’s reputation”; and held him for about three hours before releasing him without any charges, the journalist said. Upon release, an agent threatened Jalili and told him not to talk about the detention to any journalist or media outlets.”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Afghan Journalists Face Ever-Increasing Restrictions, 18 April 2022

“In one of the latest’s, a TV host and presenter Moheb Jalili, has been abducted and tortured by the Taliban members in district 15 of the Kabul city at around 8 Saturday night, according to sources. In an interview with Hasht-e-Subh, Jalili confirmed his detention, saying he is not sure of the crime for which the Taliban government has detained and tortured him for. The current government, however, did not immediately comment.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“Abductions: The UN secretary-general’s 2020 Children and Armed Conflict Report, released in June, cited 54 verified incidents of the Taliban abducting children. Of those, 42 children were released, four were killed, and the whereabouts of eight children remained unknown. [...] Child labor remained a pervasive problem. Most victims of forced labor were children. Child laborers worked as domestic servants, street vendors, peddlers, and shopkeepers. There was child labor in the carpet industry, brick kilns, coal mines, and poppy fields. Children were also heavily engaged in the worst forms of child labor in mining, including

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

mining salt; commercial sexual exploitation including bacha bazi (see section 6, Children); transnational drug smuggling; and organized begging rings. Some forms of child labor exposed children to land mines. Children faced numerous health and safety risks at work. There were reports of recruitment of children by the ANDSF during the year (see section 1.g.). Taliban forces pressed children to take part in hostile acts (see section 1.g.).

Some children were forced by their families into labor with physical violence. Families sold their children into forced labor, begging, or sex trafficking to settle debts with opium traffickers. Some parents forcibly sent boys to Iran to work to pay for their dowry in an arranged marriage. Children were also subject to forced labor in orphanages run by NGOs and overseen by the government.”

AVA Press, One fifth of starving Afghan families sending children out to work, 14 February 2022

“Up to one-fifth of families in Afghanistan have been forced to send their children out to work as incomes have plummeted in the past six months with an estimated one million children now engaged in child labour, according to new Save the Children research. A survey of 1,400 households across seven provinces of Afghanistan found that 82% of Afghans have lost income since the collapse of the former government and transition of power last August, with 18% reporting they had no choice but to send their children out to work.

According to Save the Children’s analysis, if just one child in each of these families is being sent to work, then more than one million children in the country are engaged in child labour. [...]

Last month, Save the Children reported that the number of dangerously malnourished children visiting its health clinics had more than doubled since August.

Save the Children’s Country Director in Afghanistan, Chris Nyamandi, said:

“I’ve never seen anything like the desperate situation we have here in Afghanistan. We treat frighteningly ill children every day who haven’t eaten anything except bread for months. Parents are having to make impossible decisions – which of their children do they feed? Do they send their children to work or let them starve? These are excruciating choices that no parent should have to make.”

ILO, ILO Brief - Employment prospects in Afghanistan: A rapid impact assessment, 19 January 2022

“The impact on child labour

The worsening economic and jobs crisis could aggravate the child labour situation. The recent Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019–20 estimated that approximately 1.06 million children aged 5-17 years, 9 per cent of this age group, were involved in child labour. The overall figure masks important differences by gender and area of residence: - Child labour has an important gender dimension in Afghanistan. Boys are more likely to be involved in child labour (12.6 per cent) than their female counterparts (5.1 per cent). In absolute numbers, there are more than 770,000 boys and about 300,000 girls in child labour. When the definition of child labour expands to include children carrying out household chores for 21 hours or more per week, the child labour prevalence increases to 13 per cent for both sexes and to almost 12 per cent for girls.

- Child labour is a predominantly rural phenomenon. Children living in rural areas (9.9 per cent or 839,000) are much more likely to be in child labour compared to those living in urban areas (2.9 per cent or 80,000).

- Only 40 per cent of children aged 5–17 years were attending school. A large share of children (41 per cent) were neither attending school nor working. [...]

There are no current estimates on the impact that the recent political and socio-economic situation will have on the number of children in child labour. Nonetheless, a rise in the number of working children and a decline of children attending school are expected outcomes of the fragile situation in the country.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Ariana News, Afghanistan tops list for number of child casualties since 2005, 1 January 2021

"The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said Friday that Afghanistan has witnessed the highest number of child casualties since 2005.

"In a statement issued on Friday, UNICEF stated that more than 28,500 children have been killed in conflicts since 2005 in Afghanistan.

"UNICEF said that Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and northern Ethiopia, are the places where "thousands of children paid a devastating price as armed conflict, inter-communal violence, and insecurity continued."

"According to the statement, Afghanistan has recorded 27 percent of all verified child casualties globally."

Global News, Girl shot dead by Taliban while family was preparing to flee Canada, 16 December 2021

"A 10-year-old girl was shot dead in Afghanistan while her family was preparing to flee to Canada under an immigration program for Afghans who worked for the Canadian Forces, multiple sources said Thursday. The girl, Nazifa, was killed when gunfire erupted near a Taliban checkpoint in Kandahar on the night of Dec. 10, her father and the Canadian veterans group Aman Lara told Global News in interviews.

The father had worked for the Canadian military in Kandahar until 2011. The family was approved for resettlement by Canada, but was stuck in Afghanistan due to the lack of evacuation efforts."

AVA, Poverty in Afghanistan: Child Labor Increased in Baghlan after Taliban Takeover, 28 November 2021

"Residents are worried about children being forced to work hard on the streets of Pul-e-Khumri, saying that hundreds of children are working on the streets due to poverty. Local Taliban officials in Baghlan, however, say their government cannot manage the situation. Ataullah, a resident of Baghlan who has been running a shop in Pul-e-Khumri for ten years, says people's lives are getting harder. According to him, poverty forced families to send their children to work on the streets. He adds with concern that the number of working children in the market is increasing every day. Hussainullah, an 11-year-old boy, has dropped out of school for a month while working in a wheelbarrow in -e-Khumri. He says that his father also has a wheelbarrow. Due to financial difficulties, he has been forced to take a wheelbarrow and provide alimony for his family often.

Working Child in the streets of Baghlan province. "If my family's economy were good, my only wish would have been to go to school," said Hussainullah, a child who drives a wheelbarrow with difficulty. "I would like to go to school and study."

UNAMA, UN Calls for solidarity and commitment to end violence against women and girls amidst humanitarian crises, 25 November 2021

"Gender-based violence continues to be a serious threat to women and girls and a major obstacle to achieving lasting sustainable development and peace. Referred to as a 'shadow pandemic' violence against women has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis."

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

"37. During the second quarter of 2021, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 1,179 grave violations against 1,112 children (673 boys, 420 girls, 19 sex unknown) during the reporting period, including 1,085 children killed or maimed (309 killed and 776 maimed) (647 boys, 419 girls, 19 sex unknown). [...]

38. The country task force verified the recruitment and use of 26 children (all boys) aged between 12 and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

17 years by the Taliban (16), Afghan National Police (6) and pro-government militias (4)."

Children separated from their families

Jurist, Report finds 72% increase in unaccompanied minors seeking EU asylum, 5 May 2022

"The report finds the increase is largely due to the situation in Afghanistan. There was an increase of 12,270 unaccompanied minors in 2021 from Afghanistan compared to 5,495 in 2020. In 2021, unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan accounted for 53% of the applications."

UNICEF, Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report Report #3 1-28 February 2022, 22 March 2022

"With UNICEF support, more than 99,580 people received life-saving protection services including 1,435 separated and unaccompanied children who benefitted from family-tracing and reunification services."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatch: 'an Afghan family has sold four of their daughters for 42,000 Afghanis', 18 February 2022

"To survive, an Afghan family has sold four of their daughters for 42,000 Afghanis. This family, who live in Afghanistan's Sar e Pul province, told a local newspaper that they sold their daughters to buy food and other necessities, particularly flour and oil.

This family has sold every child they have had in the last four years for small sums of money. Their first daughter was sold for 11,000 Afghanis, their second daughter for 12,000 Afghanis, their third daughter for 9,000 Afghanis, and their fourth daughter for 10,000 Afghanis.

The local newspaper further reports that the family's mother is now mentally ill due to the sale of her daughters. The family have no money to either pay for food and treatment of the family's mother."

ToloNews, Most Public Orphanages Now Closed: Ministry, 1 February 2022

"While the number of orphans and unsupervised children is increasing across Afghanistan, officials said that only 9 out of 68 public orphanages are operating in the country. Mohammad Yunus Sediqi, head of the media department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, said that 36 private orphanages are open in the country. Currently nine public (government) orphanages are open as are 36 private ones. Efforts are underway to reopen the public orphanages if there is a budget for us."

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 23 January 2022

"On 13 January, describing a "nightmare unfolding in Afghanistan", the United Nations' Secretary-General, António Guterres, warned that the world is "in a race against time to help the Afghan people." (Link) The UN Chief said the size of the appeal launched on 11 January "reflects the scale of the despair." He added that there are "babies being sold to feed their siblings. Freezing health facilities overflowing with malnourished children. People burning their possessions to keep warm." Currently, more than half the population depends on life-saving assistance but without a more concerted effort from the international community, Mr. Guterres stated that "virtually every man, woman and child in Afghanistan could face acute poverty."

NBC News, They managed to escape Afghanistan. But their 2-year-old is still stuck in Kabul, 23 December 2021

"An Afghan man and his wife are appealing to the Biden administration to help them reunite with their

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

son, who had to be left behind with a relative in the chaos at Kabul airport.”

UNICEF, Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on unaccompanied and separated children evacuated from Afghanistan, 7 September 2021

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

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

Early and forced marriage

UNFPA, ‘Giving up is not an option’ - Young Afghan forced out of school remains hopeful, 25 August 2022

“The Taliban’s series of directives that effectively restrict women and girls from participating in public life. To fill her time and still feel productive, Ms. Fasihi joined the Youth Peer Educators Network (Y-PEER), a regional initiative led by and for youth, supported by UNFPA. The training opened her eyes to various issues young Afghans face on a daily basis, especially among young girls, such as early marriage and early pregnancy. The unprecedented poverty resulting from the economic crisis that came with the Taliban’s return to power in Afghanistan has brought to the fore discussions about child marriages.”

Khaama Press, Running Away from Home: Taliban Arrests Three Girls in Western Afghanistan, 23 August 2022

“Three young girls have reportedly been arrested by Herat policewomen for the crime of home escape, according to local Taliban authorities in the western Afghan province of Herat. These three girls were reportedly taken into custody from the 6th district of Herat city, the provincial capital, according to the Taliban government’s office of the chief of police in Herat. The case concerning the three young girls has reportedly been brought before the appropriate judicial agencies and authorities in Herat for consideration. The Herat police chief’s office, however, provided no further information regarding the reasons why the three girls left their homes. A boy and a girl from the fifth district of Kunduz province in northern Afghanistan were earlier arrested by Taliban security officers on grounds of running away from home. Afghan women have been subjected to forced marriages and domestic violence, and Human Rights Watch reports that up to 70% of cases of “running away” from home are related to fleeing forced marriage or domestic violence.”

UNHCR, Five things you should know about Afghanistan, 15 August 2022

“[...] 4. Afghanistan’s women and girls have watched their rights disappear. ... Most secondary schools for girls remain closed and many women have lost their jobs, while others lack the required male guardian to accompany them when they venture out of their homes. With many women no longer able to earn a living, families have become further impoverished and young girls are being forced into marriage.”

Al Jazeera, ‘I’ll be sacrificed’: The lost and sold daughters of Afghanistan, 14 August 2022

“Across Afghanistan, it is common for children – particularly girls – to be married. Families arrange marriages to pay back personal debts, settle disputes, improve relations with rival families, or simply

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

because they hope marriage will offer them protection from the worst extremes of economic hardship, and social and political upheaval. Though child marriage is not thoroughly tracked in Afghanistan, with gaps in concrete, holistic data about the number of children affected, UNICEF has reported children being sold as young as 20 days old for future marriage, with girls disproportionately affected. Now, amid spiralling poverty and the difficulty of finding sustainable jobs – only five percent of Afghan families have enough to eat daily, and inflation for essential household goods is at 40 percent (PDF) – even more families are struggling. Many are making desperate decisions to survive, including selling their children – specifically young daughters – into marriage or arranging their marriages in order to receive a dowry or mahr. The dowry, paid by the groom to the bride’s family, is a traditional practice in all marriages in Afghanistan, but more families are now seeking this to help them survive difficult financial times.

“According to Khaja Abdul, Musa was influential within the Jawand district. The region is considered lawless and not entirely under the control of the Taliban commanders in Kabul. Different factions operate in decentralised silos and do not necessarily communicate, follow the same rules, or want to intervene in other jurisdictions. In Afghanistan, domestic violence cases rarely make it to the courts, including under the last government, and are often left unsettled.”

“In Afghanistan, women and girls have struggled for decades, with each change in government adding a new dimension to the challenges they face. During the last Taliban regime, women had little to no freedom; they were not allowed to work or go to school. Under the previous republic that took power in 2004, women were more visible in public life, but women’s rights still wavered, especially in rural areas. Domestic violence was also often justified by conservative culture. Under the new Taliban-run Afghanistan, new rules restricting freedoms around dress, education, the right to work and freedom of movement continue to be enacted. Since the takeover last year, girls beyond the sixth grade have not been allowed to attend school. This is the age where girls, historically, are most vulnerable to being set up for marriage. Girls as young as nine years old are being sold, and at least one or two women a day end their own lives in Afghanistan because of the current situation, Fawzia Koofi, the former deputy speaker of the Afghan parliament, told the United Nations last month.”

“There are concerns that the Taliban does not appear to be focused on eradicating child marriage. Many Taliban fighters have taken child brides for themselves. Taliban chief, Haibatullah Akhunzada, issued a decree barring forced marriage in December, but it did not mention a minimum age for marriage. And Sadiq Akif, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, was quoted earlier this year saying, “when a girl reaches puberty, she can be given to marriage”. Puberty in girls generally occurs between the ages of eight and 13.”

“Child marriage has always existed in Afghanistan. But, recent reports suggest an increase in child selling and marriages spurred by a deepening humanitarian crisis following the Taliban takeover. “Parents sometimes marry a daughter off because they cannot feed her, and they think it may be their only option to keep themselves and their other children alive,” explains Heather Barr, women’s rights associate director for Human Rights Watch. “It’s also unprecedented to have an entire country of girls shut out of high school.””

Jurist.org, [Afghanistan dispatch: ‘under Taliban rule, Afghans are killing themselves in epidemic proportion](#), 14 August 2022

“Today marks the three hundred fifty sixth day in which a country, in the 21 century, does not permit its girls to attend school. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that after August 2021 Afghans and in particular women and girls lost most of their human rights. Women are omitted from leadership positions,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and almost all the government bodies have and are continuously firing women from their jobs. In many cases Taliban had asked women to send their “man of the household” to work instead of themselves.” “Millions have lost their jobs, and are dealing with the worst financial crisis of their precious lives...For the last year, as per HRW’s report “almost 90 percent of the country faces food insecurity”. The country’s private sector has moreover turned to a “Mafia like” entity. Wheat, gas and almost anything that matters is made exclusively for certain companies and individuals, who manipulate the market at their will. The Taliban distort market competition for the mafia, in return they provide them with free gas.” Free speech is absolutely non-existent. Aside from JURIST, only two Afghan-driven news outlets [i.e. Afghanistan International and the “8 am” newspaper], the latter operating outside Afghanistan, have been able to publish any news against the Taliban. The past year has been the worst year for journalists. Many of them got imprisoned, severely beaten, tortured and killed. The Taliban in recent months of their first year of governing decreed that any single criticism would render the offending individual an enemy of the state. They have officially banned a free press and, frankly, any right to think against them.” ‘Thousands died during the last year. In Panjsher, Badakhshan, Takhar and Baghlan provinces, the Taliban broke into homes of civilians and killed them, claiming connection with or support of the NRF. The Taliban burned and killed a whole district—Balkhab—when a Hazara leader defied their orders...Moreover, a systematic genocide of Shia people and the Hazara ethnic group is ongoing in Afghanistan by ISS-K. Mostly the Hazara minority has been targeted by the ISS, in their mosques, and where they can find a mass number in Kabul.” No shock would come to any Afghan when they read a recent report by TOLO News on suicide rates in Afghanistan. TOLO has found that under Taliban rule, Afghans are killing themselves in epidemic proportion – 27 have killed themselves in just two months. TOLO has also found that in the course of six months 630 attempts of suicide were recorded in Herat province alone...As for the incentives, the main cause of suicide in men are financial crises. Affording food, water, electricity and rent is now more than an impossible task. The main cause of suicide in girls are child marriages and forced marriages in cases of adult females. Not having access to education, social restriction and family pressure are other reasons for high suicide rates among girls.”

Gandhara, Death in Slow Motion’: Amnesty’s Report Documents Taliban’s Suffocating Crackdown on Women, Girls, 27 July 2022

“Amnesty said the Taliban has also decimated protections for those facing domestic violence, detained women and girls for minor violations, and triggered a surge in child marriages. The report -- titled Death In Slow Motion: Women and Girls Under Taliban Rule -- also documented how women who peacefully protested the increasingly oppressive rules have been threatened, arrested, detained, tortured, and forcibly disappeared.”

Deutsche Well, Afghan women report beatings, abuse under Taliban, 27 July 2022

“The Taliban have ‘decimated’ the rights of Afghan women and girls since they returned to power in Afghanistan almost a year ago, an Amnesty International report said on Wednesday.” “Under the Taliban regime, the number of child marriages have surged.”

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

“Child, Early and Forced Marriage

"According to Too Young to Wed, an international organization working on forced and child marriage in Afghanistan, the rates of child, early and forced marriage have skyrocketed where they are working, in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Ghor, Herat and Badghis provinces. Of the families they interviewed in a recent rapid assessment survey, nearly one third were on the verge of forcing their daughters into marriage."

"Nazi Gul, a 50-year-old woman living in Uruzgan province, has been her family's sole wage-earner since her husband died seven years ago...Nazi Gul said that to feed herself and the rest of her family, she had married off her seven-year-old daughter for a bride price of 40,000 Afghanis (around US\$450). Her daughter's new husband, a teenager, was a family friend. Nazi Gul said that her daughter was not old enough to comprehend that she is married now: "When they took her the first time, she didn't cry. Then she came back to me. When she went back [to her husband's family] a second time, she started crying. She doesn't understand that this is her new family... She was going to primary school, but now that she's married, they don't let her go to school."

"Since the Taliban's takeover, many families have forced their daughters to marry in order to avoid the possibility that their daughters would be forced to marry a Taliban member. Jamila, the principal of a primary and secondary school in Panjshir province, described how this pattern emerged in her area: "The rumour was that the Taliban might come and take the girls with them, so many of my friends got engaged to their cousins." A local protection actor said he and his organization had witnessed this pattern emerge in his province, Badghis. "It was an emergency situation and there was so much uncertainty, so they felt it was better to marry them with dignity to avoid rape and forced marriages by the powerful," he said."

Khaama Press, Foreign Policy Writer Forced to Issue a Public Retraction After Being Detained for 3 Days by the Taliban, 21 July 2022

"Lynne O'Donnell, an Australian writer who presently writes a column for Foreign Policy magazine, tweeted, "I apologize for 3 or 4 reports written by me accusing the present authorities of forcefully marrying teenage girls and using teenage girls as sexual slaves by Taliban commanders."

O'Donnell revealed on Wednesday that she was forced to make an apology by the Taliban. [...] The journalist said that the agents disapproved of her reporting on LGBTQ persons and asserted that there were "no gays" in the country.

As of yet, the Taliban's Ministry of Information and Culture and intelligence authorities have not reacted on O'Donnell's disclosures.

Following her alleged detention, harassment, and threats, Lynne O'Donnell, who has reported occasionally from Afghanistan for over 20 years, departed the country on Wednesday for Pakistan. [...]"

ToloNews, Activists: Rise in Forced Marriages Linked to Closed Girls' Schools, 8 July 2022

"Some women's rights activists in Bamiyan province said that the closure of girls' schools above sixth grade has caused a surge in the number of forced marriages and has added to domestic violence in this province.

"According to the activists, the closure of schools for female students has caused many girls to turn to hard labor.

"When the schools are closed, some traditional families ... forced (daughters) to marry, and I have seen many school students who were forced to marry underage," said Latifah Sadat, women's rights activist. [...]

"After nearly a year of girls being deprived of school and of increasing poverty in Bamiyan, some students say they have turned to hard labor.

"We started sewing and doing handicrafts as a way to escape unemployment. I would prefer to get employment than to be unemployed," Mastora Akbari, one of the students, told TOLONews."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan — Baseline Mobility Assessment and Emergency Community-Based Needs Assessment Summary Results (March—April 2022), July 2022

"Additionally, 31,458 children were married off as a food-related coping mechanism in the six months prior to data collection. Thirty per cent of these cases were in Sar-e-Pul province. Sar-e-Pul province thus shows high rates of all extreme coping mechanisms."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The Special Rapporteur was particularly troubled to learn about accounts of parents struggling to survive including by increasingly engaging in child marriage, and being exploited by criminal organisations to sell their children or body organs to survive. It is key that the national budget is gender-sensitive and balanced, to ensure that the funds allocated to security are not disproportionate compared with those allocated to health, education, and social services."

Tolo News, Afghan Girls Banned From School Suffer Psychologically: Experts, 3 May 2022

"Female students above grade six say the closing of their schools is causing them mental health trouble. The students said they are counting the seconds until school will be reopened. Saeeda, a student in grade 10, said she dreams of being a doctor in the future. Saeeda said she is afraid to not reach her dreams now because girls beyond grade six are not allowed to go to school. "I am very disappointed that the schools were not reopened. It is the right of every girl to have access to education," said Saeeda, a student in grade 10. "We seriously don't know what type of situation this is. We should go to school to make our future," said Setayish, a student. Psychologists say that the banning of these girls from school is causing mental stress. "When someone likes something and is prevented from doing it, it causes mental stress and anxiety. The girls who like education and are not allowed to engage in it, it causes them mental pressure," said Jamshid Rasa, a psychologist. Sociologists said banning girls from education can pave the ground for early and forced marriages in the country. "The banning of girls from going to secondary and high school will cause a surge in forced marriage," said Bahauddin Baqayi, a sociologist."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"After the August takeover by the Taliban, due to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country, widespread reports surfaced suggesting that some families were selling their young children, usually daughters for early marriage, to afford food. Societal pressures and the Taliban practice of arranging marriages for widows forced women into unwanted marriages. HRW conducted telephone interviews with residents in Herat in September and found that women in Taliban-controlled areas increasingly felt pressured to marry for their own safety in view of restrictions upon their movements and activities imposed by the Taliban. On August 13, the Taliban entered Herat, seizing government offices and the police station. A Taliban fighter reportedly threatened to kill a widowed mother of five if she did not marry him, and she was forced to do so in September with the consent of a mullah. She has said that her life is a nightmare and "it is like he is raping me every night." On December 3, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhunzada announced a public decree banning the forced marriage of women. The decree set out the rules governing marriage and property for women, stating that women should not be forced into marriage and widows should have a share in their late husband's property. The decree mandated that courts should consider these rules when making decisions, and religious affairs and information ministries should

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

promote these rights. [...] In August international aid organizations noted that, without sufficient humanitarian aid, families would be forced to resort to child labor and child marriage. In November UN officials noted that a worsening economic situation was leading households to resorting to dangerous practices, such as child labor and early marriage, in order to survive.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 February 2022

“Increased poverty levels have exacerbated the situation of the people of Afghanistan and have had a particular impact on child protection issues, including recruitment and use by armed groups and child and/or forced marriage. Access to education, particularly for girls, and broader issues related to equal access to education and health care for both boys and girls are of concern due to the gender segregation rules imposed by the de facto authorities.”

NPR, Parents selling children shows desperation in Afghanistan, 31 December 2021

“Aziz Gul's husband sold the 10-year-old girl into marriage without telling his wife, taking a down-payment so he could feed his family of five children. Without that money, he told her, they would all starve. He had to sacrifice one to save the rest.”

UNICEF, Humanitarian Action for Children 2022 Overview, 6 December 2021

“Recent political developments have greatly exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The volatile situation has heightened the underlying vulnerabilities in the country, where 24.4 million, including 12.6 million children are already in need of humanitarian assistance. Child protection risks remain high with continued insecurity and attacks against civilians, and families are resorting to child marriage and child labor to cope with the socioeconomic deterioration. Over 10 million school-aged children need education assistance, in addition to the 4.2 million children already out of school.”

The Washington Post, Taliban chief bans forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021

“The Taliban decreed on Friday they were banning forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, a move apparently meant to address criteria the international community consider a precondition to recognizing their government and restoring aid to the war-torn country.

The move was announced by the reclusive Taliban chief, Hibatullah Akhunzada, a cleric chosen as the group's supreme leader who is believed to be in the southern city of Kandahar. It comes as poverty is surging in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August amid the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops. Since then, foreign governments have halted funds that had been a mainstay of the economy. “Both (women and men) should be equal,” said the decree, adding that “no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure. [...]”

The decree did not mention a minimum age for marriage, which previously was set at 16 years old.”

AlJazeera, Taliban bans forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, 3 December 2021

“The Taliban has issued a decree barring forced marriage in Afghanistan, saying women should not be considered “property” and must consent to marriage, but questions remain about whether the group that returned to power in mid-August would extend women's rights around work and education.

The decree was announced on Friday by the reclusive Taliban chief, Hibatullah Akhunzada – who is believed to be in the southern city of Kandahar. “Both (women and men) should be equal,” said the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

decree, adding that “no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure”.

The decree did not mention a minimum age for marriage, which previously was set at 16 years old.

The group also said a widow will now be allowed to re-marry 17 weeks after her husband’s death, choosing her new husband freely.

Widows

Longstanding tribal traditions have held it customary for a widow to marry one of her husband’s brothers or relatives in the event of his death.

[...] The development was hailed as a significant step forward by two leading Afghan women, but questions remained about whether the group would extend women’s rights around work and education.

[...] Roya Rahmani, the former ambassador for Afghanistan to the United States, echoed her optimism and added that it was likely partly an attempt to smooth over international fears regarding the group’s track record on women’s rights as the Taliban administration seeks to get funding released.

“An amazing thing if it does get implemented,” Rahmani told the Reuters Next panel, adding details such as who would ensure that girls’ consent was not coerced by family members would be key.

“It’s a very smart move on the part of Taliban at this point because one of the (pieces of) news that is attracting the West’s attention is the fact little girls are being sold as property to others in order to feed the rest of the family,”

CNN, The rescue of Parwana: 9-year-old child bride is taken to safety in Afghanistan, 2 December 2021

“Even before the Taliban took over, hunger was rife in the impoverished country, and now young girls are paying the price with their bodies -- and their lives.

“Afghan young girls (are) becoming the price of food,” leading Afghan women's rights activist Mahboubia Seraj told CNN. “Because otherwise their family will starve.” Even though marriage under the age of 15 is illegal nationwide, it has been commonly practiced for years, especially in more rural parts of Afghanistan. And the situation has deteriorated since August, as families become more desperate.

“Usually there is a lot of misery, there is a lot of mistreatment, there is a lot of abuse involved in these things,” Seraj said, adding that some girls forced into marriage die during childbirth because their bodies are too small to cope. “Some of them can't take it. They mostly die pretty young.”

Women have long been treated as second-class citizens in Afghanistan, which was ranked as the worst country in the world for women in the 2021 Women, Peace and Security Index.

And since the Taliban took over, many of the basic rights that women had fought for over the past two decades have been stripped away.”

Thomson Reuters, Afghans “marry off” baby girls for dowries as starvation looms, 23 November 2021

“Last month, he received a \$3,000 dowry payment after handing over his 13- and 15-year-old daughters to men more than twice their age. If the money runs out, he may have to marry off his seven-year-old, he said.

“I had no other way to feed my family and pay off my debt. What else could I have done?” [...]

Child marriage has increased in tandem with soaring poverty since the Taliban seized power 100 days ago on Aug. 15, with reports of destitute parents even promising baby girls for future marriage in exchange for dowries, women's rights activists said. [...]

Parents are also handing over daughters to settle debts. Frogh cited a case in which a landlord had taken a distraught tenant's nine-year-old girl when he could not pay his rent. [...]

“The number of cases has increased so much because of starvation. People have nothing and cannot feed their children,” said Frogh, founder of the Women & Peace Studies Organization, which works with

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

grassroots women leaders across the country. [...]
"These girls are often treated as servants, as slaves.""

NBC News, Desperate for cash, Afghan families are selling young daughters into marriage, 17 November 2021

"Her father says he will receive the equivalent of \$2,000 for Benazir, but he hasn't explained the details to her or what's expected of her. She's too young to understand, he says.

Benazir is 8 years old.

[...] "We are 10 people in the family. I'm trying to keep 10 alive by sacrificing one," he said in Pashto.

Khan said the arrangement is for Benazir to be married to a boy from a family in Iran when she reaches puberty. He hasn't received the money yet for her dowry, and he said that as soon as he does, Benazir will be taken away by the man who bought her.

[...] Promising their daughters early for marriage in exchange for cash is seen as a lifeline for families that barely have a scrap of bread to eat.

The U.N. Population Fund has warned that it is "deeply concerned" by reports that child marriage is on the rise in Afghanistan.

Henrietta Fore, the executive director of UNICEF, said in a statement: "We have received credible reports of families offering daughters as young as 20 days old up for future marriage in return for a dowry."

Deutsche Welle, Desperate Afghans forced to sell children, 17 November 2021

"With an already ailing economy that has been hard hit by a prolonged drought and with the Taliban at the helm, Afghanistan's future is looking bleak. [...]

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 bring 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.""

UN NEWS, Afghanistan: Girls at increasing risk of child marriage, 14 November 2021

"The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has received credible reports of families in Afghanistan offering daughters as young as 20 days old for future marriage in return for a dowry.

In a statement released on Friday, the agency's Executive Director, Henrietta Fore, said that she was "deeply concerned" over reports that child marriage is on the rise.

Even before the latest political instability, UNICEF's partners registered 183 child marriages and 10 cases of selling of children in Herat and Baghdis provinces between the ages of six months and 17 years from 2018 to 2019.

The agency estimates that 28 per cent of Afghan women between the ages 15 and 49 were married before they reached their 18th birthday

A growing crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing food crisis and the onset of winter have further exacerbated the situation for families.

In 2020, almost half of Afghanistan's population was so poor that they lacked basic necessities, such as nutrition or clean water.

And the extremely dire economic situation is pushing more families deeper into poverty and forcing them

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to make desperate choices, such as putting children to work and marrying girls off at a young age.

“As most teenage girls are still not allowed to go back to school, the risk of child marriage is now even higher”, Ms. Fore said. “Education is often the best protection against negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage and child labour”.-*

Lifetime of suffering

UNICEF is working with partners to raise the awareness of communities on the risks girls face when marrying early, such as a lifetime of suffering.

Girls who marry before they turn 18 are less likely to remain in school and more likely to experience domestic violence, discrimination, abuse and poor mental health. They are also more vulnerable to complications in pregnancy and childbirth. [...]

UNICEF will also work with religious leaders to ensure that they are not involved in the “Nekah”, or marriage contract, for young girls. [...]

She also urged the de facto authorities to prioritize the reopening of all secondary schools for girls and allow all-female teachers to resume their jobs without any further delays.

“The future of an entire generation is at stake”, she concluded.

‘Dramatic situation’

In parallel coverage, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) closed its 18th session.

In her concluding remarks, Gladys Acosta Vargas, the Committee Chairperson, said all Members were “deeply concerned about the dramatic situation” of women and girls in Afghanistan.

She argued that it was “crucial” that the Committee decided to request an exceptional report on their situation, at an opportune time.

The Committee also asked for the creation of an informal task force to consider the impact of the evolving political, economic and social situation on the rights of women and girls.”

UNICEF, Girls increasingly at risk of child marriage in Afghanistan, 13 November 2021

“KABUL, 13 November 2021 – “I am deeply concerned by reports that child marriage in Afghanistan is on the rise.

“We have received credible reports of families offering daughters as young as 20 days old up for future marriage in return for a dowry.

“Even before the latest political instability, UNICEF’s partners registered 183 child marriages and 10 cases of selling of children over 2018 and 2019 in Herat and Baghdis provinces alone. The children were between 6 months and 17 years of age.

“UNICEF estimates that 28 per cent of Afghan women aged 15–49 years were married before the age of 18.

“The COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing food crisis and the onset of winter have further exacerbated the situation for families. In 2020, almost half of Afghanistan’s population was so poor that they lacked necessities such as basic nutrition or clean water.

“The extremely dire economic situation in Afghanistan is pushing more families deeper into poverty and forcing them to make desperate choices, such as putting children to work and marrying girls off at a young age.

“As most teenage girls are still not allowed to go back to school, the risk of child marriage is now even higher. Education is often the best protection against negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage and child labour.

“UNICEF is working with partners to raise communities’ awareness of the risks for girls if they are married

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

early. Child marriage can lead to a lifetime of suffering. Girls who marry before they turn 18 are less likely to remain in school and more likely to experience domestic violence, discrimination, abuse and poor mental health. They are also more vulnerable to complications in pregnancy and childbirth.

“We have started a cash assistance programme to help offset the risk of hunger, child labour and child marriage among the most vulnerable families. We plan to scale up this and other social services programmes in the months to come.

“UNICEF will also work with religious leaders to ensure that they are not involved in the “Nekah” (the marriage contract) for young girls.

“But this is not enough.

“We call on central, provincial and local authorities to take concrete measures to support and safeguard the most vulnerable families and girls. We urge the de facto authorities to prioritize the reopening of schools for all secondary school girls and allow all-female teachers to resume their jobs without any further delays.

“The future of an entire generation is at stake.””

HRW, Afghanistan Facing Famine, 11 November 2021

“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. [...]”

CNN, She was sold to a stranger so her family could eat as Afghanistan crumbles, 1 November 2021

“Parwana is one of many young Afghan girls sold into marriage as the country's humanitarian crisis deepens. Hunger has pushed some families to make heartbreaking decisions, especially as the brutal winter approaches.

The parents gave CNN full access and permission to speak to the children and show their faces, because they say they cannot change the practice themselves.

“Day by day, the numbers are increasing of families selling their children,” said Mohammad Naiem Nazem, a human rights activist in Badghis. “Lack of food, lack of work, the families feel they have to do this.” [...] Though marrying off children under 15 is illegal nationwide, it has been commonly practiced for years, especially in more rural parts of Afghanistan. And it has only spread since August, driven by widespread hunger and desperation.”

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

ICRC, Afghanistan: A changed perspective to disability helps her inspire others, 3 August 2022

“The ICRC's physical rehabilitation programme, which was one of our first activities in the country, began in Kabul almost 35 years ago. Now, there are a total of seven ICRC-run physical rehabilitation centres – in Kabul, Gulbahar, Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Faizabad and Lashkar Gah.”

Tolo News, Ministry: Payments for Disabled People Will Resume in 2 Months, 27 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs said monthly support payments for disabled people and families of martyrs will resume following a recheck in two months. "Our main problem is that the majority of orphans and disabled people do not have electronic identity cards and bank accounts, but despite this, our colleagues are working to finish this process as soon as possible," said Mufti Faisal, head of the press department of the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs. Meanwhile, some disabled people and their families in Kabul said that they are facing economic challenges and asked the Islamic Emirate to pay their monthly support payments. "We filled the form in the winter, but still there is no news of the salary," Saleh Mohammad, a disabled person, told TOLONews. "We are facing economic challenges, every day I have to collect 100 Afs for my house rent," Zabiullah, a disabled person, told TOLONews. "They should pay our salaries, eight orphans have been left to me," said a family member of a disabled person. Previously, the families of disabled people have complained about not receiving their monthly support payments, but the Ministry of Martyrs and the Disabled said that the recheck of the disabled and the families of the martyrs is one of the main reasons for the delay in paying their salaries."

AVA, People with Disabilities Overlooked in the Response to Quake-Hit Afghanistan: Human Rights Watch, 12 July 2022

"According to the Human Rights Watch report, there is a paucity of post-earthquake statistics on the needs of disabled persons in Afghanistan, and many of them have been forgotten about when relief was being distributed.

Despite frequently being mentioned as a population at risk, people with disabilities frequently encounter impediments to receiving humanitarian aid such as food, sanitation, and medical help"

"[...] individuals with disabilities continue to be underrepresented and disadvantaged in general."

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), People With Disabilities Overlooked in the Response to Quake-Hit Afghanistan: Human Rights Watch, 12 July 2022

"Human Rights Watch stated that people with disabilities had been overlooked in humanitarian relief to the earthquake victims in a report about the recent earthquake in southern Afghanistan.

According to the Human Rights Watch report, there is a paucity of post-earthquake statistics on the needs of disabled persons in Afghanistan, and many of them have been forgotten about when relief was being distributed.

Despite frequently being mentioned as a population at risk, people with disabilities frequently encounter impediments to receiving humanitarian aid such as food, sanitation, and medical help.

Given the Taliban government's egregious breaches of human rights, particularly against women and girls, since the Taliban took power, governments have struggled to provide funds for humanitarian relief to Afghanistan.

In the report, Human Rights Watch makes the observation that meeting humanitarian needs should be maintained separately from the politics of Taliban legitimacy and recognition. If not, the crisis will mostly affect people with disability and other vulnerable groups.

According to an Afghan woman who cofounded a group run by people with disabilities but was forced to leave Afghanistan after the Taliban took control in August 2021, "I think people with disabilities have been left behind during the help and rescue programs because nobody tried to distinguish people with disabilities among all people harmed."

She summed up the humanitarian assistance distribution for the quake-hit disabled people as "a raindrop for a thirsty person."

Following an earthquake that occurred in eastern Afghanistan on June 22 and left at least 1,000 people

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

dead, individuals with disabilities continue to be underrepresented and disadvantaged in general."

Tolo News, [Afghans Complain About Lack of Disability Payments](#), 3 June 2022

"Some disabled individuals in Kabul are complaining about not receiving their monthly support payments. Despite the budget for this year being approved, their salaries have not yet been paid. Abdul Wasi is a disabled person who was injured disabled 30 years ago as a result of a mine explosion in Kabul's Paghman area. He said that not getting paid has compelled him to work in order to support his family."

UNFPA, [UNFPA Afghanistan Humanitarian Updates - First Quarter 2022](#), 29 May 2022

"The situation of women and girls continues to be negatively affected by increasing restrictions on their rights and systematic discrimination which exacerbates long-standing inequalities particularly for those living with disabilities and in remote rural areas."

US DOS, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#), 12 April 2022

"Status and Treatment of Internally Displaced Persons [...] Protection concerns were increasingly reported to humanitarian partners, with growing protection needs for persons with disabilities, the elderly, female-headed households, and sexual and gender minorities. [...] Persons with disabilities could not access education, health services, public buildings, and transportation on an equal basis with others. Persons with disabilities faced barriers such as limited access to educational opportunities, inability to access government buildings, difficulty in acquiring government identification required for many government services and voting, lack of economic opportunities, and social exclusion due to stigma. [...] The World Institute on Disability (WID) estimated that 90 percent of persons with disabilities were unemployed as a result of entrenched social biases and faced barriers to accessing public services including health and education. According to WID, persons with disabilities also faced barriers to accessing education, transportation, and health care. Lack of security remained a problem for disability programs throughout the year. Insecurity in remote areas, where a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities lived, precluded delivery of assistance in some cases. Most buildings remained inaccessible to persons with disabilities, prohibiting many from benefitting from education, health care, and other services.

Before the August takeover, the Taliban attacked the Special Olympics headquarters in Kabul with at least two separate bombing attempts. On August 15, Taliban gunmen entered the headquarters and seized the office director's laptop and credentials, prompting the director to flee the country due to repression."

OWP, [Humanitarian crisis and neglect in Afghanistan puts people with disabilities at risk](#), 19 January 2022

"Disabled Afghans are arguably the country's most vulnerable cohort and suffer from ongoing neglect, stigmatization and discrimination. Disabled people are often excluded from participation in education and social life, and disabled women and children suffer from exploitation, violence, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of disability in the world, with Human Rights Watch reporting that at least one in five households has member with a serious disability. The Asia Foundation's 2020 study found that 80% of adults live with some form of disability (24.6% mild, 40.4% moderate and 13.9% severe), as do 17.3% of children aged between 2 and 17. Severe disabilities are more prevalent amongst females, leaving women and girls more vulnerable. Over 40 years of continuous conflict has also meant that approximately 1 million Afghans have amputated limbs or other mobility, visual, or hearing disabilities, and many Afghans also suffer from mental health conditions.

[...] The re-emergence of the Taliban and the withdrawal of foreign aid, upon which the country is extremely reliant, have reduced both the funds to implement these programs and international

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

commitments and the Afghan leadership's interest in carrying them out. Thus, these vital policies, including opportunities in employment and education and programs to improve healthcare, accessibility, and inclusion, have been virtually abandoned. For example, the international community froze the funds of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, whose Rural Access Project completes road rehabilitation projects to help disabled students travel to school. The freeze in funding and policy inaction by the Taliban has seen projects like this cease, leaving people with disabilities neglected and unable to participate in society. This neglect represents a huge step back in disability rights, as well as disabled people's dignity. There are also fears that the Taliban is not only neglecting but actively discriminating against the disabled. "There are millions of people with disabilities there without any support, without food, without clothes, without education, without any basic human rights," says Benafsha Yaqoobi, a prominent blind activist at the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. "We must raise their voices." Yaqoobi says the Taliban believes that disability is God's way of punishing parents' sins, leading them to discriminate against people with disabilities."

OCHA (Disability Inclusion Working Group – Afghanistan), Afghanistan: International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), 3 December 2021

"The emergency situation in Afghanistan often disproportionately impacts persons with disabilities and their households and the COVID-19 pandemic, has been no exception. People with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to intensify the existing inequalities and vulnerabilities as people with disabilities encompass a variety of conditions and impairments and have faced many barriers throughout the pandemic. The collapse of the government and international sanctions have further exacerbated the situation."

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban blocking female aid workers, 4 November 2021

"[...] women with disabilities, whether married or single, are often seen as a burden on their families and are at increased risk of violence both inside and outside the home. [...]"

The lack of women aid workers also means that women with disabilities have less access to rehabilitative services.

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

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

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

Business Insider, An advocate for disabled Afghans on her harrowing escape and her concern for disabled Afghans under Taliban rule, 6 September 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"[...] Benasfha Yaqubi, a blind commissioner with the Afghanistan Human Rights Commission (AHRC) [...] Afghanistan has one of the highest rates of disability in the world, according to Human Rights Watch—including more than a million people with physical injuries from decades of conflict, including the two-decade-long U.S. war. Countless others have mental health conditions, like post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety. [...]"

The proportion of Afghans with severe disabilities increased from 2.7% in 2005 to 13.9% in 2019, the European Parliament reported last year. [...]"

Vulnerable adults and children are often deeply reliant on the assistance of family members, and she worries that desperate families might leave behind more vulnerable, and less able, family members. [...]"

Another group she is thinking about is disabled widows as well as widows who do not live with an adult male and therefore, under Taliban rules where women are expected to move around with a male escort, might become "functionally disabled" and unable to earn money.

"The women don't have husbands. They have small children. They don't have a man. They don't have anyone to follow them outside. So what can they do? They are functionally disabled. They can't go to work. They'll miss their income," said Yaqubi."

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

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

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

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

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

Freedom of movement

Freedom of movement and travel abroad (Taliban officials)

Al Jazeera, [UN fails to reach agreement to extend Taliban travel ban waiver](#), 20 August 2022

"A United Nations waiver allowing 13 Afghan Taliban officials to travel abroad expired on Friday, as the Security Council failed to reach an agreement on whether to extend the travel exemptions. China and Russia have called for an extension, while the United States and Western nations have sought a reduced list of Taliban officials allowed to travel to protest against the Taliban's rollback of women's rights and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

failure to form an inclusive government as it promised. [...]"

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"In December 2021, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue issued guidance indicating that women must be accompanied by a mahram, or male chaperone, for journeys longer than 72km. Taliban official Zabiullah Mujahid said in a previous interview that the Taliban's mahram requirements would not apply for daily activities such as traveling to work or school. However, this statement was undermined by a decree issued on 7 May 2022 by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue that required women to cover their faces in public and stipulated that they should not leave their homes unless necessary. The Taliban have also instructed airlines to prevent women from flying domestically and internationally without a mahram and they have ordered driving instructors in Herat to cease giving driving lessons and licenses to women."

"Taliban restrictions on movement also have the potential to pressure women and girls to enter into marriage, whether by their own choice or as a result of pressure or coercion from their family members. One woman who was arbitrarily arrested for being in public with a man who was not her mahram, explained: "If you want to go outside, you have to have a father, brother or husband with you... A father can't always go out with the daughter, a brother might be busy... This will pressure girls and women to marry, just so that they always have a mahram.""

Al Jazeera, UN scraps travel ban waiver for two Taliban education officials, 21 June 2022

"The United Nations has effectively banned two Taliban officials from travelling internationally in response to the harsh restrictions the group has imposed on Afghan women and girls, diplomats have said. Travel exemptions permitting 15 Taliban officials to go abroad for talks and negotiations were set to expire on Monday."

Al Jazeera, What's at stake as UN Taliban travel ban waiver set to expire?, 20 June 2022

"A waiver that exempts top Taliban officials from a long-standing United Nations travel ban and related sanctions is set to expire, with rights groups saying the restrictions should be reimposed based on the group's oppression of women since taking power last year. The United States has not given an official stance on the current extension, which reportedly is set to be discussed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) next week. It officially expires on Monday [27 June 2022]."

What is the Taliban's position regarding citizens leaving the country?

TOLO News, Afghans Deported From Iran Recount Hardship, 6 August 2022

"Afghans who were recently deported from Iran have spoken out about experiencing extreme hardship and mistreatment. Afghanistan's citizens say they faced threats to reach Iran but were deported after weeks. Khaled and his sister Fatima and the rest of their family were forced to come to Afghanistan by Iranian forces. They illegally went to Iran through Nimroz. "We were compelled to go to Iran, here there no working opportunities. Everyone knows that illegal trips come with problems. There, you can find difficult work with low incomes," said Khalid. "When they arrested us, we were faced with immoral and hideous threats. Some of them are good people, but many think Afghans are not human," said Fatima. [...] "Some Afghans, mainly singles, complained about the treatment of Iranian forces across the border. They claimed mistreatment and torture by Iranian forces," said Mohammad Reza Khalili, a border official. "There are problems in the ways against refugees. They sometimes expel them from Iran," said

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Mallawi Sediqullah Nusrat, head of the Refugees and Repatriations Directorate of Nimroz. Hundreds of Afghans daily head to Iran to seek work opportunities, but Iranian officials deport those who illegally arrive."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Taliban's New Chaperone Rule Deprives Afghan Women of Foreign Scholarships, 8 July 2022

"But Afghan women are now being deprived of studying abroad because the Taliban is not allowing women to travel outside Afghanistan without a male chaperone.

The restriction follows a Taliban ban on education for teenage girls, which has kept millions of secondary-school students from the classroom since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August.

"I had a hellish experience because of this restriction," says Hadia Tuba, who recently went to Pakistan to begin her university education on a scholarship from Islamabad.

The young Kabul resident says the day she crossed the Torkham border crossing connecting eastern Afghanistan to northwestern Pakistan was the hardest in her life.

"The Taliban stopped me at the border and questioned me for the entire day," she told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "Eventually, I was let go after a stern warning [that I should never travel alone]."

Tuba says the intimidation she felt was difficult to describe.

"I will never forget what happened, but I don't like to talk about it," she said.

The restriction has forced entire Afghan families to leave the country. Sonia Ahmadi was forced to bring her parents and siblings with her when she went to the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad to attend Ferdowsi University.

"It is a major problem that no woman is allowed to travel alone, whether by road or by air," she told Radio Azadi. "The gender discrimination against women is pushing Afghanistan backward.""

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"The enforcement of a strict hijab rule continues; barriers are in place for women's access to employment, including for female NGO workers performing their duties; there are no opportunities for women to participate in public and political life; and their freedom of movement has been severely restricted. Let me be clear: what we are witnessing today in Afghanistan is the institutionalised, systematic oppression of women. Limiting women's freedom of movement negatively impacts almost all aspects of their lives, including the ability of women and their children to access and to participate in health services, livelihood and humanitarian aid."

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022

"Radio Azadi reports on the one sector of Afghanistan's collapsing economy that is thriving: the smuggling of people trying to escape the country. The Taliban has banned the transit of undocumented migrants across the border to Pakistan and Iran. But smugglers have overcome the ban by bribing corrupt Taliban border guards. "We fit about 20 people in each vehicle, and the Taliban charges 1,000 afghanis (about \$11) per car," said Mahmud. He earns \$800 a month smuggling up to 150 people weekly from Zaranj in Nimroz into Iran."

Gandhara, Escaping Afghanistan: People-Smuggling Thrives On Bribes To Taliban, 27 May 2022

"The Taliban has tried to stem the flow of Afghans attempting to escape economic ruin and persecution. But, despite an official ban, the smuggling of undocumented migrants to neighboring Iran and Pakistan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

continues to rise with the help of Taliban border guards and officials willing to look the other way. As Afghanistan's economy collapses, its citizens continue to leave the country en masse in a trend that began to rise with the announced withdrawal of foreign forces in the spring of 2021 and which spiked after the Taliban seized power in August. Iran, a major destination country, has clamped down by beefing up security along its 900-kilometer border with Afghanistan and deporting tens of thousands of Afghans. Taliban authorities in the southwestern province of Nimroz, which abuts Afghanistan's borders with Iran and Pakistan and serves as a major migration hub, have banned human smuggling in an effort to stem the outflow."

IOM, MOVEMENTS IN AND OUT OF AFGHANISTAN [14 May to 20 May 2022, MOVEMENT SUMMARY - AFGHANISTAN TO AND FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES], 27 May 2022

"The reporting week observed a slight increase in inflow movement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan, with 23,535 individuals compared to 20,091 last week. However, the outflows decreased from 6,631 last week to 4,810 during this reporting period.

- Crossings between Afghanistan and Pakistan significantly increased in both inflows and outflows, with an average of 9,077 outflows per day compared to 6,899 in the previous week and an average of 8,581 inflows per day compared to 6,258 in the previous week."

Khaama Press, About 5,000 Afghan citizens await German family reunification visas, 25 May 2022

"Afghan citizens must apply for family reunification visas through the German embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad after the German embassy visa office in Kabul closed in 2017.

The German government has said that in order to facilitate this process, visa offices have been directed to "make full use of their authority". The time-consuming document evaluation will be suspended, and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs will begin processing the applications, according to reports.

The difficulty of leaving family reunification visa applicants out of Afghanistan, particularly women who desire to travel alone, has been noted by the German government as a key impediment to the procedure. The Taliban, on the other hand, will not let them leave Afghanistan without a passport, and obtaining one is a difficult and time-consuming process."

Ariana News, IEA approves working process to bring exiled Afghan politicians home, 17 May 2022

"Organization procedures for the commission tasked with getting Afghan politicians and former government officials living abroad to return home have been approved by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the commission is expected to start work soon. "In this commission, all faces, whether women or men, will be contacted, and everyone's return plan is ready for the patriotic figures to be returned," said Hassan Haqyar, a close ally of the IEA. But some political activists have raised questions about the future of any returning exiled Afghans. They have asked if the politicians for instance will be allowed to carry on with work as previously or whether they will have to give up politics and find another occupation. The same goes for former government employees. "We call on the Emirate, in order to implement the plan of this commission, to facilitate the work and activity of these figures again, and there must be a guarantee for everyone who returns, because everyone must see themselves in the mirror of the government," said Sayed Jawad Hussaine, political analyst. However, Iran, which hosts a number of former politicians has once again called for the establishment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan. Recently, Anas Haqqani, a member of the commission, said that about 50 former government officials have so far returned to Afghanistan and that efforts are underway to bring back other political figures. The meeting of the Commission for the Return of Politicians and Former Government Officials was

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

meanwhile convened shortly after former President Hamid Karzai was ordered to not leave the country."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Afghanistan airline launches Kabul to Moscow route, 27 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The Russian Embassy in Kabul tweeted Tuesday that flights are scheduled to run weekly from Kabul to Moscow on Mondays and from Moscow to Kabul on Tuesdays.

Following the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in mid-August last year and the chaos at Kabul Airport during the evacuation operation, ceased operations and most foreign were suspended or canceled.

The embassies of China, Iran, Russia, and Pakistan were among the few political representations of countries in Afghanistan that continued to operate after the Islamic Emirate (IE) came to power.

In the past few months, the Islamic Emirate has been trying to reactivate Kabul Airport and has had many discussions with and Turkey."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Travel restrictions eased for Afghans at Torkham, 26 April 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Pakistani has decided to allow the Afghans to cross the till April 29 on producing their official identity card, called.

The Express Tribune reported Pakistan would enforce a new strategy after the expiry of the deadline of April 29."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Tazkira holder Afghans given 4 days to leave Pakistan, 25 April 2022

"He said: "Tazkira holders will be allowed to leave for Afghanistan via Torkham border crossing till 29th April 2022. All those who wish to return to their homes need to exit during this window. Normally, only patients are allowed crossings without on Torkham."

He added normally, only patients are allowed crossings without visas on Torkham."

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Afghanistan-Iran border crossing reopens, 25 April 2022

"The Dogarun border crossing between Afghanistan and Iran has been reopened after a day of tensions, both sides say."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"The pre-August 15 government's law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. The pre-August 15 government generally respected these rights. The Taliban generally respected these rights for citizens with sufficient identity documentation, including passports, but they prevented certain political figures associated with previous administrations from travelling abroad. Restrictions were also placed on women's in-country movements. [...] The Taliban stated they do not want citizens to leave the country but that those with foreign travel authorization and required documentation would be allowed to depart; Taliban leaders stated the right to travel is guaranteed by Islam. Enforcement of these "regulations" was inconsistent. Citizens with passports and visas for third countries were generally permitted to depart the country, and Pakistan was allowing pedestrians from Kandahar Province to cross into Pakistan and back for trade and day labor using only identity cards. The Taliban prevented certain political figures associated with previous administrations from travelling abroad due to concerns regarding possible political activities abroad. [...] In October the Taliban stated they would resume issuing passports, ending a months-long suspension that had diminished the limited ability of citizens to depart the country. According to local media, more than 170,000 passport applications received in August and September remained adjudicated as of December 31. In December the Taliban

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

announced that passport offices had opened in 25 provinces. Anecdotal reports suggested passports were not always issued impartially but rather reserved for individuals whom the Taliban deemed “unproblematic” or who could pay substantially higher prices for the passport. Some individuals associated with the previous administration reported being detained and beaten following their visit to passport offices. In October Taliban authorities closed the Chaman-Spin Boldak border crossing into Pakistan. After a 27-day closure, the crossing reopened to pedestrians and trade. After the reopening, Pakistan reportedly permitted Kandahar tazkira (national identification card) holders – as well as individuals with medical reasons but without documentation – to cross the border. [...] Access to Asylum: The pre-August 15 government did not create a legal and programmatic framework for granting asylum or refugee status and had not established a legal framework for providing protection to refugees. Since the takeover, the Taliban also have not created a legal and programmatic framework for granting of asylum or refugee status.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Gandhara, Taliban Rows Back Comments Saying Afghans Barred From Leaving, 2 March 2022

“The Taliban’s chief spokesman on March 1 rowed back comments he made suggesting Afghans would be barred from leaving the country, saying he had been misunderstood.

Zabihullah Mujahid sparked alarm over the weekend when he told a press conference that Afghans would need “an excuse” to travel abroad and confirmed Afghanistan’s new rulers had put a stop to any more evacuation flights.

After seizing power in August, the Taliban promised Afghan citizens would be allowed to come and go as they pleased -- as long as they had passports and visas for their destinations.

But on February 27, he told a press conference: “I have to say clearly that persons who leave the country along with their families and have no excuse...we are preventing them.”

On March 1, he tweeted that his “meaning” was: “Our compatriots who have legal documents and invitations can travel outside the country and can return to the country confidently.”

The Taliban’s deputy minister for refugees and repatriations, however, said on March 1 it was “not appropriate” for Western nations to invite Afghans abroad or facilitate their departure.

“To a larger extent, the international community is interfering in Afghanistan’s affairs and are inviting people promising asylum,” Mohammad Arsala Kharutai told a press conference. “This is interference and against international law, and we condemn it.”

Mujahid’s February 27 announcement alarmed many Afghans who have been promised asylum abroad after working with U.S.-led foreign forces or other Western organisations during the Taliban’s 20-year insurgency.

More than 120,000 Afghans and dual nationals were evacuated up to August 31 when the last U.S.-led troops withdrew, two weeks after the hard-line Islamists seized Kabul.

Thousands with similar links remain in Afghanistan, however, desperate to leave and fearful they may be targeted by the Taliban as collaborators.

The last official evacuation by air was on December 1 although organized road convoys to Pakistan have taken place as recently as last week.

Hugo Shorter, Britain’s top envoy to Afghanistan based outside the country, said barring Afghans from leaving amounted to “unacceptable restrictions on freedom of movement.”

Al Jazeera, Afghans with correct legal documents may travel abroad: Taliban, 2 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“More than 120,000 Afghans and dual nationals were evacuated up to August 31 last year when the last US-led troops withdrew, two weeks after the Taliban seized Kabul.

Thousands with similar links are still in Afghanistan, however, desperate to leave and fearful they may be targeted by the Taliban as “collaborators”.

Diplomats have said efforts to evacuate thousands of Afghans who had worked with foreign governments and militaries and were eligible for visas in Western countries were getting harder in recent months.

Regular evacuation flights organised by the US via Qatar were largely stopped in December over disagreement by the Taliban administration on who should be able to board, sources had told Reuters news agency.

The last official evacuation by air was on December 1, although organised road convoys to Pakistan have taken place as recently as last week.”

UNHCR, [Afghanistan Crisis update: Women and Girls in Displacement](#), 1 March 2022

“Despite the existential threats posed by conflict and the many gender-specific forms of persecution currently taking place in Afghanistan, many Afghan women and girls are not able to leave the country through regular channels. Restrictions on movement and the lack of documentation may pose challenges for women, especially at official border points. Unofficial border points are more remote, lack basic facilities, and often require travellers to employ smugglers, and those conditions put women and girls at further risk of violence.”

Khaama Press, [Mullah Baradar asks Afghan youths not to leave country](#), 1 March 2022

“First Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar asked young people and experts in Afghanistan not to leave the country as it needs them the most.

Speaking at the occasion of the second anniversary of the Doha agreement in Kabul on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, Mullah Baradar said that Afghanistan is fully independent now and is under no country’s umbrella. The third man in power in Afghanistan further added that the IEA is willing to have friendly relations with the entire world and that they welcome all positive schemes for the development of Afghanistan.

“Doors of universities and professional studies in Afghanistan are open for all students so the experts and elite members of Afghan society do not need to leave Afghanistan.” Said Baradar.

Furthermore, he acknowledged that rebuilding Afghanistan is a shared responsibility of all Afghans and the IEA welcomes all constructive schemes and notions in this regard.

He urged the Afghan youths to continue seeking education so that they get experts in science, technology, and other professional fields.

This comes as universities across Afghanistan have been reopened but students do not attend the classes with the same number as they would do prior to the Taliban takeover.”

Khaama Press, [Mujahid claims to be misconstrued about travel restrictions on people](#), 1 March 2022

“The chief spokesperson of and Deputy Minister of Information and Culture of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Zabiullah Mujahid claims that his remarks about travel restrictions on people have been misunderstood.

Mujahid in a Twitter post on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, said that the imposition of restrictions is only for those who illegally try to leave Afghanistan.

“Those of our fellow countrymen who have legal documents and invitations from other countries can easily travel out of Afghanistan and can come to the country.” Reads the Twitter post.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Earlier on Sunday, Zabiullah Mujahid said that people can no longer leave Afghanistan as Afghan refugees are going through bad living conditions abroad.

He had also added that evacuation will not be allowed until the Afghan people in exile gets good treatment from the host nations as they (the Taliban) are responsible for the good life of the Afghan people."

Ariana News, Afghans with legal documents, invitations can travel: Mujahid, 1 March 2022

"Officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said on Tuesday that Afghans with the necessary legal documents and invitations from foreign countries can travel without any limitations.

Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the IEA and deputy minister of information and culture, on Tuesday clarified his comments made Monday on the travel ban.

He said people in possession of the correct documents are free to travel but those without legal documents are banned from leaving the country.

"Our compatriots who have legal documents and invitations can travel abroad and come to the country with confidence," tweeted Mujahid.

Mujahid's comments on Monday sparked widespread reaction.

Among the organizations that reacted was Human Rights Watch.

"It is important to keep in mind that if you are not allowed to exit from home and engage in legal issues. It means you are not allowed to have access to schools, and health services. It means you are not allowed to be safe from domestic violence. It is horrific that women will be at home," said Haidar Bar, head of the Afghanistan Human Rights Watch.

Some women's rights activists said that if the IEA issues limitations on women, they would be contradicting their commitments to the international community.

"IEA vowed they will allow women to have access to their fundamental rights like political engagement and education. But now the women's demands are destroyed," said Zarghana Wali, an activist.

"If women are not allowed to leave their country, they can't continue their activities; Islamic Emirate should change their policy regarding women," said Tarana Adib, another activist."

France 24, Taliban ban Afghans from evacuating amid massive security sweep, 28 February 2022

"The new travel ban was announced late Sunday by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who packaged the restrictions as being aimed at preventing hardship for Afghans abroad.

Evacuations organised by nations or non-governmental organisations have been banned, while even families attempting to leave the country by their own means now need "an excuse", or they will be stopped by immigration. [...] The announcement came the same weekend a search for "kidnappers, thieves and looters" kicked off in Kabul and other Afghan cities -- a so-called "clearing operation" separate from the travel measures. The new travel restrictions will alarm tens of thousands of Afghans who have been promised asylum abroad after working with US-led foreign forces or other Western organisations during the Taliban's 20-year insurgency. More than 120,000 Afghans and dual nationals were evacuated up to August 31 when the last US-led troops withdrew, two weeks after the hardline Islamists seized Kabul. Thousands with similar links are still in Afghanistan, however, desperate to leave and fearful they may be targeted by the Taliban as "collaborators"."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Taliban Bans Afghans From Evacuating Amid Massive Security Sweep, 28 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The new travel ban was announced late on February 27 by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who packaged the restrictions as being aimed at preventing hardship for Afghans abroad.

Evacuations organized by nations or nongovernmental organisations have been banned, while even families attempting to leave the country by their own means now need "an excuse," or face being stopped by immigration.

"I have to say clearly that persons who leave the country along with their families and have no excuse....We are preventing them," Mujahid told a press conference late on February 27.

Women will also not be able to fly abroad unless accompanied by a male relative -- mirroring similar domestic restrictions introduced last year that bar solo travel for women between cities and towns.

"If they (women) want to travel abroad, they should have a chaperone," Mujahid said. "This is the order of Islamic Shari'a law.""

Khaama Press, Taliban halts evacuation until Afghan refugees' livelihoods get better, 28 February 2022

"As tens of thousands of Afghans claiming to be eligible for evacuation still await flights from Kabul, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that no evacuation operation will be allowed until the livelihoods of Afghan refugees get better.

Speaking in a press conference in Kabul on Sunday, February 27, 2022, spokesman of the IEA Zabiullah Mujahid said that the living situation of those who left Afghanistan in the past six months must be assured first so that they allow further vacation because they are responsible for the lives of Afghans.

Zabiullah Mujahid said that are fully aware of the very bad situation of the Afghanis who are still in camps in Abu Dhabi or without camps in Turkey.

This comes nearly a month after thousands of Afghan evacuees in Abu Dhabi protested and complained about their destiny is unclear as they have been living in the camps for more than six months.

After the Taliban takeover on August 15 last year, about two hundred thousand people have been estimated to have left Afghanistan to seek refuge in Europe or America.

Earlier the IEA had agreed on two flights in a week with Qatar Airlines."

TOLO News, Mol to Kabul Police: "Professionals" Must Run Checkpoints, 23 February 2022

"At a security meeting, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) leadership ordered security forces to not open fire on individuals at checkpoints. Police should respect the honor of the people, and they have to maintain the lives and property of people," said Mawlawi Sultan Ahmad, the general director of the auditing department. Meanwhile, several residents of Kabul expressed their optimism over the decision made by the Ministry of Interior, while others claimed that the security forces mistreat the people. "At the checkpoints, one of them says stop, the other says go, drivers cannot decide what to do, so they fire in such circumstances," said Obaidullah."

TOLO News, New Special Unit to Increase Kabul Security, Monitor Checkpoints, 22 February 2022

"The Interior Ministry said it has set up a special unit to monitor checkpoints in Kabul. Officials of this unit say they will mount night patrols tasked with preventing armed robberies and monitoring the activities of the security forces. According to officials, the 500-strong unit is equipped with advanced military weapons and for the past two weeks has have been conducting patrols to ensure the security of the people and to monitor the checkpoints and security areas of Kabul. "These checkpoints are good, they are effective, the more checkpoints mean better security," said a Kabul resident."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

MilitaryTimes, Afghan evacuation flights to resume with streamlined process, 27 January 2021

“After a nearly two-month pause, evacuation flights from Afghanistan to Qatar are set to resume, Shawn Van Diver, founder of #AfghanEvac, told Military Times. Additionally, Van Diver said that measures to shorten the visa process are being implemented, potentially trimming a years-long process down to months. “We are glad that it looks like we might be able to be restarting that,” Van Diver said in a phone interview. “And hopefully, we can have a reliable, repeatable process that continues to evacuate folks.” According to Phil Caruso, Chairman of No One Left Behind, official evacuation flights carrying Afghans who worked with the U.S. to Qatar stopped in early December. Caruso and other members of the organization told Military Times that the cessation was caused by a rift between the Qatari and the new rulers of Afghanistan over Taliban migrant workers seeking entry to Qatar. The Taliban sought space for these workers on flights carrying evacuees to Qatar, a concession the Qatari government resisted.”

AVA Press, Kabul passport office head urges patience as anxious crowds keep gathering, 13 December 2021

“As winter closes in and the economic crisis deepens in the wake of the abrupt of foreign aid after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) takeover in August, the crowds around the biggest passport issuing centre in the country underline the desperate desire of large numbers of citizens to leave.

“We have done our best to reopen the office but we are still facing some equipment shortages,” passport office head Alam Gul Haqqani told Reuters in an interview on Sunday.

Last month the office was forced to close after equipment used for issuing broke down under the pressure of processing thousands of applications a day but demand has built steadily.

Even though the office has been closed for weeks, hundreds of people still gather outside the fortified compound clutching plastic document files. [...] A number of provincial passport offices are still open and officials in Kabul are processing around 2,000-3,000 passports from these offices each day, he said, but it was still unclear when the Kabul office would reopen.”

Al Jazeera, Taliban fighters man Afghanistan’s urban checkpoints, 9 December 2021

“Many Taliban foot soldiers now have new jobs: manning checkpoints on the streets and carrying out security patrols in and around Afghan cities and towns.”

UNHCR, Document - Afghanistan Situation External Update - 1 December 2021, 8 December 2021

“During the reporting period, UNHCR has highlighted the escalating risks faced by Afghans seeking to flee into neighbouring countries as the situation within Afghanistan continues to deteriorate. Afghanistan’s land borders with Pakistan and Iran are open almost solely to those with the required passports and visas, though a small number of medical cases are permitted to exceptionally enter Pakistan without documents. The land borders of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan remain closed to Afghans. While official borders remain closed to the vast majority of Afghans, UNHCR is aware of asylum-seekers crossing into neighbouring countries through unofficial channels. Many entering Iran report having sought the assistance of smugglers to leave Afghanistan. Most Afghans have told UNHCR and partners they were exposed to serious protection risks on the journey – including extortion, beatings, and other violence, particularly against women and girls. In Iran, local media continue to cite the Iranian authorities continue to estimate upwards of 5,000 newly arriving individuals per day into Iran.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, 'No Reason To Stay': Taliban Repression, Economic Collapse Accelerate Exodus From Afghanistan, 2 December 2021

"He now plans to join the thousands of Afghans who are escaping the country each week. Many of them pay smugglers to take them westward to neighboring Iran, from where some will hope to reach Europe. [...]"

The journey is dangerous. Afghans who have illegally crossed borders in the region have been arrested, beaten, shot at, and even killed by border guards, smugglers, and criminal gangs. Others have drowned or died of illness and exhaustion."

The Diplomat, No Place for Afghan Refugees in Central Asia, 29 November 2021

"Central Asian countries remain closed to refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan and uninterested in changing their restrictive policies. [...] Meanwhile, the Taliban seem to be honoring the request of bordering Central Asian states and Russia to prevent border crossings."

Pajhwok Afghan News, Opportunists fleecing Afghans trying to leave country, 25 October 2021

"Pajhwok Afghan News findings show some people have demanded tens of thousands of dollars from people wishing to leave the country against a promise of individual and family visas.

However, government officials say those behind of such cases have been identified and will be brought to justice.

Following the fall of Afghanistan's previous regime on August 15 this year, a number of countries, including the United States, Britain, Germany, Canada, France, Ireland, Italy, and Australia, announced that Afghans who worked with them in Afghanistan, would be evacuated to the countries.

According to reports, more than 120,000 Afghans have been evacuated so far, including journalists, civil society activists, translators, former government security personnel and others.

At the same time, many Afghans are trying to take advantage of this opportunity to move to the United States or Europe with their families.

Some people are trying to involve in trafficking persons using the opportunity and take illegal money from people who plan to leave the country.

A Facebook page named, (Tourist Company providing European countries visas and free consultation for asylum) in a post said, "US individual visa, there are limited chances, anyone who are matching the conditions should hurry up".

The post says that the US immigrant visa processes for a person is charged \$28,000 and it could be provided in 20 days. Two visas of Canada for a family of two is for \$50,000 and for a three member family it is for \$60,000.

A number of Facebook users who commented to the post said that officials of the company have deceived people; some others said that the company lied while others required more details.

The post has given a telephone number, which a Pajhwok reporter dialed and sought details from the recipient, who identified himself as "Umrah." He said "Right now we have Canadian visas, we have individual visas for the United States, we have many individual visas."

He said a Canadian visa would cost 27000 dollars. He said they had American visas as well and each visa would cost between 29,000 and 27000 and 26000 dollars. The visa process time is 25 to 30 days. "You will be included in this program. Family visas will be announced next week. Our work is 100 percent sure."

The person said they took no money in advance. The money should be kept with a money changer and they would receive the money once the visa was confirmed.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

A Facebook page “Afghan Bazaar” also wrote that a Canadian visa was being made available in 45 days. A phone number on the page was contacted by this scribe. The call recipient refused to give his name. He said a Canadian visa would be provided in 45 days against 22,000 dollars. He also said they do not demand money in advance.

Similarly, Pajhwok has obtained an audio clip in which a person says “There are Afghans who can receive visas from embassies against 10000 dollars. Why don’t we do this, we have Wakil Sahib in the embassy, if we introduce five people and each gives 50000 dollars, it is enough money.”

In a second audio clip the same person says: “there are Afghans who want to go abroad to the US, Europe and other countries. I am in the embassy and I will introduce someone in the embassy who can obtain visas. You can ask people to give up to 25000 dollars which we will distribute among ourselves.”

Similarly, a resident of Kabul, Melad Sahibzada, said he had talked with a human smuggler who lived in Mazar-i-Sharif. The smuggler told him he could evacuate people in flights to foreign countries from Mazar and Kabul.

“A single person is charged 10000 USD and a family is charged 20000 dollars. The flight is confirmed in a week. One should provide ID card, passport, telephone number and email address.”

The Human First Coalition, which facilitates the evacuation of American citizens and their Afghan allies from Afghanistan, also says it has received information that someone is trying to deceive Afghans who want to leave Afghanistan safely. [...]

The group insists that these people are deceiving Afghan families and people should know that those who call these numbers are not providing real service because the Human First Coalition never asks for money in return for services and cooperation in evacuating people from Afghanistan.

Zabihullah Mujahid, Deputy Minister of Information and Culture, told Pajhwok Afghan News that they were investigating the claims and in case of any violation, they would act according to the law.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Hundreds of nomads, passengers denied entry into Pakistan, 13 October 2021 [subscription only]

“Hundreds of nomads and passengers are stranded in Agnur Ada area of Barmal district in southeastern Paktika province after being denied entry into [...] [Pakistan]”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, Taliban Uses Force And Fear To Push Hundreds Of Afghans From Tajik Border, 8 October 2021

“Thousands of Afghans camped out in Afghanistan's Badakhshan Province on the border with Tajikistan hope to leave their country and Taliban rule. Many had been at the border for weeks but now the Taliban has forced hundreds to flee the area amid reports of death threats from the militants [...]”

Reuters, Plane carrying Afghans, U.S. and European citizens from Kabul arrives in Doha, 17 September 2021

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

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Pakistan's PIA To Restart Islamabad-Kabul Commercial Flights, 11 September 2021

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Return Of The Taliban Emirate, 10 September 2021

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

Human Rights Watch, What's Next for Afghans Fleeing the Taliban?, 9 September 2021

"2. Are Afghans entitled to leave the country? [...]"

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

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

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

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

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (30 August – 5 September 2021), 13 September 2021

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

TOLO News, Taliban Preventing Planes From Leaving: US Rep. McCaul, 6 September 2021

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

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

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

Forced deportation from neighbouring states to Afghanistan (August 2022)

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: The Taliban's War With IS-K; A Pakistani Women-Only Park Closes; Afghans Deported From Tajikistan, 26 August 2022

"RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports on Tajikistan forcibly deporting Afghan refugees despite calls by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to halt the expulsions and to protect Afghan nationals fleeing conflict and persecution. During the past week, at least nine Afghan nationals have been deported by Dushanbe. It is unclear why they were expelled. But the move has instilled fear among the more than 8,000 Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

migrants residing in Tajikistan. "[The Tajik authorities] told us that they would take us to Dushanbe, but they took us directly to the border," said an Afghan woman claiming to have been deported."

AVA, Continuing the forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Turkey; Another 227 asylum seekers are returned, 22 August 2022

"Following the process of forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Turkey, 227 more refugees were transferred to Istanbul after being detained from Edirne Province. [...] According to the January report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are about 300,000 Afghan refugees in Turkey, of which about 130,000 people do not have legal documents and face the risk of forced deportation."

What is the Taliban's position regarding unsuccessful asylum applicants returning to Afghanistan?

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Update, 17 August 2022

"Refugee arrivals. There are more than 180,000 reported newly arriving Afghans seeking international protection to neighbouring countries since 1 January 2021. Most of those interviewed report leaving Afghanistan for protection-related reasons. The overall number of Afghans with international refugee protection needs is likely to be much higher, as not all approach or contact UNHCR. At the same time, authorities in Pakistan have indicated that more than 250,000 Afghans have arrived in the country since August 2021 for a variety of reasons, while authorities in Iran indicate that, according to evolving estimates, that between 500,000 and 1 million Afghans have arrived in the country since January 2021. Refugee returns. Since the start of the year, some 1,576 Afghan refugees have returned under UNHCR's facilitated voluntary repatriation programme, including 231 from Iran and 1,340 from Pakistan. This figure surpasses the 1,300 Afghans who came back during the full year of 2021, and almost triples the number who returned up to this point in 2020. Returnees have indicated that the main reasons for their returns movements from Iran and Pakistan include costs of living and lack of employment opportunities in their host countries, reunification with family in Afghanistan, improved security situation, and land allocation opportunities in Afghanistan. As highlighted above, UNHCR provides cash assistance to those returning to help support their reintegration in Afghanistan, while also running programmes and projects in priority areas of return and reintegration."

UNHCR, Voluntary Repatriation; Response Snapshot; 01 January - 30 June 2022, 1 August 2022
[infographic]

UNHCR, Iran; Voluntary repatriation since January 2022, 31 July 2022
[infographic]

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan) Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements, January to July 2022 (As of 26 July 2022) 26 July 2022

"In 2022, displacement due to ongoing conflict reduced and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Almost 7.4K people have left their homes this year due to fighting. In addition to this, close to 508.6K people have returned from neighboring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 462.3K from Iran, and 46.3K from Pakistan."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNHCR, Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees - South West Asia Quarterly Update, 2022 Q2, 18 July 2022

"In 2022, 1,178 Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan, surpassing the 1,148 Afghans who came back during the same period in 2021, and more than triple the number who returned up to this point in 2020. Returnees stated as the main reasons behind return movements from Iran and Pakistan the UNHCR assistance package, cost of living and lack of employment opportunities in host countries, reunification with family, improved security situation, and government land allocation programme¹ in Afghanistan. So far this year, some 19% of the refugee returnees have returned to Kabul (218), 11% to Kunduz (125) and 9% Herat (104). At Encashment Centres in Afghanistan, returning refugees receive a cash grant of an average USD 250 per individual, while also running programmes and projects in priority areas of return and reintegration."

DTM IOM Report, Afghanistan RLS Snapshot Report Round 5 (7 – 26 May 2022), 13 July 2022

"To better understand the demographic profiles, living conditions and reintegration processes of Afghan returnees, IOM, under the EU-funded project "Displacement Tracking Matrix Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (DTM REMAP)", developed the Returnee Longitudinal."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Plane Arrives in Netherlands with 181 Afghan Refugees from Pakistan, 13 July 2022

"A plane has arrived in the Netherlands with a 181 Afghans who had fled their war-torn country, the Dutch government said on July 13.

The refugees on the flight from Pakistan were the latest group of Afghans to fly to safety following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan last year after the pullout of Western troops.

Most of the group left Afghanistan by crossing the land border into Pakistan, where Dutch diplomats and the International Organization for Migration helped them reach the capital, Islamabad.

Pakistani authorities allowed the Afghans, who did not have valid travel documents, into the South Asian nation so they could travel on to the Netherlands.

The Netherlands has pledged to evacuate Afghans who assisted Dutch diplomats and military personnel before the Taliban seized power.

The Dutch government said on July 13 that it hopes to evacuate "as many eligible people as possible" from Afghanistan who are able to make it to Pakistan.

The Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry said earlier this year that it had brought 1,801 Afghans to the Netherlands since late August 2021."

IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan — Baseline Mobility Assessment and Emergency Community-Based Needs Assessment Summary Results (March—April 2022), July 2022

"10,064,707 former IDPs have returned to their habitual residence [2012–April 2022]"

"5,737,462 individuals returned from abroad [2012–April 2022]"

[Changes from 2021 to 2022]

"Returnees from abroad numbered 5,149,245 in Round 14 and by Round 15, the total increased by 11%, reaching 5,737,462 individuals. Almost half (48%) returned from Pakistan, 44% returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and only 6% returned from

[Returned IDPs changes from 2021 to 2022:]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"...Afghans who have returned to their home or place of origin in the assessed location or settlement from which they had previously fled as IDPs, as a result of, or in order to avoid, the effects of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, protection concerns, or natural and humanmade disasters."

"Kunduz province has the most returned IDPs compared to all provinces (1,948,537 individuals, or 19% of all returned IDPs), the majority of which returned between 2012 and 2018."

"Nuristan province witnessed a 91% increase in returned IDPs between December 2021 and April 2022. Daykundi province saw fewer IDPs compared to the previous round, a decrease of 31%."

"10,064,707 individuals have been IDPs and returned to their habitual residence in 2012 and 2022"

"4 in 5 returned from other locations within their home province (78%)"

"1 in 5 19% of all returned IDPs returned to Kunduz province"

"98% of IDPs from Zabul province have not returned home"

"4,603,766 individuals returned in 2021 and 2022 alone (46% of all returned IDPs)"

"In 2021, the number reached an unprecedented level, increasing to almost 4 million returned IDPs, a 255% increase compared to 2020. In the first four months of 2022 alone, almost 700,000 IDPs have returned to their places of origin. The high number of returned IDPs in 2021 and 2022 could be attributed to changes in the security situation and encouragement from the government for IDPs to return."

"Almost four out of five returned IDPs (78%) returned within their province of origin. Just over one in five returned IDPs (22%) had been displaced to and returned from another province."

"Almost all of the IDPs who returned to Uruzgan province were displaced within Uruzgan province (94%). Virtually all of the IDPs who returned to Panjsher province were in displacement in another province (98%)."

"Zabul province has the highest rate of non-return: 98% of those who have displaced from Zabul have not yet returned to their habitual residences."

"Forty-two per cent of individuals who were previously displaced and have returned to their habitual residence (place of origin) are in rural settlements, followed closely by peri-urban settlements (38%). One in five (20%) returned to urban settlements."

[Returnees from Abroad changes from 2021 to 2022]

"...Afghan nationals who have returned to the assessed locations after having spent at least six months abroad. This includes both documented persons (Afghans who were registered as refugees in host countries and requested voluntary return with UNHCR and relevant national authorities) and undocumented persons (Afghans who returned spontaneously or were deported from host countries, irrespective of whether or not they were registered as refugees with UNHCR and relevant national authorities)."

"Among all provinces across Afghanistan, Nangarhar received the most returnees from abroad (659,187 individuals, or 11% of all returnees from abroad)."

"...Nuristan province witnessed the largest increase in returnees from abroad, with an increase of 142%. Uruzgan province saw the largest decrease in Afghans returning from abroad: -39% between December 2021 and April 2022."

"5,737,462 individuals returned after moving across international borders"

"2,758,335 returned from Pakistan (48%)"

"3,926,133 undocumented returnees from Pakistan & the Islamic Republic of Iran (74%)"

"2,539,977 returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran (44%), 1,372,179 documented returnees from Pakistan & the Islamic Republic of Iran (26%)"

"439,150 returned from non-neighbouring countries (8%)."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The number of Afghans going to all four of the most common destinations for those moving abroad (Europe & Türkiye, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Pakistan) increased between 2019 and 2021."

"Afghans returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran grew significantly from 2019 to 2020; there was a 63% increase (from 225,262 to 368,134 individuals). By 2021, this trend slowed, by 2021 compared to 2020, there was a 16% increase in Afghans returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran (from 368,134 to 426,884 individuals). A total of 2,473,057 Afghans (both documented and undocumented) have returned from Iran since 2012."

"The overwhelming majority of Afghans who have returned from Pakistan have returned to Kabul province (78% of all who have returned)."

"Over one-third of Afghans who have returned from abroad to Afghanistan returned to rural areas (39%) followed by peri-urban areas (31%) and urban areas (30%)."

IOM, UNOCHA, UNHCR, AFGHANISTAN: Snapshot of Population Movements (May 2022), 25 May 2022

"In 2022, displacement due to ongoing conflict reduced and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. There is no displacement reported this year. 381.6K people have returned from neighboring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 247.0K from Iran, and 34.6K from Pakistan."

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements, May 2022 (As of 25 May 2022), 25 May 2022

"There is no displacement reported this year. 381.6K people have returned from neighbouring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 347.0K from Iran, and 34.6K from Pakistan."

UNHCR, Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations, Last updated 23 May 2022

"The humanitarian situation inside Afghanistan deteriorated in 2021 with significant consequences for the most vulnerable among the population. Some 3.4 million people are currently displaced by conflict. UNHCR is responding to this emergency. In Iran and Pakistan, which are neighbours of Afghanistan, there are also 2 million registered Afghan refugees. The majority of these refugees fled Afghanistan over the years, including from as early as 1979. A further 5.3 million refugees returned to Afghanistan in phases since 2002, but this trend has been declining in recent times. In August 2021, UNHCR has also released a non-return advisory for Afghanistan, calling for a halt on forced returns of Afghan nationals, including asylum seekers who have had their claims rejected. [...]

Refugee returnees to Afghanistan in 2022 [...]

403

Last updated 23 May 2022"

UNHCR, Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees; South West Asia - Quarterly Update; January - March 2022, 15 May 2022

"During the first quarter of 2022, 131 Afghans returned under the programme, of which 58% are children (under 18), the month of March registered the highest figure for returns in 2022, with 57 (44%)."

UNHCR, Refugee returnees to Afghanistan in 2022, 11 May 2022

"237 Last updated 11 May 2022"

Ariana News, Haqqani calls on former officials to return home, assures them of their security, 25 April

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

2022

““We invite those who went abroad to return home. High-ranking officials of the former government can live here with dignity. The Islamic Emirate fully defends your honor, dignity and property,” said Haqqani. A number of political analysts have meanwhile said that the Islamic Emirate should create a proper mechanism for the return of skilled Afghans who left the country and that the general amnesty should be implemented properly across the country.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“The pre-August 15 government cooperated with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance to IDPs, returning refugees, and other persons of concern. The Taliban has cooperated to a limited extent with UNHCR, the IOM, or other humanitarian organizations. On September 13, UN Refugee Commissioner Filippo Grandi visited the country and met with the Taliban’s so-called interim minister of refugees and repatriation affairs Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani. [...] The IOM estimated that all returning migrants required humanitarian assistance. Between January and September, the IOM recorded a total of 866,889 undocumented Afghans returning or being deported from Iran and Pakistan. In the same time period, the IOM recorded 40,089 assisted returnees. UNHCR reported the number of registered refugees returning remained lower than in 2020, mainly due to the Taliban takeover. The country lacked the capacity to reintegrate successfully large numbers of returnees due to continuing insecurity, poor development, and high unemployment, exacerbated by COVID-19. Insecurity and lack of services meant most recent returnees could not return to their places of origin. While numbers of deportations or spontaneous voluntary returns were trending upwards, the seizure of Kabul by the Taliban in August disrupted accurate tracking of returnees.”

Ariana News, Iran steps up deportation of Afghan refugees, 6 April 2022

"At least 3,000 Afghan refugees return to Afghanistan from Iran every day, many of whom are forcibly returned, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials have reported.

Investigations by the Ministry of Refugees found that 7,500 people entered Afghanistan from the Iranian border in the past two days.

According to the ministry, of these people, 5,500 were forcibly returned to Afghanistan by the Iranian government.

People who went to Iran due to political developments or poverty and hunger, now have bitter narratives of forced deportation from Iran.

“When you leave Afghanistan, extortion and looting begin. They [Iranians] are very annoyed,” said one of the forced returnees.

“On the way back home, if you get caught by them, they will take money from you, in short, they will do whatever they want,” said another forced returnee.”

UNHCR, Voluntary Repatriation Response Snapshot, 31 March 2022

“74 Registered Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan between 1 Jan 2022 to 28 Feb 2022 of whom 47 returned from Iran and 27 from Pakistan [...]

\$19,679 Has been provided to 74 refugee returnees in 2022 to support their immediate humanitarian needs and transportation costs.”

Khaama Press, Half million Afghans return to country in six months: Taliban, 1 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Ministry of Refugees and Repatriates of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that 500,000 Afghans in exile have returned to Afghanistan in the past six months.”

Deputy of the Ministry Muhammad Arsala Kharoti in a press conference in Kabul on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, said that most of the repatriates are from neighboring Pakistan and Iran.

Muhammad Arsala Kharotis further added that presently seven million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan, Iran, and other countries. He added that the Ministry is striving to make these people come back to the country.

Based on the information of the Ministry, 250 thousand families have been helped with by the Ministry since the resurgence of the IEA in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, three million people in Afghanistan have received aid from international organizations through the Ministry.

The IEA recently announced that no family will be allowed to leave the country in the case of an emergency. The IEA has also halted evacuation until Afghan refugees in different countries behave well.”

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 23 January 2022

“Afghans who are apprehended while trying to enter Iran continue to be returned to Afghanistan despite UNHCR's non-return advisory and advocacy for those fleeing conflict to be provide asylum. Through the analysis of available data and information, UNHCR estimates that 65% of all newly arriving Afghan asylum seekers are deported from Iran by the Government.

Provincial BAFIA has reported that in Sistan and Baluchistan Province approximately 400 Afghans are arrested per day and most are deported in less than 24 hours. This is consistent with the previous trend. Currently, there are 28 Afghan families (138 individuals) kept in Al-ghadir supervisory camp whose deportations are suspended pending decision from Central BAFIA. Suspension of deportation is extremely rare and limited to these families kept in Al-Ghadir. In Rey County, the Police Commander stated that 1,800 foreign nationals were arrested and deported from the county in the past 6 months and the presence of irregular foreign nationals is not acceptable.

In 2021, the total number of voluntary repatriations assisted through Field Unit Dogharoun reached 851 individuals, of which 57.3% were students who then re-enter Iran on a student visa. During the first half of January 2022, 24 applicants were assisted, including 16 students (67%), to return to Afghanistan. This suggest that refugee students still show interest in traveling to Afghanistan for status change, as opposed to going to Kish Island (which the Government put in place after August). This could be associated with volrep package assistance they receive. UNHCR continues to disseminate relevant information on voluntary repatriation and the situation in Afghanistan to all those undertaking voluntary return to Afghanistan. What happens to individuals who have left Afghanistan and return?”

Operational Data Portal, (UNHCR) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan situation, 20 December 2021

“Refugee returnees to Afghanistan in 2021: 1,341”

Khaama Press, Taliban’s provincial governors directed to resolve problems of those seeking asylum abroad, 8 December 2021

“In a recent decree, supreme leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mullah Hebtullah Akhund directed all the provincial governors of Afghanistan to solve the problems of those who are fleeing Afghanistan and seeking asylum elsewhere.

A statement released by the spokesperson’s office of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan reads that people who are going abroad are facing various problems both on the way and in refugee camps.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The statement further reads that Afghan refugees confront the problems of security, ethical degeneration, and other humanitarian issues.

“Some inflammatory programs endanger belief, ethics, and spiritual values. Afghans are mostly made to fabricate anti-Islam documents to gain citizenship. People who must utilize their ability and professionalism inside Afghanistan, go abroad and do some inferior jobs.” Reads the statement.

Hence, the statement directed all provincial governors and religious scholars to meet these people and resolve their problems.

Heads of the provinces were also asked to escalate efforts for the security of people especially the security of businessmen, investors, and specialists in order to convince them to stay in their country and work.

It comes as hundreds of thousands of Afghans are still finding ways to flee Afghanistan and seek asylum abroad.”

UNHCR, [Document - Afghanistan Situation External Update - 1 December 2021](#), 8 December 2021

“Deportations of Afghans have also escalated from Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan in the recent period, in contravention of UNHCR’s non-return advisory. UNHCR estimates that an average of 3,000 Afghans have been deported from Iran to Afghanistan daily between August and November. In Pakistan, deportations of some 1,800 Afghans were reported during September and October. UNHCR is also seriously concerned by the deportation of twenty-three Afghan asylum-seekers, including women and children, from Tajikistan during the past month.”

Operational Data Portal, (UNHCR) (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan situation](#), 8 December 2021

“Refugee returnees to Afghanistan in 2021: 1,317”

Operational Data Portal, (UNHCR) (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan situation](#), 28 November 2021

“Refugee returnees to Afghanistan in 2021: 1,304”

Operational Data portal, (UNHCR) (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran](#), 25 November 2021

“Afghans who are apprehended while trying to enter Iran continue to be returned to Afghanistan, despite UNHCR’s non-return advisory and advocacy to provide asylum to those fleeing conflict. Through its analysis of available data and information, UNHCR estimates that over 1,000 Afghans are being returned daily to their country by Iran. On 16 August 2021, UNHCR issued a non-return advisory for Afghanistan, which remains in place. UNHCR is seeking further clarity and reiterating the principle of nonrefoulement to the Government.”

What are the challenges to moving freely within the country?

Afghan Voice Agency, “Charity trains” left for Afghanistan from Turkey, 25 August 2022

“When the sixth consignment arrives in Afghanistan, a total of 1.25 million Afghans will have received aid carried by the trains, 17 in total, AFAD added.

This comes amid an ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan exacerbated by recent flash floods across a wide stretch of the country that has left at least 182 people dead and thousands of homes destroyed or damaged in the past month.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

IOM, movements In And Out Of Afghanistan: 1 August to 15 August 2022, 23 August 2022

"Acknowledging the deep rooted generosity of the people and the governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan for hosting millions of Afghan migrants and refugees for over 4 decades, this document captures present mobility and displacement trends between Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. The movements from the Islamic Republic of Iran into Afghanistan increased, of which (67%) were male and (33%) were female. During this reporting period, 47% of all crossings of Afghan nationals from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Afghanistan were deportations. The remains of 48 Afghan nationals, who reportedly died due to accidents and natural causes, were repatriated during the reporting weeks. (The number of individuals crossing into Islamic Republic of Iran from Afghanistan can vary from those reported by UNHCR). During this reporting period, crossings from Pakistan to Afghanistan were observed, averaging a daily inflow of 8,907 individuals (Pakistani nationals with Afghanistan visa, Afghan nationals with valid passport and Pakistani visa, Afghan nationals with ACC/POR card holders and 1,038 undocumented individuals. A majority of Afghan nationals returned from Pakistan after visiting family or conducting business. Movements from Afghanistan into Pakistan increased when compared to the last two weeks. Afghan patients who required medical treatment in Pakistan, along with 1,331 who were attendants (person who accompanies a sick person/patient). The number tripled for Afghans who fled their countries of origin in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict. The number has quadrupled for the individuals moved abroad. The number has doubled for the Afghan population who have returned to the assessed locations after having spent at least six months abroad."

Khaama Press, Running Away from Home: Taliban Arrests Three Girls in Western Afghanistan, 23 August 22

"Three young girls have reportedly been arrested by Herat policewomen for the crime of home escape, according to local Taliban authorities in the western Afghan province of Herat. These three girls were reportedly taken into custody from the 6th district of Herat city, the provincial capital, according to the Taliban government's office of the chief of police in Herat. The case concerning the three young girls has reportedly been brought before the appropriate judicial agencies and authorities in Herat for consideration. The Herat police chief's office, however, provided no further information regarding the reasons why the three girls left their homes. A boy and a girl from the fifth district of Kunduz province in northern Afghanistan were earlier arrested by Taliban security officers on grounds of running away from home. Afghan women have been subjected to forced marriages and domestic violence, and Human Rights Watch reports that up to 70% of cases of "running away" from home are related to fleeing forced marriage or domestic violence."

The Guardian, 'I daren't go far' Taliban rules trap women with no male guardian, 15 August 2022

"Those without a male relative to act as a mahram are in legal limbo and unable to travel long distances. Hasina* cannot send her two daughters to school, because they are teenagers and high school is banned for girls in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

But she cannot take them out of the country to finish their education because she is a divorced single mother, and women are barred from long-distance travel without a male "guardian" to escort them.

Wazhma* lies awake worrying what she will do if her sick, elderly mother needs emergency medical help at night. Her father is dead, she is unmarried and her teenage sister is disabled.

She is terrified that as women out alone at night, even on their way to a hospital, they would be stopped and harassed by the Taliban.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Most Afghan women have had to learn to endure new restrictions and controls over the last year, but there is one group whose lives have been particularly curtailed.

Women who live in households without a close male relative, whether through tragedy, circumstance or choice, now exist in a legal limbo, because they do not have a close male relative to act as a mahram, or “guardian”.

In the Taliban’s extremist reimagining of Afghanistan, women are not fully autonomous citizens of their own country. Instead a man is deemed responsible for their presence in public, including how they dress and where they travel.

Officially, any woman travelling more than 75km (46 miles) or leaving the country needs a mahram. If a woman is found to have broken the Taliban’s dress codes, their male relatives face punishment.

The rules have been enforced sporadically, with some officials turning a blind eye to solo travel. Raihana* was barred from boarding a plane earlier this year for a work trip but says women have since been allowed back in the air alone.

“It was in March, they had just circulated the new notice that no woman can travel to another city without a mahram. I wasn’t allowed to board the plane, and had to wait in the airport for two to three hours, with 20 or 30 other women,” she said. “This went on for a few weeks then they abolished [the rule]. Now we can travel again.”

But many others across Afghanistan have reported restrictions on women’s movements that go far beyond the official regulations. They told the Guardian that Taliban fighters have barred them from even short journeys, including commuting to work, sometimes using indirect tactics such as threatening drivers who take solo female passengers.

Health workers said they had personal experience of women being barred from accessing medical help without a mahram in at least two districts, one in central Afghanistan’s Bamiyan province and one in southern Helmand.

[...]

The mahram rule has also contributed to an economic catastrophe for families without adult men, amid a broader economic collapse. The regulations make it harder or more frightening for women to find jobs, or commute to work.”

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"In December 2021, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue issued guidance indicating that women must be accompanied by a mahram, or male chaperone, for journeys longer than 72km. Taliban official Zabiullah Mujahid said in a previous interview that the Taliban’s mahram requirements would not apply for daily activities such as traveling to work or school. However, this statement was undermined by a decree issued on 7 May 2022 by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue that required women to cover their faces in public and stipulated that they should not leave their homes unless necessary. The Taliban have also instructed airlines to prevent women from flying domestically and internationally without a mahram and they have ordered driving instructors in Herat to cease giving driving lessons and licenses to women."

"Taliban restrictions on movement also have the potential to pressure women and girls to enter into marriage, whether by their own choice or as a result of pressure or coercion from their family members. One woman who was arbitrarily arrested for being in public with a man who was not her mahram, explained: “If you want to go outside, you have to have a father, brother or husband with you... A father can’t always go out with the daughter, a brother might be busy... This will pressure girls and women to marry, just so that they always have a mahram.”"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

International Rescue Committee (IRC), One year on: How the IRC expanded our impact in Afghanistan, 8 August 2022

"In 2021, the IRC supported health facilities around the country by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to clinics to prepare them against COVID-19. We also trained health care workers on infection prevention measures and community volunteers to identify symptoms and refer people to clinics for treatment. Now, the IRC is supporting 62 health clinics in 11 provinces, and programming includes the delivery of malnutrition services, responding to deadly cholera outbreaks, and maternal and reproductive health.

We also have a network of 31 mobile health teams, who can travel to remote communities to deliver lifesaving medical assistance. After a June earthquake hit a remote area in the southeast, IRC staff formed an all-female mobile health team that was able to quickly deploy to people who had been injured and provide first aid support.

"The proudest point in my job is serving my people—the people of Afghanistan," said Amna Gul, an IRC health manager who helped create the all-female team. "Especially the women who are not able to go to health care facilities because of transportation, financial conditions and Mahram [needing a male chaperone to receive care from a male health care worker]."

Amnesty International (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Death in slow motion: Women and girls under Taliban rule, 27 July 2022

"In December 2021, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue issued guidance indicating that women must be accompanied by a mahram, or male chaperone, for journeys longer than 72km. Taliban official Zabiullah Mujahid said in a previous interview that the Taliban's mahram requirements would not apply for daily activities such as traveling to work or school. However, this statement was undermined by a decree issued on 7 May 2022 by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue that required women to cover their faces in public and stipulated that they should not leave their homes unless necessary. The Taliban have also instructed airlines to prevent women from flying domestically and internationally without a mahram and they have ordered driving instructors in Herat to cease giving driving lessons and licenses to women."

"Taliban restrictions on movement also have the potential to pressure women and girls to enter into marriage, whether by their own choice or as a result of pressure or coercion from their family members. One woman who was arbitrarily arrested for being in public with a man who was not her mahram, explained: "If you want to go outside, you have to have a father, brother or husband with you... A father can't always go out with the daughter, a brother might be busy... This will pressure girls and women to marry, just so that they always have a mahram.'"

Khaama Press, 52 People Killed and Injured in Southern Afghanistan As Passenger Bus Overtakes, 26 July 2022

"The incident comes at a time when the Afghanistan Meteorology Department issued two warnings, labeling Zabul province with other provinces, this week for heavy rainfall and flash floods.

Drivers' negligence has resulted in considerable human loss in Afghanistan and traffic incidents associated with the fault of the driver have increased in recent months."

ToloNews, Poverty, Govt Restrictions Affects Kabul Parkgoers, 12 July 2022

"Numbers of visitors at the parks in the capital city of Kabul have fallen as recent restrictions have been imposed by the Islamic Emirate.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The residents of Kabul who come to the parks for picnics said new restrictions imposed by the Islamic Emirate are the main reason for the reduction of visitors to the parks."

EurasiaNet, [Islamic State threatens Central Asian and Chinese ventures in Afghanistan](#), 6 July 2022

"[...] Tashkent's ambition to build a railway across Afghanistan that would connect Uzbekistan to ports in Pakistan and link Central Asia to new markets [threatened by] Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) – the terror group's local branch, which has claimed a volley of atrocities targeting civilians across Afghanistan in the last year – has vowed to kill anyone working on it. [...] It is not only the trans-Afghanistan railway in Islamic State's crosshairs. ISKP-linked social media accounts are pouring scorn on the prospective Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan) Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan), [Afghanistan: Emergency Earthquake Response Plan \(Jul - Sep 2022\)](#), 30 June 2022
"Staffing of female humanitarians is particularly difficult given pre-existing limited numbers of women staff and restrictions on women's movements without a Mahram."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, [Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover](#), 22 June 2022

"Women cannot travel alone. Already in December 2021 came the directive that women who travel longer than 72km. must be accompanied by a male family member (BBC News 2021). From different parts of the country it is reported that women have been denied health care because they did not have male companion (mahram). Women who visit health centers with the sick children, are rejected because they come unaccompanied (Nader & Amini 2022). Another measure that restricts women's freedom of movement is that they no longer receive a driver's license (Free Press Journal 2022). Furthermore, the Taliban has banned that women can fly without a male companion. The order for a companion applies to both domestic and international flights. The airlines were informed of the restrictions in a letter from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (Reuters 2022)."

Tolo News, [Travelers Face Trouble at Spin Boldak, Chaman Crossings](#), 21 June 2022

"According to people interviewed by TOLONews, residents who live near the Durand Line, particularly people living in nearby Qila Abdullah and Chaman, can cross with either with Kandahar-issued or Pakistani ID cards, while other Afghans with legal documents must wait several days. Bismillah, who is a resident of Ghazni, said that he has tried twice to cross into Pakistan but has not been allowed. "We were not allowed, we were told that we should have a passport or a sick visa in order to pass at the crossing," said Bismillah, a resident of Ghazni. "Yesterday I went three times to the crossing, they sent us back, there were women also with us, they mistreated us and also the women. They threw away our IDs," Abdul Rahman Shah, a resident of Uruzgan, told TOLONews. According to residents of Kandahar, sometimes even those residents of Kandahar who have ID cards and legal documents cannot cross. Citizens asked the Islamic Emirate to solve the problem permanently. "This is the third time that we have gone, they send us back and do not accept our Kandahar ID cards and they are not allowing us through," said Khan Wali, a resident of Kandahar. Meanwhile, local officials in Kandahar said that they are trying to solve this problem through dialogue with Pakistani officials. "We have talked to the Pakistani officials about this problem so that all the people of Afghanistan can move freely so that there is no gap between them and their relatives," said Hafiz Esmatullah, an official."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA, Kabul, Tehran want Khawaf-Herat railroad completed, 15 June 2022

"A delegation of the Afghan Railway Authority (ARA) led by Mullah Bakhtulrahman Sharafat head of the department and Iranian railway authorities have discussed work on the third portion of the Khaf-Herat railroad. RA in a statement received by BNA said that the two sides during a meeting discussed the resumption of work on the third portion of Herat-Khaf railway transportation via the track. The source said that the Iranian side assured of its preparedness to resume work on the remaining portion of the railway and use the route for transportation. Meanwhile, the ARA head thanked the Iranian side for their cooperation and emphasized the continuation of such meetings in the future for better coordination on the railway construction process. Iranian Urban Affairs Minister Rostam Qasami directed relevant organs of his country to complete work on the remaining parts of the Herat-Khawaf railroad and put it to use before the arrival of winter this year. Herat-Khawaf is a standard railway that connects Khaf in Iran to the Herat province of Afghanistan. The railway is divided into four portions two of which are in Iran and the rest are in Afghanistan."

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"The enforcement of a strict hijab rule continues; barriers are in place for women's access to employment, including for female NGO workers performing their duties; there are no opportunities for women to participate in public and political life; and their freedom of movement has been severely restricted. Let me be clear: what we are witnessing today in Afghanistan is the institutionalised, systematic oppression of women. Limiting women's freedom of movement negatively impacts almost all aspects of their lives, including the ability of women and their children to access and to participate in health services, livelihood and humanitarian aid."

AVA, High Fuel Prices in Kabul, 14 June 2022

"The price of fuel, and also the price of taxi fares, have surged, causing a strain for many who are struggling to make ends meet amid an economic crisis. [...] The taxi drivers said that the price of one liter of diesel is 100 Afs, which caused a surge in the taxi fare as well."

AVA, PM Shehbaz Sharif approves new transit visa policy for Afghans, 13 June 2022

"Pakistan's Prime Minister has approved a new on arrival visa policy for Afghan nationals going abroad via Pakistan. Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, Salman Sufi, head of the Prime Minister's Strategic Reforms Initiatives, said that under the new policy a transit visa of 30 days would be issued within 24 hours by the Pakistan government to Afghan nationals, Dawn newspaper reported. The official said that upon the receipt of such a request from the host embassy in Pakistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) would immediately process the request for transit visa of up to 30 days. "Thereafter, upon the receipt of the immigration approval, embassy of the host country will intimate (MoFA) and the ministry will forward the case to the interior ministry for clearance within 24 hours," he said. Sharif meanwhile said on Sunday the new Afghan visa policy is part of the Pakistani government's efforts to continue helping "our Afghan brothers in their hour of need." "Grant of transit visa will help them complete paperwork for onward travel. International community should also lend a helping hand to people of Afghanistan," Sharif said on Twitter."

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"PARWAN, Afghanistan -- Armed Taliban fighters stopped at Ahmad's home last week, ordering his family of six to immediately leave their village in Afghanistan's northern province of Baghlan.

"They didn't even allow us to take any of our belongings," Ahmad, who did not reveal his real name for fear of retribution, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. He said the Taliban fighters forced his family into a military vehicle in the Pol-e Hesar district and dropped them off in another area of the province.

Ahmad and his family are among the hundreds of civilians that have been forcibly evicted from their homes in recent weeks in Baghlan, the scene of intensifying clashes between the Taliban and resistance forces, residents and activists say.

The recent surge in fighting in Baghlan and the neighboring province of Panjshir has prompted allegations of widespread Taliban abuses, including extrajudicial killings of civilians, torture, and forced displacement."

" Zabihullah Farahmand, an activist in Baghlan, said the Taliban has forcibly evicted at least 50 families from their homes in the districts of Pol-e Hesar, Deh Salah, and Andarab in recent weeks. The districts comprise the long, narrow Andarab Valley. "They have been forcibly relocated by the Taliban and no assistance has been provided to these refugees," says Farahmand. "These families find refuge in other northern provinces with a lot of hardship. They need help and care."

AREU, Afghanistan Covid-19 Poverty Report, 1 June 2022

"Access to health facilities is widely reported, though treatment costs and transportation disruptions have had an impact on people seeking treatment. Many respondents sought treatment, though most emphasised the effect of the costs of these treatments on their households' economic security, as well as lost time in employment and day labour. One respondent reported avoiding treatment due to misinformation about the dangers of attending a health facility for Covid-19."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The expert notes that, since August 2021, armed hostilities in most parts of the country ceased and there was a consequent reduction in conflict-related casualties. This also resulted in increased access in the country for Afghans and humanitarian agencies, and more predictability especially in rural communities, although women's freedom of movement has been progressively restricted."

UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Severity Overview (April 2022), 26 May 2022

"Key Findings (as of March 2022)

Consolidating access severity scores across all humanitarian partner groups – UN Agencies, International NGOs and National NGOs – reveals that from the 401 districts across Afghanistan, the level of access constraints were found to be:

- High in 19 districts (representing 5 per cent of all districts).
- Moderate in 93 districts (23 per cent).
- Lower in 289 districts (72 per cent).

Interferences by the de facto Taliban authorities are the most common impediments faced by all humanitarian partners, including for those ranked with lower access constraints. 82 per cent of the districts across Afghanistan face high (32) and medium (297) priority of needs, 26 per cent of which are also perceived to have high (14) and moderate (70) access constraints. Findings in this document thus

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

reveal that while physical access has markedly improved since August 2021 - mainly due to the significant reduction in armed conflict - various access constraints nevertheless persist, with varying impact on humanitarian actors ability to implement programmes and deliver assistance and services. Note that 1) the mere existence of an access impediment according to the criteria - such as the establishment of a checkpoint - does not necessarily slow down or hinder the response; and 2) the perception of quality of access is informed by severity and the magnitude of the potential impact on affected people and humanitarian staff, and not just by frequency (which speaks to the low perception of access constraints compared to the high number of impediments reported)."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"The pre-August 15 government's law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. The pre-August 15 government generally respected these rights. The Taliban generally respected these rights for citizens with sufficient identity documentation, including passports, but they prevented certain political figures associated with previous administrations from travelling abroad. Restrictions were also placed on women's in-country movements. [...] After the Taliban takeover in August, intercity travel was generally unobstructed. On December 26, the Taliban announced that women could not engage in long-distance travel without a mahram. Within populated areas, women could move more freely, although there were increasingly frequent reports of women without a mahram being stopped and questioned."

Ariana News, Afghanistan, Pakistan to establish cross-border bus services, 12 March 2022

"Afghanistan's Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation said on Saturday that passenger bus services between Afghanistan and Pakistan will be rolled out in the near future and will initially run between Kandahar and Quetta; and Nangarhar and Peshawar. According to officials, private bus companies from both countries will provide the services. Five Afghan and five Pakistani companies will provide services for passengers. We want to expand such transit and transport services with other neighboring countries," said Amamudin Ahmadi, spokesman for the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. Members of the Afghanistan transport companies association welcomed the move but said government needs to establish similar services to other neighboring countries."

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"The Taliban impose few direct restrictions on freedom of movement within the country. However, intrusive checkpoints, designed to ensnare suspected opponents and enforce Taliban codes, can make movement hazardous.

Freedom of movement for women is restricted, with the MVV restricting how far they can travel unaccompanied. Women who do not wear clothing that abides by the ministry's guidance can be prohibited from entering vehicles."

How do Taliban checkpoints affect free movement?

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022

"Radio Azadi reports on the one sector of Afghanistan's collapsing economy that is thriving: the smuggling of people trying to escape the country. The Taliban has banned the transit of undocumented migrants across the border to Pakistan and Iran. But smugglers have overcome the ban by bribing corrupt Taliban border guards. "We fit about 20 people in each vehicle, and the Taliban charges

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

1,000 afghanis (about \$11) per car," said Mahmud. He earns \$800 a month smuggling up to 150 people weekly from Zaranj in Nimroz into Iran."

Gandhara, [Escaping Afghanistan: People-Smuggling Thrives On Bribes To Taliban](#), 27 May 2022

"The Taliban has tried to stem the flow of Afghans attempting to escape economic ruin and persecution. But, despite an official ban, the smuggling of undocumented migrants to neighboring Iran and Pakistan continues to rise with the help of Taliban border guards and officials willing to look the other way. As Afghanistan's economy collapses, its citizens continue to leave the country en masse in a trend that began to rise with the announced withdrawal of foreign forces in the spring of 2021 and which spiked after the Taliban seized power in August. Iran, a major destination country, has clamped down by beefing up security along its 900-kilometer border with Afghanistan and deporting tens of thousands of Afghans. Taliban authorities in the southwestern province of Nimroz, which abuts Afghanistan's borders with Iran and Pakistan and serves as a major migration hub, have banned human smuggling in an effort to stem the outflow."

UNOCHA, [Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Severity Overview \(April 2022\)](#), 26 May 2022

"Key Findings (as of March 2022)

Consolidating access severity scores across all humanitarian partner groups – UN Agencies, International NGOs and National NGOs – reveals that from the 401 districts across Afghanistan, the level of access constraints were found to be:

- High in 19 districts (representing 5 per cent of all districts).
- Moderate in 93 districts (23 per cent).
- Lower in 289 districts (72 per cent).

Interferences by the de facto Taliban authorities are the most common impediments faced by all humanitarian partners, including for those ranked with lower access constraints. 82 per cent of the districts across Afghanistan face high (32) and medium (297) priority of needs, 26 per cent of which are also perceived to have high (14) and moderate (70) access constraints. Findings in this document thus reveal that while physical access has markedly improved since August 2021 - mainly due to the significant reduction in armed conflict - various access constraints nevertheless persist, with varying impact on humanitarian actors ability to implement programmes and deliver assistance and services. Note that 1) the mere existence of an access impediment according to the criteria - such as the establishment of a checkpoint - does not necessarily slow down or hinder the response; and 2) the perception of quality of access is informed by severity and the magnitude of the potential impact on affected people and humanitarian staff, and not just by frequency (which speaks to the low perception of access constraints compared to the high number of impediments reported)."

Tolo News, [Security Officials: Kabul Checkpoints Increased for Eid](#), 30 April 2022

"Following the recent attacks in Kabul and other provinces, officials of the Ministry of Defense and the Kabul Police Command said that strict security measures have been taken during Eid to provide security for the citizens of the country. "People can spend their Eid days with a peace of mind and calmness because their brothers, the Mujahideen, are at their service and 8will ensure their security, and we will not allow any group or movement to disrupt security," said Enayatullah Kharazmi, spokesman for the Ministry of Defense."

US DOS, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#), 12 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Prior to August 15, the greatest barrier to movement in some parts of the country remained the lack of security. Taxi, truck, and bus drivers reported security forces and insurgents sometimes operated illegal checkpoints and extorted money and goods from travelers. Prior to August 15, the Taliban regularly blocked highways completely or imposed illegal taxes on those who attempted to travel.

Through the year, Taliban checkpoints increasingly dotted the main highways leading in and out of Kabul, since many outposts were abandoned by pre-August 15 government security forces. Media workers and officials of the pre-August 15 government avoided in-country travel because they feared being identified by the Taliban and subjected to reprisals. After the Taliban takeover in August, intercity travel was generally unobstructed.”

The New York Times, On Patrol: 12 Days With a Taliban Police Unit in Kabul, 28 January 2022

“So far, the new government’s approach to policing has been ad hoc at best: Local Taliban units have assumed the role at checkpoints across the country, while in large cities, such as Kabul, Taliban fighters have been imported from surrounding provinces.”

Khaama Press, Girl gunned down in Taliban’s check post in Kabul, 15 January 2022

“A family in the western Kabul Dasht-e-Barchi claimed that their 25-year-old daughter has been shot dead in a check post of Taliban.

Family members of the slain Zainab said that they or the way home back from a wedding function who were stopped in a check post and were then shot at.

The Father of Zainab asked for justice and the arrest of the culprits.

The motive behind the shooting is not yet clear but the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan pledged to be investigating the case and bring to justice the perpetrators.

It is worth mentioning that, last month a 22-year-old Faisal was shot dead in a check post of the Taliban in Kabul city.

The Taliban affiliate was arrested but the family of the slain Faisal pardoned him.”

Gandhara, 'The Only Option Left': My Escape From Afghanistan, 2 December 2021

“We left in the middle of the night for the Pakistani border. Right now, that's the best time to go. The Taliban doesn't have the resources yet to fully man its checkpoints, and I was told that their fingerprint readers only work in daylight. There's no traffic or crowds. Actually, the road was so quiet it was spooky. When the driver stopped to pray in one town, the only noise was some dogs barking in the distance. We passed several checkpoints on the way. There's no warning or signage. You just see a man on the road with a gun signaling you to stop. In some places, there was just one member of the Taliban on duty. I guess the rest were sleeping. I saw their motorcycles covered with a blanket to keep the engines warm. At other times, the militants were standing wrapped in blankets themselves. Some of them were playing Islamic songs or a recitation of the Koran on their mobile phones. The driver had made the trip a few times, so he knew some tricks to get through the checkpoints. He told us to act sleepy, even though we were nervous and wide awake, while the Taliban peered through the windows and shined lights in our faces.”

Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNHCR, Flash External Update: Afghanistan Situation #19, 17 August 2022

"[...] Ongoing earthquake response. In late June, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck districts in Paktika and Khost provinces, south-eastern Afghanistan. Over 1,000 people are estimated to have been killed, including 250 children, while an additional 3,000 people were injured, among them 600 children. At least 70% of houses in the most impacted areas were damaged or destroyed. [...]

The broader humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains challenging across the country, with more than half of the population remaining dependent on assistance. This includes many displaced people, who often live in makeshift settlements under difficult conditions. [...]

UNHCR first visit to Nuristan province in 15 years: In the reporting period, UNHCR staff undertook a twoday mission to Nuristan Province for the first time since 2007, as the province had been largely inaccessible due to active conflict. The province capital, Parun, is more than eight hours by road from Jalalabad over mountainous terrain in Nangarhar Province, eastern Afghanistan. During the visit, the UNHCR team met with authorities, IDP representatives and partner agencies. The visit highlighted the lack of access to basic services, including potable water, education, health, access roads, and lack of access to viable livelihood opportunities in remote districts and locations. As part of the immediate response, UNHCR started the distribution of tents and CRIs to the most vulnerable IDPs, while also assessing the further potential for scaling up further through an area-based approach in the two new PARR locations. [...]

Support to IDP returnees: A priority for UNHCR's work in Afghanistan remains the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced Afghans to their places of origin. Over 110,000 IDP returnees have been identified by UNHCR in 2022, bringing the total number of IDP returnees identified by UNHCR since 2021 to more than 989,000. [...]

Refugee returns: Since the start of the year, some 1,576 Afghan refugees have returned under UNHCR's facilitated voluntary repatriation programme, including 231 from Iran and 1,340 from Pakistan. This figure surpasses the 1,300 Afghans who came back during the full year of 2021, and almost triples the number who returned up to this point in 2020. Returnees have indicated that the main reasons for their returns movements from Iran and Pakistan include costs of living and lack of employment opportunities in their host countries, reunification with family in Afghanistan, improved security situation, and land allocation opportunities in Afghanistan. As highlighted above, UNHCR provides cash assistance to those returning to help support their reintegration in Afghanistan, while also running programmes and projects in priority areas of return and reintegration."

ToloNews, OCHA Claims 27,000 Displaced in Balkhab Conflict, 8 July 2022

"The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that at least 27,000 people have been displaced following the fighting in Balkhab district in Sar-e-Pul province." [...] "... in Bamiyan province there are more than 6,000 internally displaced people"

IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan — Baseline Mobility Assessment and Emergency Community-Based Needs Assessment Summary Results (March—April 2022), July 2022

[Key figures]

"5,894,220 arrival IDPs who remain in displacement [2012–April 2022]"

"10,064,707 former IDPs have returned to their habitual residence [2012–April 2022]"

"5,676,122 individuals moved abroad [2012–April 2022]"

"5,737,462 individuals returned from abroad [2012–April 2022]"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[...]

[Changes from 2021 to 2022]

"Arrival IDPs increased by 1%, from 5,832,454 individuals recorded in Round 14 (November and December 2021) to 5,894,220 individuals in Round 15. Most arrival IDPs are hosted in Herat province (17%)."

"Returned IDPs reached over 10 million, increasing by 18% between Rounds 14 and 15 (from 8,495,365 to 10,064,707 individuals). Almost half (46%) of these individuals returned in 2021 and 2022 alone."

"The number of Afghans moving abroad also increased significantly between Rounds 14 and 15, with a 26% increase from 4,519,522 to 5,676,122 individuals. The most common destinations are the bordering countries of the Islamic Republic of Iran (66%) and Pakistan (19%), followed by Europe and Türkiye (12%)."

"Returnees from abroad numbered 5,149,245 in Round 14 and by Round 15, the total increased by 11%, reaching 5,737,462 individuals. Almost half (48%) returned from Pakistan, 44% returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and only 6% returned from Europe and Türkiye."

[Settlement Classification]

"Among the arrival IDPs, 42% are urban settlements, while 30% are in rural and 28% are in peri-urban settlements."

"Forty-two per cent of individuals who were previously displaced and have returned to their habitual residence (place of origin) are in rural settlements, followed closely by peri-urban settlements (38%). One in five (20%) returned to urban settlements."

"Almost half of Afghans who moved abroad are from rural settlements (48%), followed by peri-urban (33%) and urban settlements (19%)."

"Over one-third of Afghans who have returned from abroad to Afghanistan returned to rural settlements (39%) followed by peri-urban (31%) and urban settlements (30%)."

[Arrival IDPs changes from 2021 to 2022]

"Arrival IDPs are Afghans who fled their communities of origin and have arrived in the assessed locations within Afghanistan as a result of, or in order to avoid, the effects of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, protection concerns, or natural and humanmade disasters."

"Kandahar province witnessed an increase in arrival IDPs of 53% between December 2021 and April 2022. Over the same time period, Samangan province witnessed a decrease in arrival IDPs of 40%."

"5,894,220 arrival IDPs currently in displacement"

"17% of IDPs are in Herat, which is the largest share among all provinces (989,696 individuals)"

"4,027,373 displaced due to conflict (68%), 139,725 of which due to troop withdrawal in 2021"

"3 in 5 displaced within their home province (62%)"

"1,866,847 displaced by natural disaster (32%)"

"The 2019 through 2021 period witnessed a steady but large increase in the number of Afghans displaced by conflict and natural disasters. In 2021, an unprecedentedly high number of individuals were displaced nationwide. According to DTM's most recent estimates (Round 15), over 1.4 million Afghans fled their homes as IDPs in 2021,1 which is 131% higher than the number displaced in 2019."

"Almost two-thirds of arrival IDPs displaced between 2012 and 2022 remain within their province of origin. Uruzgan hosts the most IDPs from within the same province (98%). Panjsher hosts the largest portion of IDPs from other provinces (94%)."

"Between 2012 and 2022, 68% of arrival IDPs have displaced due to conflict while 32% have displaced due to natural disaster. Kunar province has witnessed the highest proportion of displacement due to conflict (100%) among all provinces, while Bamyán province has faced the highest proportion of displacement due to natural disaster (79%)."

[Returned IDPs changes from 2021 to 2022]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"...Afghans who have returned to their home or place of origin in the assessed location or settlement from which they had previously fled as IDPs, as a result of, or in order to avoid, the effects of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, protection concerns, or natural and humanmade disasters."

"Kunduz province has the most returned IDPs compared to all provinces (1,948,537 individuals, or 19% of all returned IDPs), the majority of which returned between 2012 and 2018."

"Nuristan province witnessed a 91% increase in returned IDPs between December 2021 and April 2022. Daykundi province saw fewer IDPs compared to the previous round, a decrease of 31%."

"10,064,707 individuals have been IDPs and returned to their habitual residence in 2012 and 2022"

"4 in 5 returned from other locations within their home province (78%)"

"1 in 5 19% of all returned IDPs returned to Kunduz province"

"98% of IDPs from Zabul province have not returned home"

"4,603,766 individuals returned in 2021 and 2022 alone (46% of all returned IDPs)"

"In 2021, the number reached an unprecedented level, increasing to almost 4 million returned IDPs, a 255% increase compared to 2020. In the first four months of 2022 alone, almost 700,000 IDPs have returned to their places of origin. The high number of returned IDPs in 2021 and 2022 could be attributed to changes in the security situation and encouragement from the government for IDPs to return."

"Almost four out of five returned IDPs (78%) returned within their province of origin. Just over one in five returned IDPs (22%) had been displaced to and returned from another province."

"Almost all of the IDPs who returned to Uruzgan province were displaced within Uruzgan province (94%). Virtually all of the IDPs who returned to Panjsher province were in displacement in another province (98%)."

"Zabul province has the highest rate of non-return: 98% of those who have displaced from Zabul have not yet returned to their habitual residences."

"Forty-two per cent of individuals who were previously displaced and have returned to their habitual residence (place of origin) are in rural settlements, followed closely by peri-urban settlements (38%). One in five (20%) returned to urban settlements."

Persons who moved abroad changes from 2021 to 2022:

"...individuals who have moved abroad from the assessed locations, regardless of the reason or duration of expatriation. This category includes persons in need of international protection and economic migrants (it does not include other categories of IDP populations or cross-border movements)."

"The largest increase in Afghans moving abroad were from Nuristan province, which witnessed a 135% increase between December 2021 and April 2022. The province that witnessed the largest decrease in individuals moving abroad between Rounds 14 and 15 was Uruzgan province, which saw a decline of 59%."

"5,676,122 individuals left their habitual residence and crossed international borders"

"699,329 moved to Europe and Türkiye (12%)"

"3,738,637 moved to the Islamic Republic of Iran (66%)"

"1,094,879 moved to Pakistan (19%)"

"9% of Afghans who have moved abroad originate from Faryab province (518,476 individuals)."

"...2021 saw a significant surge in those moving abroad, increasing 183% compared to 2020. This large increase is likely due to an intensifying environment of conflict accompanying the withdrawal of international troops and the change of government that occurred in the summer of 2021."

"The number of Afghans going to all four of the most common destinations for those moving abroad (Europe & Türkiye, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Pakistan) increased between 2019 and 2021."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is the most common destination for Afghans moving abroad. Movement to the Islamic Republic of Iran increased by 50% between 2019 and 2020, followed by a larger increase of

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

190% between 2020 and 2021. As of this round of data collection, a total of 3,738,637 Afghans have moved to the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"Those moving abroad to Pakistan increased by 31% between 2019 and 2020 and later by 212% between 2020 and 2021. As of this round of data collection, a total of 1,094,879 Afghans who have left Afghanistan are residing in Pakistan."

"Afghans moving abroad to Europe and Türkiye also increased, although to a lesser extent: 30% more moved abroad to Europe and Türkiye in 2020 compared to 2019, and 126% more moved to those locations in 2021 compared to 2020. Afghans who have moved to Europe and Türkiye has reached 699,329, according to the most recent round of data collection."

"Almost half of Afghans who moved abroad are from rural areas (48%), followed by peri-urban areas (33%) and urban areas (19%)."

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, The AIHRCs statement, regarding international humanitarian rights' violations by The Taliban in Balkhab District, Sar-E-Pol province, 29 June 2022
"Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) is concerned about targeting civilian people and venues, and overall about increase in human rights and international humanitarian rights violation cases by The Taliban, during current conflicts all around the country, and strongly criticizes these violations.

There have been reports of civilians peppered and shot to death during Taliban's recent attacks on Panjshir and Baghlan provinces, specifically these days on Balkhab district in Sar-e-Pol province, and based on AIHRC's findings, there have been a large number of civilian victims.

Available reports, evidences and testimonials show that, The Taliban elements have peppered a number of civilians, fired some of defenseless civilians' accommodation places, murdered many of the captives and the surrendered, bombarded on civilian venues, caused many families to get displaced and move out towards impassable mountainous areas, disconnected phone and internet lines, blocked connective routes towards this district.

Such kind of acts is considered a violation against Islamic principles and international humanitarian rights, as well as a clear example of war crime."

AVA, The United Nations provides an environment conducive to IDPs and returnees, 15 June 2022

"The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a meeting with the Political Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate that the United Nations is working to create a conducive environment for internally displaced persons and returnees in Afghanistan. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) - Kabul: Ms. Kylie Cleimines; Deputy UN High Commissioner for Refugees with Shir Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai; The political deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate met and talked about immigrants and internally displaced persons."

Number and situation of IDPs in Afghanistan

UNHCR Operational Data Portal, **External Update: Afghanistan Situation #19**, 17 August 2022

"Ongoing earthquake response: In late June, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck districts in Paktika and Khost provinces, south-eastern Afghanistan. Over 1,000 people are estimated to have been killed, including 250 children, while an additional 3,000 people were injured, among them 600 children. At least 70% of houses in the most impacted areas were damaged or destroyed.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[...]

Broader response in Afghanistan: The broader humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains challenging across the country, with more than half of the population remaining dependent on assistance. This includes many displaced people, who often live in makeshift settlements under difficult conditions.

“UNHCR first visit to Nuristan province in 15 years: The visit highlighted the lack of access to basic services, including potable water, education, health, access roads, and lack of access to viable livelihood opportunities in remote districts and locations.

[...]

Support to IDP returnees: Over 110,000 IDP returnees have been identified by UNHCR in 2022, bringing the total number of IDP returnees identified by UNHCR since 2021 to more than 989,000.”

International Organisation for Migration: Displacement Tracking Matrix, Afghanistan – Survey on drivers of migration – round 3 (April – August 2021), August 2022

“This report demonstrates how Afghan mobility is the result of a range of factors related to economic conditions and prolonged conflict within the country. Between April 2021 and August 2021 (Round 3 of SDM), various provinces of Afghanistan were affected by active conflict, which was followed by the fall of the government in Afghanistan on 15 August 2021. This resulted in civilian casualties, the loss of livelihoods, internal displacement, and cross-border mobility. Therefore, the decisions to leave Afghanistan and choose a destination country revolved around multiple intersections of these factors as opposed to an identifiable, single reason”.

OCHA, Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements, January to July 2022 (As of 26 July 2022), 26 July 2022

“In 2022, displacement due to ongoing conflict reduced and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Almost 7.4K people have left their homes this year due to fighting. In addition to this, close to 508.6K people have returned from neighboring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 462.3K from Iran, and 46.3K from Pakistan”.

Tolo News, Ministry: 2,000 Displaced Families to Return to Provinces, 27 July 2022

“Ministry of Repatriation and Refugees officials said two thousand displaced people will be returned to their provinces in cooperation with the United Nations. Ahmad Ullah Hashemi, acting chief of the refugees' department of Kabul, made the announcement. “228 families are going this week on Wednesday, and we have plans to transfer 2,000 families to their provinces,” said Hashemi. “We share lists of these displaced people with our provincial zones and after evaluations, \$400 will be given to the needy and issues of housing, food aid and temporary shelter have been considered for them,” said Muhammad Arif Sadiqi, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Meanwhile, some displaced people said they are worried about homelessness and unemployment.

“In Faryab, there is no work and there is high poverty--now they transfer us, but I don't know what will happen,” said Fatana, a displaced person. They called for long-term support from aid agencies.

“We ask for long-term assistance, now they give us \$200 dollars--half of that will be spent on the way, and a sack of flour and oil is not enough for us,” said Mohib Ulla, a displaced person. According to statements by Repatriation and Refugees officials, currently more than three million internally displaced people have come to the capital because of war and draught.”

CARE, Afghanistan: Humanitarian needs worsening due to insecurity, drought and COVID-19, Undated

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Insecurity- (...) As of mid-July, the country had a total of 3.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs). (...) Needs will worsen as winter approaches, with displaced families having to cope with freezing temperatures and snowfall. Communities hosting IDPs also face challenges as they struggle to accommodate the influx of new arrivals, as well as deal with the impact of worsening drought and COVID-19.

Drought- (...) Afghanistan has been pushed deeper into an already dire food security crisis, with At least 11 million people – more than a quarter of the population – experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity due to ongoing drought, as well as conflict, COVID-19, high food prices and rampant unemployment. Urgent action is required to save lives, reduce food shortages and protect livelihoods. Women and girls are particularly hard hit: Recent CARE research shows women are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. (...) Gender-based violence and child, early and forced marriages have increased since the drought began.

(...) The combined effects of these challenges are gravely affecting people throughout the country, particularly women and girls. According to Marianne O’Grady, CARE Afghanistan’s deputy country director: “The triple crisis of the economic hardship created by the pandemic, the drought and the current insecurity leaves women in an incredibly difficult situation. Hard-won gains by women and girls are being rolled back.”

Tolo News, Ministry: 2,000 Displaced Families to Return to Provinces, 27 July 2022

“Ministry of Repatriation and Refugees officials said two thousand displaced people will be returned to their provinces in cooperation with the United Nations.

[...] ‘We share lists of these displaced people with our provincial zones and after evaluations, \$400 will be given to the needy and issues of housing, food aid and temporary shelter have been considered for them,’ said Muhammad Arif Sadiqi, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Meanwhile, some displaced people said they are worried about homelessness and unemployment.

[...] According to statements by Repatriation and Refugees officials, currently more than three million internally displaced people have come to the capital because of war and draught.”

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (Afghanistan) Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements, January to July 2022 (As of 26 July 2022) 26 July 2022

“In 2022, displacement due to ongoing conflict reduced and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Almost 7.4K people have left their homes this year due to fighting. In addition to this, close to 508.6K people have returned from neighboring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 462.3K from Iran, and 46.3K from Pakistan.”

Tolo News, Over 700 Panjshir Families Displaced to Parwan, 20 July 2022

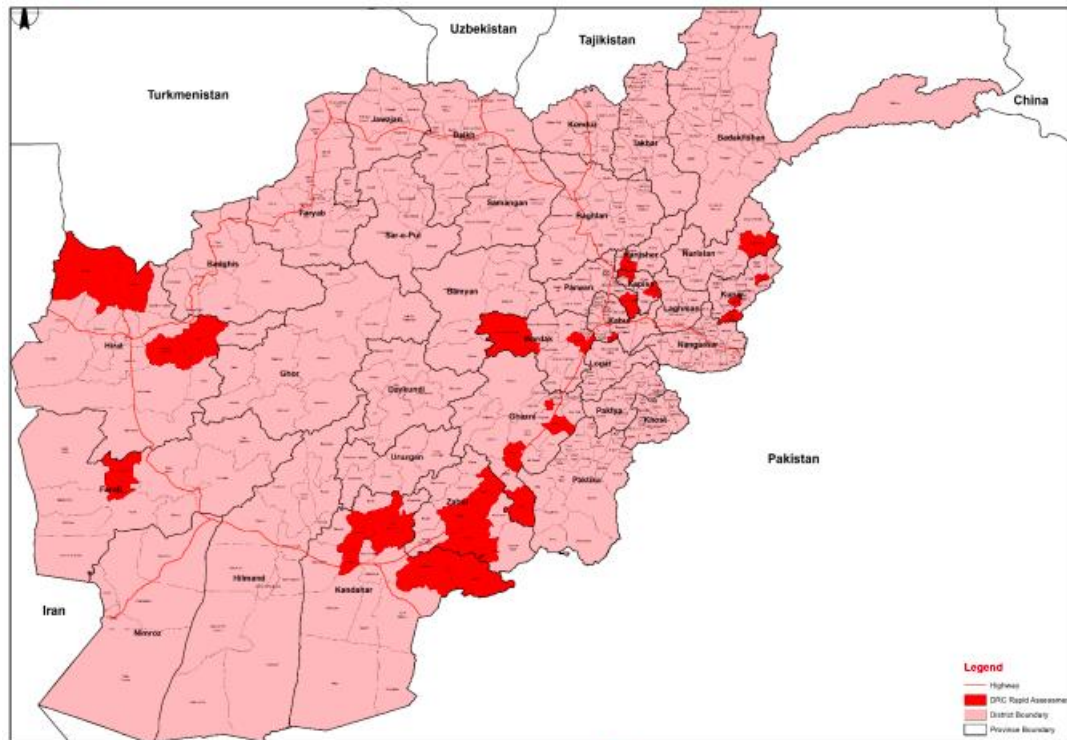
“More than 700 families have been displaced, due to security incidents, from Panjshir to Parwan, officials at the refugee and repatriations department of Parwan said. The officials further said that the department is planning to provide families with cash assistance. “748 families were displaced from Panjshir to Parwan province. They left their houses due to conflict,” said Faraidoon Noori, an official at the department. Meanwhile, local officials of Panjshir province confirmed the arrival of the families, saying that a precise number of displaced families is not available. Panjshir officials pledged to seek ways for the displaced families to return to their homes. “The refugees and repatriation department is considering providing

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

assistance with the families who sustained damages,” said Nasrullah Malekzadah, head of information and culture of Panjshir.”

DRC, *The World Lives on Hope – Crisis and Survival in Rural Afghanistan*, July 2022

Map of locations assessed



6

“In 2021, many rural communities across Afghanistan were affected by intensifying conflict as the IEA launched a renewed offensive to capitalize on the international troop withdrawal. Two-thirds of districts assessed by DRC had sustained damage to houses and other critical infrastructure such as bazaars, roads, schools, and clinics during this period, with homes often comprehensively looted, with between two-thirds and one-half of the population displaced, usually to the nearest city.”

Norwegian Refugee Council (Afghanistan), *Afghanistan: Devastating Earthquake Exacerbates Dire Humanitarian Crisis*, 22 June 2022

"Last year 1.3 million people have been internally displaced nationwide. This is an unprecedentedly high number, due to a combination of conflict and natural disasters [...]"

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (Afghanistan), *End violence and serious human rights violations against Afghan refugees*, 20 June 2022

"Today, over six million Afghans have been driven out of their homes and their country by conflict, violence and poverty. Of those, 3.5 million are displaced within Afghanistan, with 2.6 million Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

refugees living in other countries. These numbers have been exacerbated by the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan in August 2021 and the critical humanitarian crisis Afghanistan is facing today. The impact of the situation has been particularly devastating for women and children, who account for 80 % of newly displaced Afghans, as they face increased protection risks such as family separation, psychosocial stress and trauma, exploitation and gender-based violence."

Global Shelter Cluster, Afghanistan: ES-NFI Cluster HRP Dashboard [all regions] (as of May 2022), 15 June 2022

UNHCR, Afghanistan: UNHCR Operational update - April 2022, 8 June 2022

"The total number of IDPs due to conflict countrywide is now estimated at 3.5 million. [...] Estimates of IDPs in Afghanistan are provided by OCHA. [...] POPULATION OF CONCERN AS OF 30 APR 2022 [...] IDP returnees 791,000*** [...] ***IDP returnees are those who went back to their communities in 2021 (Source: UNHCR Rapid Assessment) [...]"

OCHA Services: Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan - Response Overview (1 January - 31 March 2022), 28 April 2022

"Between January and March 2022, humanitarian partners reached 18 million people with at least one form of humanitarian assistance, including 65,000 new IDPs. While this represents a broad reach in absolute terms, millions will require multiple rounds of assistance over the course of the year to survive."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Internal population movements continued because of armed conflict and natural disasters, including avalanches, flooding, and landslides. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that widespread intense fighting between pre-August 15 government security forces and the Taliban between May and August forced approximately 250,000 citizens to flee their homes. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated a total of 669,682 persons were displaced between January and December 19, of whom 2 percent were displaced following August 15. Most internally displaced persons (IDPs) left insecure rural areas and small towns to seek relatively greater safety and government services in larger towns and cities in the same province. UNHCR estimated that 158,000 displaced persons returned home since fighting subsided following the Taliban takeover in August. [...] The Taliban's "Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation Affairs" repatriated approximately 4,000 IDPs to their communities of origin, although the IOM estimated there were more than five million IDPs in the country. "Interim Minister" Khalil Haqqani told al-Jazeera that the Taliban had a plan to return all IDPs to their homes, assist in repairing damaged homes, and designate provincial support zones to assist returnees."

IOM, The People of Afghanistan Must Not be Forgotten: IOM Director General António Vitorino, 1 April 2022

"This is why, today, millions of Afghans are internally displaced, while thousands of people cross borders every week in both directions, seeking means to secure their futures. So many of them have exhausted their coping mechanisms. They are in dire need of life-saving protection, livelihood and recovery support. Through our Comprehensive Action Plan for Afghanistan and neighboring countries, we, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), are striving to assist the estimated 24 million people in need."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNOCHA, Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths' opening remarks at the High-level Pledging Event for Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

"Six out of 10 people in Afghanistan need humanitarian aid, among them almost 6 million people have been uprooted inside the country. They need food and healthcare but also livelihood support. The economy is too weak to sustain the lives of its people."

Afghan Voice Agency, Six million Afghans are internally displaced: IOM, 13 March 2022

"The report reads that 1.3 million people were displaced internally merely in 2021. About the migrants, the report added that 4 million and 519 people left Afghanistan during the past 11 years. Has acknowledged that increasing and economic issues are the biggest reasons for people leaving Afghanistan and that most of the people cross borders into . It comes as the Ministry of and Repatriates of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has recently said that over half a million Afghans have returned from other countries, especially from and Iran."

UNFPA, Traumatized by chaos and miscarriage, young mother finds a lifeline in the mobile health team, 7 March 2022

"Kandahar, Afghanistan - In the southern part of this province, internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Zhari district have to walk hours to reach health facilities. The situation has worsened since August 2021 when the Taliban took control of the country and development assistance halted, including a project that funded the operation of more than 2,000 public health facilities. Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal death rates in the Asia and the Pacific region at 638 deaths per 100,000 live births, and the situation is expected to get worse without timely and appropriate interventions for maternal health."

IOM, Afghanistan — Baseline Mobility Assessment Summary Results (November—December 2021), 2 March 2022

"DTM [Displacement Tracking Matrix] teams assessed 13,187 communities across Afghanistan in November and December 2021 for Round 14 of the BMA assessment. DTM identified 5,832,454 individuals who displaced between 2012 and 2021 and remain in displacement. Over one fifth of those individuals (1,327,474 or 23%) displaced in 2021 as a result of conflict and natural disaster. [...] IOM Afghanistan deployed the Emergency Event Tracking (EET) assessment in September 2021 to track sudden internal displacement and population movements due to the rapid political transformations in 2021 and its consequences, including effects on the feasibility of data collection. [...] Three rounds of the EET assessment took place from September to December 2021. [...] covering 10,129 communities in 368 districts across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan. IOM identified 988,817 individuals who were displaced after the political changes in August 2021 and remained in displacement until the end of 2021. [...] In 2021, an unprecedentedly high number of individuals were displaced nationwide. [...] estimates, over 1.3 million Afghans fled their homes as IDPs in 2021. Sixty-two per cent of these IDPs displaced because of the conflict escalation due to international troop withdrawal over the summer months, which subsequently led to a rapid change of government. [...] 2021 saw a significant surge in out-migrants, increasing 122% compared to the previous year. The large increase in out-migrants is likely due to an intensifying environment of conflict accompanying the withdrawal of international troops and the change of government that occurred in the summer of 2021."

Danish Refugee Council, Widowed and displaced with nine children, 17 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Among the internally displaced in Southern Afghanistan are individuals and entire families who became homeless during the years of active conflict and more recently due to the escalation of fighting in the months leading up to rapid changes in power dynamics in August 2021. Female-headed households are particularly vulnerable and currently being targeted by DRC through direct protection and emergency aid assistance in Central, Western and Southern Regions of Afghanistan under the UN-led Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF).”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements (January 2022), 9 February 2022

“In 2022, displacement due to ongoing conflict and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. 63.2K people have returned from neighbouring countries to Afghanistan so far this year including 57.4K from Iran, and 5.8K from Pakistan.”

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 8 February 2022

“702,724 people have been internally displaced in Afghanistan since the start of 2021, of which 21% are women and 59% are children [...]”

The Statesman, Displaced families sell children organs to survive, 16 January 2022

“Displaced families are selling children and organs to survive in war-ravaged Afghanistan under Taliban regime.

The displaced families escaped heavy conflict between the Islamic Emirate and former government forces before the fall of the republican government in the northern provinces of Balkh, Sar-e-Pul, Faryab and Jawzjan, according to TOLO News. A charity committee is helping displaced families with food and cash aid in order to dissuade them from selling their children and kidneys. The price of a child is between 100,000 to 150,000 Afs and the price of one kidney is 150,000 to 220,000 Afs. The families are living in a camp in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province.

The families said that they were forced to make such decisions due to poverty, the economic problems in the country as well Covid-19 outbreak. Every family has around two to seven children and these families were helped by a charity committee to stop them from selling the kids and kidneys.”

TOLO News, IOM Raises Alarm About Millions of Displaced Afghans, 3 January 2022

“The International Organization for Migration (IOM) expressed concerns over the large number of displaced people in Afghanistan and said that there are “664,000 newly displaced by conflict in 2021.”

““There are now an estimated 5.5 million Internally Displaced Persons in Afghanistan (IDPs), including those living in protracted situations, and 664,000 newly displaced by conflict in 2021,” IOM said. “This is in addition to more than 924,744 undocumented Afghan returnees who returned from Iran and Pakistan between 1 January and the end of September, and the more than 2.2. million refugees and 3.5 million undocumented Afghan nationals already in neighboring countries, primarily Iran and Pakistan.””

ReliefWeb, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific (RBAP): Flash External Update: Afghanistan Situation #12, As of 15 December 2021 (two-week period), 22 December 2021

“KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES

“3.4M: Estimated internally displaced persons (IDPs) by conflict within Afghanistan as of 1 December 2021

“682,031: Estimated total conflict induced IDPs within Afghanistan since 1 January 2021

“72,481: Refugees and asylum-seekers in Afghanistan as of 8 December 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"2.2M: Refugees and asylum-seekers from Afghanistan in neighboring countries as of 31 December 2020
"112,520: Reported newly arrived Afghans in need of international protection to neighbouring countries since 1 January 2021 [...]"

OCHA, [Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Planned Response 2022](#), 16 December 2021

"Following the record displacement of nearly 700,000 people in 2021, some 9.2 million IDPs and returnees remain in some form of displacement and need support for return where possible."

UNHCR, [Document - Afghanistan Situation External Update - 1 December 2021](#), 8 December 2021

KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES



"Out of nearly 669,000 people internally displaced (IDPs) in Afghanistan by conflict this year, an estimated 170,000 IDPs have returned to their previous places of origin since September, particularly as the security situation across the country has stabilized."

TOLO News, [1000s of Displaced People Still Live in Kabul: Officials](#), 6 December 2021

"Officials at the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MoRR) said that there are still thousands of internally displaced and homeless people in Kabul which are in need of urgent basic humanitarian assistance.

They added that the ministry has so far relocated 4,000 internally displaced families to their home provinces."

OCHA, [Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 \(Part Two\)](#), 2 December 2021

"Dand, Afghanistan. The 6,000 IDPs in Dand are some of the tens of thousands of people displaced from southern Afghanistan, forced to flee conflict in October last year. Many were farmers who were able to support themselves and their families before. But when they fled, they left behind their homes, land and livestock. Now they are internally displaced and living in tents with no access to their livelihoods."

IFRC, [Afghanistan: Worst drought and hunger crisis in decades](#), 2 December 2021

"Nearly 700,000 people have been internally displaced this year, joining some 3.5 million people already forced from their homes throughout the country, who all face a harsh winter, when temperatures can drop as low as -20C in some areas of Afghanistan."

Gandhara, ['No Reason To Stay': Taliban Repression, Economic Collapse Accelerate Exodus From Afghanistan](#), 2 December 2021

"Babar Baloch, a spokesman for the United Nations Refugee Agency who recently toured Afghanistan, says that the number of Afghans in need of urgent assistance is soaring.

Baloch says some 5 million Afghans were already internally displaced due to war and severe drought before the Taliban takeover. Since then, he says, the number of Afghans dependent on food aid has risen to 23 million from 18 million.

"The sense of desperation and sense of destitution is increasing by the day," he told RFE/RL."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNFPA, Press Release: Prioritise needs of women and girls in Afghanistan, 1 December 2021

“According to UNOCHA, nearly 80 percent of the 670,000 internally displaced people in Afghanistan as of mid-November are women and children who are being disproportionately affected as catastrophe looms in the country.”

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan)(UNOCHA), Afghanistan Weekly Humanitarian Update (15-21 November 2021), 26 November 2021

“Inter-agency joint assessment teams identified 3,973 vulnerable people including IDPs to receive humanitarian aid in the coming days in Farah and Hirat provinces [...]”

Khaama Press, Conflicts in Afghanistan leaves over half a million internally displaced in 2021: Report, 26 November 2021

“According to a newly released report by the UN IOM, over half a million people in Afghanistan have been internally displaced as a result of conflicts and insecurity in 2021. The report which has been conducted between 11-21 November 2021, has found that only 667,900 people have been internally displaced between January 1 and November 21. The report has also identified the number of refugees who have been returned back to Afghanistan during the current year from Pakistan and Iran. Over 1.146 million undocumented Afghan refugees have been returned from Iran and Pakistan during the year 2021, the majority of whom have returned from Iran. This comes as, on the other hand, hundreds of thousands of Afghans have also emigrated to Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, India, Europe, England, US, and Canada in the last 100 days, since the Taliban took over Afghanistan by force.”

Operational Data portal, UNHCR) (Afghanistan), Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 25 November 2021

“667,938 people have been internally displaced in Afghanistan in 2021. Of the internally displaced people, 21% are women and 59% are children.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, 10,000 displaced families still living in Kabul, 24 November 2021

“The Department of Refugees and Repatriation says it has so far repatriated more than 5,000 displaced families, but 10,000 other still remain in Kabul.

Maulvi Abdul Matin Rahimzai, director of refugee affairs in Kabul, told Pajhwok on Tuesday efforts were being made to provide clothing and food to displaced families during the winter.”

UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Weekly Humanitarian Update (1 – 7 November 2021), 11 November 2021

“IDPs IN 2021 (AS OF 7 NOVEMBER)

682,891 People displaced by conflict (verified)”

TOLO News, Displaced Families Transferred From Kabul, 28 October 2021

“Thousands of people were displaced as fighting between the forces of the Islamic Emirate and the former government escalated.

More than 2,500 displaced families were transferred from Kabul back to their home-provinces, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation said on Thursday.

The head of the Kabul refugee department, Abdul Matin Rahimzai, said that the evacuation process would continue.

“We have evacuated 2,500 displaced families from Kabul. Today we are evacuating 450 families from

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Kunduz and some of the other provinces,” he added.

The UN said earlier that many of these families were incapable of going back to their home areas due to financial problems.

“We and around 75 families were displaced from Ghor to Shahar-e-Naw camp. We haven’t received any aid from any organization,” said Ghulam Jailani, a displaced person.

Thousands of displaced families are struggling with severe challenges in the capital city of Kabul.

“We haven’t seen anything good but cold weather, exhaustion and poverty,” said Abdul Samad, a displaced person.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), nearly 700,000 people were displaced between January and September 2021.”

UNHCR, UNHCR Iran: Afghanistan Situation Update, 26 October 2021

“677,832 people have been internally displaced in Afghanistan [...]”

IPC, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

“Displacement continues to drive food insecurity. From January to September 2021, around 664,200 people were displaced due to intensified conflict and livelihood-related factors. Most of the people were displaced to provincial urban centres, regional capitals and Kabul, which has exacerbated the already oversaturated labour market and placed further pressure on limited facilities in those areas. Due to prolonged conflict and droughts, the country already had 3.5 million prolonged IDPs in December 2020. The 2021 SFSA found that 9% of randomly selected respondents were IDPs. This indicates that the actual number of displaced people could be higher than estimated.”

OCHA, Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements, January - September 2021, 22 October 2021

“In 2021, displacement due to ongoing conflict and natural disasters is continuing to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Almost 677,000 people have left their homes this year due to fighting. Many of these people remain displaced across the country, as conflict and poverty prevent them from returning to their areas of origin [...]”

Same period previous years

2020: 308,000 new IDPs

2019: 392,000 new IDPs [...]”

20% adult male 21% adult female 59% children under 18”

OCHA, Afghanistan, ICCT Real-Time Response Overview Situation Report (21 October 2021) - Afghanistan, 21 October 2021

“KEY FIGURES IDPs IN 2021 (AS OF 17 OCTOBER)

677,832 People displaced by conflict (verified)

312,182 Received assistance”

UNHCR, UNHCR Iran: Afghanistan Situation Update, 18 October 2021

“677,832 people have been internally displaced in Afghanistan in 2021.”

AVA Press, IDPs appeal for urgent help ahead of winter, 30 September 2021

“Meanwhile, Amnesty International stated that over 5 million internally are in dire need of support amidst the escalating crisis in Afghanistan.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The international community must ensure continues unabated to Afghanistan, the organization tweeted.

The Ministry of `Refugees, however, stated that the number of IDPs is lower than what Amnesty International has reported.

The Ministry said around one million Afghans have been displaced, adding that aid would be provided to all displaced people.

, the acting deputy minister of refugees stated: “Consultations have been made with as many as 30 organizations, issues of transportation have been considered for them (IDPs), for where they must go [to live], food and cash and we have also discussed the issue of those who don’t have shelter and whose houses have been destroyed.””

IOM DMT Emergency Event Tracking Report - covering 1-27 September 2021, 29 September 2021

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE FIGURES*

	TOTAL	RURAL	PERI-URBAN	URBAN
# CFPs	6,660	5,3086	986	588
% CFPs who reported an increase in IDP arrivals	53%	49%	65%	72%
# of reported individual IDP arrivals	986,618	584,701	183,377	218,540
# of reported family IDP arrivals	140,378	81,650	27,777	30,951
% CFPs who reported an increase in departures	69%	67%	78%	73%
# of reported individual departures	1,328,179	901,120	275,829	151,200
# of reported family departures	177,226	121,544	36,427	19,255

[CFPs = Community Focal Points]

UNHCR, Afghanistan situation: Emergency preparedness and response in Iran, 27 September 2021

“663,969 people have been internally displaced in Afghanistan since the start of 2021, of which 80% are women and children [...]”

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

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

ACAPS, Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement, 3 September 2021

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

International Crisis Group, Afghanistan’s Growing Humanitarian Crisis, 2 September 2021

“Violence, Displacement, Food Insecurity and Deteriorating Essential Services

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

What is the housing situation for IDPs?

Tolo News, Ministry: 2,000 Displaced Families to Return to Provinces, 27 July 2022

“Ministry of Repatriation and Refugees officials said two thousand displaced people will be returned to their provinces in cooperation with the United Nations.

[...] ‘We share lists of these displaced people with our provincial zones and after evaluations, \$400 will be given to the needy and issues of housing, food aid and temporary shelter have been considered for them,’ said Muhammad Arif Sadiqi, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Meanwhile, some displaced people said they are worried about homelessness and unemployment.

[...] According to statements by Repatriation and Refugees officials, currently more than three million internally displaced people have come to the capital because of war and draught.”

Norwegian Refugee Council (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Devastating Earthquake Exacerbates Dire Humanitarian Crisis, 22 June 2022

“The Spera District in Khost Province; Barmala, Ziruk, Nika and Gayan Districts in Paktika Province are among the areas most affected by the earthquake. Khost Province is home to thousands of internally displaced Afghans, returnees, and refugees from Waziristan [...] Most of the population affected by the

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

earthquake has already experienced multiple displacements and has been severely hit by the economic collapse, following the financial restrictions placed on the country after the Taliban takeover."

UNHCR, Afghanistan: UNHCR Operational update - April 2022, 8 June 2022

"A core part of UNHCR's work is providing access to adequate shelter to persons in need. In Afghanistan, UNHCR is responding to the emergency through tent distribution and installation, construction and maintenance of emergency shelter kits and shelter rehabilitation. UNHCR provides cash for shelter support to refugee and IDP returnees to repair their partially damaged homes in their areas of origin. UNHCR also works on repair of essential services infrastructure and public facilities in the PARRs. [...] UNHCR scaled up its winter response programme to support IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees as well as affected host communities. This has enabled UNHCR to effectively respond to the basic needs of affected communities and support their recovery process through CRIs, cash, shelter, and other protection services."

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

"PARWAN, Afghanistan -- Armed Taliban fighters stopped at Ahmad's home last week, ordering his family of six to immediately leave their village in Afghanistan's northern province of Baghlan.

"They didn't even allow us to take any of our belongings," Ahmad, who did not reveal his real name for fear of retribution, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. He said the Taliban fighters forced his family into a military vehicle in the Pol-e Hesar district and dropped them off in another area of the province.

Ahmad and his family are among the hundreds of civilians that have been forcibly evicted from their homes in recent weeks in Baghlan, the scene of intensifying clashes between the Taliban and resistance forces, residents and activists say.

The recent surge in fighting in Baghlan and the neighboring province of Panjshir has prompted allegations of widespread Taliban abuses, including extrajudicial killings of civilians, torture, and forced displacement."

"Zabihullah Farahmand, an activist in Baghlan, said the Taliban has forcibly evicted at least 50 families from their homes in the districts of Pol-e Hesar, Deh Salah, and Andarab in recent weeks. The districts comprise the long, narrow Andarab Valley. "They have been forcibly relocated by the Taliban and no assistance has been provided to these refugees," says Farahmand. "These families find refuge in other northern provinces with a lot of hardship. They need help and care."

UNHCR, UNHCR AFGHANISTAN 2021 MULTI SECTORIAL RAPID ASSESSMENTS ANALYSIS, 21 April 2022

"Some 84 per cent of IDPs indicated that they are renting shelters. IDP returnees (24%) are also renting accommodation in their place of origin upon return. Evidently, given that shelters may have been damaged by conflict, IDP returnees have needs pertaining to shelter rental. Qualitative findings from UNHCR's CBPM have found that the presence of IDPs who rent homes drives-up rental prices and contributes to community tensions. The rapid assessment data shows that 20 per cent of host community members are also renting shelters, creating a protection concern linked to the issue of rent, beyond just individual needs."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Limited humanitarian access due to the poor security situation caused delays in identifying, assessing,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and providing timely assistance to IDPs, who continued to lack access to basic protection, including personal security and shelter. Many IDPs, especially in households with a female head, faced difficulty obtaining basic services because they did not have identity documents. Many IDPs in urban areas reportedly faced discrimination, lacked adequate sanitation and other basic services, and lived at constant risk of eviction from illegally occupied displacement sites, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center.”

ToloNews, Nangarhar: 1000s of War-Displaced Families Return Home, 31 January 2021

“Families which were forced to leave their homes during the 20-year conflict are returning to their villages in the Shinwari area of Nangarhar. Shinwari is a large area located alongside the Durand Line in Nangarhar. The area is comprised of six districts including Spin Ghar, Nazian, Achin, Haska-Mina, Dor Baba and Ghani Khel.” [...] “The Islamic Emirate has launched a process to transfer the war-displaced people back to their home areas. But the families complained about the lack of support and aid, which makes life difficult back in their home areas.”

AVA Press, Unfavourable Situation of 4,000 Displaced Families in Afghanistan’s Kapisa, 21 December 2021

“More than four months after the end of fighting between the former government and the Taliban, hundreds of displaced families in Kapisa province have not yet returned to their homes. According to the Department of and Repatriations in province, more than 4,000 families have been displaced from their homes five months ago following the breakout of clashes.”

TOLO News, 1000s of Displaced People Still Live in Kabul: Officials, 6 December 2021

““This assistance is not enough, people have lots of problems in Afghanistan and full attention must be paid to their challenges. The pledges of the international community have not been sufficiently fulfilled and have not reached Afghanistan,” said Mohammad Arsalah Kharoti, deputy minister of refugees and repatriations.

Meanwhile, some internally displaced people complained that their challenges have not been adequately addressed, saying they are in dire need of shelter.”

UN News, Avoid starvation: ‘Immediate priority’ for 3.5 million Afghans, 3 December 2021

“Displaced lack proper shelter

Following his recent return from Kabul, Mr. Baloch [UNHCR Spokesperson] said in Geneva that a lack of insulated shelters, warm clothes, insufficient food, fuel for heating, and medical supplies are just some of the deprivations confronting people who have been forcibly displaced.

With temperatures “expected to drop to -25C, many displaced families lack proper shelter – a primary requirement if they are to survive the bitter cold”, he warned.”

AVA Press, IDPs appeal for urgent help ahead of winter, 30 September 2021

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) are living in very poor conditions in Kabul camps, where they have no access to medical services nor regular food supplies.

Sahar Arsalan, an IDP stated: “Refugees from all provinces are living inside tents in hardship; so far, they have not received any assistance from the or any organizations.”

The IDPs have also called on aid agencies to provide them with shelter in Kabul or help them to return

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

home.

Another IDP said: “Many have no home in their provinces and they need aid and help to get back to their province to help them pay rent for houses.””

ACAPS, Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement, 3 September 2021

“Sectoral needs

Shelter and NFIs

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

What is the food situation for IDPs?

UNHCR, Afghanistan: UNHCR Operational update - April 2022, 8 June 2022

“UNHCR provided life-saving multi-sectoral assistance to more than 248,562 new IDPs and those affected by armed conflict by the end of April. In addition, cash for winterization was provided to 93,748 people to support their food security, nutrition, and other needs.”

UNOCHA, Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths’ opening remarks at the High-level Pledging Event for Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

“Six out of 10 people in Afghanistan need humanitarian aid, among them almost 6 million people have been uprooted inside the country. They need food and healthcare but also livelihood support. The economy is too weak to sustain the lives of its people.”

Al Jazeera, Afghan women face hardship as Taliban struggles to revive economy, 12 January 2022

“For Zaigul, a 32-year-old housewife from Nangarhar province who lives at the Nasaji camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) near the capital, Kabul, life was already difficult before the Taliban seized power on August 15 last year. [...]”

Zaigul, like millions of other Afghans, has no work as most economic activities have run aground following the collapse of the West-backed government of President Ashraf Ghani and the chaotic withdrawal of the US forces in August.

“The most pressing issue is the financial difficulties,” said Zaigul, as she sat on the floor of her one-room home, her children huddled around her.

“You can live without freedom, but you can’t live if you have nothing to eat,” she told Al Jazeera.

The United Nations on Tuesday said about 22 million people – more than half of Afghanistan’s population – face acute hunger. It sought nearly \$5bn in aid for the country to avoid a humanitarian “catastrophe”. (...)

Like many families in Afghanistan, Zaigul and Nasir’s household income has been slashed over recent months.

With most building projects coming to a halt after the Taliban takeover, and many families becoming unable to afford help at home, the couple has been unemployed.

“Neither of us can find work any more. We lack the most basic things – food, warm clothes and a heater to keep the house warm,” said Zaigul, as she wrapped a thin black shawl around her shoulders.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Two of her teenage daughters were crouched next to her, while the youngest, a toddler named Sana, sat playing with old rags in the back. Despite the cold, her feet were bare, and her clothes sparsely covered her small limbs.

Zaigul's one-room home was empty except for a few worn-out mattresses that were splayed across a cold stone floor. In the daytime, the family used the mattresses to sit on, before converting them to beds for the night.(...)

Zaigul recounted life before the takeover, saying that despite being poor, her family got by on a meagre income and donations from international NGOs that helped them through the winter season.

"But now, even that [the aid] has stopped," she told Al Jazeera.

"My children go out to collect rubbish which we try to sell, or paper to burn to keep us warm. Sometimes, I think about going on to the street to beg," she told Al Jazeera, as she dropped her head into her palms and tears formed at the corners of her eyes.

Western sanctions have dealt a heavy blow to the aid-dependent country, forcing international NGOs to stop operations in the country."

UN News, Avoid starvation: 'Immediate priority' for 3.5 million Afghans, 3 December 2021

"According to Mr. Baloch [UNHCR Spokesperson], nearly 23 million people, or 55 per cent of the population, are facing extreme levels of hunger – nearly nine million of whom are at risk of famine."

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) (UNOCHA), Afghanistan Weekly Humanitarian Update (15-21 November 2021), 26 November 2021

"North: 355,000 people receive food assistance [...]; East: 138,000 people receive humanitarian assistance"

IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

"Food security situation for displaced populations: Various assessments conducted on IDPs by Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) partners show worse food security scores on indicators than any other population category in Afghanistan. In 2021, REACH conducted an assessment with different vulnerable groups on the move that included new and prolonged IDPs, returnees and refugees; these people on the move are mostly concentrated in 11 urban areas (Nangarhar, Hirat, Kabul, Faryab, Takhar, Kunduz, Kandahar, Hilmand, Balkh, Baghlan and Jawzjan) on which the urban IPC analysis focused. According to the findings of this assessment, 42% of the IDPs have a poor and 36% have a borderline food consumption score; they have a very low level of income, far below the cost of a basic food basket, and 75% of the IDPs reported a high level of debt. With the recent severe economic crisis, the FSAC of Afghanistan aims to target 90% of the newly displaced IDPs with a multisector response, aligning the response with these numbers."

ACAPS, Afghanistan - Conflict-Driven Displacement, 3 September 2021

"Food

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Do IDPs have access to livelihood opportunities?

UNHCR, Flash External Update: Afghanistan Situation #19, 17 August 2022

“Support to IDP returnees: A priority for UNHCR’s work in Afghanistan remains the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced Afghans to their places of origin. Over 110,000 IDP returnees have been identified by UNHCR in 2022, bringing the total number of IDP returnees identified by UNHCR since 2021 to more than 989,000. [...]

Refugee returns: Since the start of the year, some 1,576 Afghan refugees have returned under UNHCR’s facilitated voluntary repatriation programme, including 231 from Iran and 1,340 from Pakistan. This figure surpasses the 1,300 Afghans who came back during the full year of 2021, and almost triples the number who returned up to this point in 2020. Returnees have indicated that the main reasons for their returns movements from Iran and Pakistan include costs of living and lack of employment opportunities in their host countries, reunification with family in Afghanistan, improved security situation, and land allocation opportunities in Afghanistan. As highlighted above, UNHCR provides cash assistance to those returning to help support their reintegration in Afghanistan, while also running programmes and projects in priority areas of return and reintegration.”

UNHCR, 2021 Multi sectorial Rapid Assessments Analysis, June 2022

"On average 72 percent of male-headed IDP households indicated not being able to work and cover daily expenses while amongst female-headed households the number leaped to 81 percent. Similarly, amongst IDP returnee households, the rates are 68 percent and 76 percent, respectively."

UNHCR, Afghanistan: UNHCR Operational update - April 2022, 8 June 2022

“UNHCR provided life-saving multi-sectoral assistance to more than 248,562 new IDPs and those affected by armed conflict by the end of April. In addition, cash for winterization was provided to 93,748 people to support their food security, nutrition, and other needs. [...] UNHCR continues investments in crucial areas such as health and education to support the sustainable reintegration of refugees and IDPs who previously returned to their areas of origin or may do so in the future. The investments also benefit local communities and displaced people living in areas of return.”

UNHCR, PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS RESPONSE SNAPSHOT (01 January - 30 April 2021), 7 June 2022

“Individuals reached with direct cash or in-kind assistance and/or referred to other service providers [...] Of the 3,163 individuals assessed, cumulatively 844 directly benefited from cash and/or in-kind assistance while 1,965 were referred for medical, livelihoods, shelter and other assistance [...] 13% [Reached] 67% [Remaining] [...]”

UNHCR, CORE RELIEF ITEMS RESPONSE SNAPSHOT (01 January - 30 April 2022), 7 June 2022

“Individuals reached through provision of core relief items. (55,510 households reached against 90,000 target households) [...] During reporting period, UNHCR ensured timely delivery and distribution of Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) to support the internally displaced populations and host communities. [see infographic for provinces reached] [...]”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“Limited opportunities to earn a livelihood following the initial displacement often led to secondary displacement, making tracking of vulnerable persons difficult.”

UNOCHA, Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths’ opening remarks at the High-level Pledging Event for Afghanistan, 31 March 2022

“Six out of 10 people in Afghanistan need humanitarian aid, among them almost 6 million people have been uprooted inside the country. They need food and healthcare but also livelihood support. The economy is too weak to sustain the lives of its people.”

The Guardian, ‘I’ve already sold my daughters; now, my kidney’: winter in Afghanistan’s slums, 23 January 2022

“Crushing poverty is forcing starving displaced people to make desperate choices.

The temperature is dropping to below zero in western Afghanistan and Delaram Rahmati is struggling to find food for her eight children. Since leaving the family home in the country’s Badghis province four years ago, the Rahmatis have been living in a mud hut with a plastic roof in one of Herat city’s slums. Drought made their village unliveable and the land unworkable. Like an estimated 3.5 million Afghans who have been forced to leave their homes, the Rahmatis now live in a neighbourhood for internally displaced people (IDP). There are no jobs. But the 50-year-old has hospital fees to pay for two of her sons, one of whom is paralysed and the other who has mental illness, as well as medicine for her husband. “I was forced to sell two of my daughters, an eight- and six-year-old,” she says. Rahmati says she sold her daughters a few months ago for 100,000 afghani each (roughly £700), to families she doesn’t know. Her daughters will stay with her until they reach puberty and then be handed over to strangers. [...]”

IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation September - October 2021 and Projection for November 2021 - March 2022, 25 October 2021

“Usually, because of the severity of the conflict and its sudden nature, most of the livelihood assets of IDPs are either looted, sold at very meagre prices and/or killed in the case of livestock or lost. IDPs often migrate without the necessary legal documents of identity and school certificates of their children, which hinders their access to support services. They also pay very high prices for transportation to move their families to a safer location. Therefore, in the absence of agriculture and livestock-based livelihoods and with no urban labour skills, they are left with almost zero livelihood options. Most of the IDPs bring agriculture-based livelihood skills to these urban areas where there is no market for their skills. Their arrival increases the pressure on the local job market, reducing wages and adding strain on infrastructure, ultimately fuelling tensions and conflict with the local population.”

Thomson Reuters Foundation news, Agencies distribute food, blankets, cash as hunger and cold threaten Afghanistan, 13 October 2021

“Aid agencies delivered food, blankets and cash to hundreds of displaced families in Kabul on Wednesday as humanitarian assistance begins to trickle into Afghanistan following warnings the country faces potentially catastrophic famine this winter.

The distribution of aid to 324 families represents a tiny fraction of the needs in Afghanistan, which faces a severe drought as well as a near collapse of its economy following the withdrawal of Western support.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

[...]

But the challenge of providing the aid is massive. As well as farmers and rural people displaced by drought, poverty has extended into the cities where widespread unemployment has forced many to try to sell their household goods to raise money. "Around 50,000 Afghan people from different provinces of the country have been displaced because of recent conflicts and are in Kabul. Our assistance continues to needy people every week," said UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch."

AVA Press, Taliban begins relocating thousands of IDPs from Kabul, 3 October 2021

"Officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan say that they have begun the relocation process of thousands of Internally Displaced People from Kabul to their respective provinces on Saturday, October 2.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Over two thousand families were displaced mainly from the Northern provinces of Afghanistan after conflicts intensified between the Taliban and the security forces of the previous Afghan government.

They were settled in the parks of Kabul along with their children for more than two months.

Head of refugees and returnees of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Abdul Matin said that 1,005 displaces families from -e-Naw Park in Kabul have been relocated in collaboration with different aid agencies.

Previously, the UNHCR had warned humanitarian crisis if not addressed the problems of IDPs as winter is approaching.

On the other hand, the also distributed humanitarian aid to the people in Kabul.

According to the statistics of UNHCR, around 300,000 people have been forced to displace due to heavy conflicts in 2020."

CARE, CARE Restarts Afghanistan Humanitarian Response - Provides Seeds, Tools, Fertilizer Ahead of Lean Growing Season and Ongoing Food Crisis, 30 September 2021

"In the last week, CARE has restarted its emergency humanitarian response, providing a small number of vulnerable displaced families with financial assistance to spend on key needs.

Similarly, CARE resumed some of its crucial food security and livelihoods support to small-scale farmers in several provinces - including, fertilizer, tools, seeds and trainings as part of a programme to encourage women to develop home gardens and household level livelihoods options."

OCHA, Afghanistan, Weekly Humanitarian Update (30 August – 5 September 2021), 13 September 2021

"KEY FIGURES

IDPs IN 2021 (AS OF 5 SEPTEMBER)

592,531 People displaced by conflict (verified)

280,244 Received assistance"

Documentation

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

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: The Taliban's War With IS-K; A Pakistani Women-Only Park Closes; Afghans Deported From Tajikistan, 26 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Passports And Taliban Bribes Radio Azadi reports on the complaints by Afghans of the hurdles they face in getting a passport from the Taliban government. Issuing identity documents is a significant revenue stream for the militants. "We don't have any money and do not know any Taliban officials," said Shakila, who has been trying to get a passport for her family members since the Taliban takeover a year ago. "We have been knocking on the doors of the passport office every day." A Kabul resident says he has been trying to get a passport for a sick relative so he can travel outside the country for treatment. But he has been waiting for more than one month. "Only people who have \$1,000 or \$1,500 [to pay in bribes] can get passports," he said. "The rest of us just queue up with no luck.""

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban intelligence agents detain American filmmaker Ivor Shearer, Afghan producer Faizullah Faizbakhsh in Kabul, 19 August 2022

"On August 17, Shearer and Faizbakhsh were filming in the Sherpur area of District 10 in Kabul—where a U.S. drone strike killed Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri earlier in August—when several security guards stopped them, according to a report by U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster Voice of America-Dari and two journalists familiar with the case, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of the Taliban's reprisal. The guards questioned them about their activities and checked their work permits, ID cards, and passports; they then confiscated the journalists' cellphones, detained them for a couple of hours, and repeatedly called them "American spies," according to the journalists familiar with the case... "The Taliban's increasing pressure and escalating numbers of detentions of journalists and media workers, including the detention of American filmmaker Ivor Shearer and his Afghan colleague Faizullah Faizbakhsh, show the group's utter lack of commitment to the principle of freedom of the press in Afghanistan," said CPJ Program Director Carlos Martinez de la Serna."

The New Humanitarian, One year on, few options for Afghans escaping hunger and Taliban persecution, 10 August 2022

"Due to an overwhelming demand for passports and a lack of government staff, passport offices in Afghanistan are often closed. Many people opt to sell their property and assets to purchase travel documents for roughly \$9,000 on the black market, according to information compiled by Samuel Hall, an independent think tank conducting research on migration in Afghanistan, and shared with The New Humanitarian."

Al Jazeera, "Afghans in US immigration limbo watch Ukrainians breeze through", 20 July 2022

"[...] USCIS received more than 46,000 properly submitted parole applications from Afghans between July 1, 2021, and June 2, 2022, of which the vast majority remain unadjudicated. Only 297 Afghans were approved during that time."

European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) COI Portal, Afghanistan / Passports, citizenship certificate, getting documents legalised, situation in July 2022, 7 July 2022 [original is in Finnish, the excerpts below have been translated by an Asylos volunteer]

- "1. Are passports currently being issued in Afghanistan? Are there limitations in obtaining them?
2. Are passports currently being issued in Afghan Embassies in the neighboring countries of Afghanistan or Finland (eg Sweden, Iran, India and Pakistan)?
3. Are the above-mentioned Embassies issuing nationality certificates?
4. Is it possible to get documents legalized in the above-mentioned embassies?"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

1. Are passports currently issued in Afghanistan? Are there any restrictions on obtaining passports?

" Norwegian land information service Landinfo in June 2022, the administration installed by the Taliban movement continues to issue passports. Since the rise of the Taliban, passport offices have been closed for shorter and longer periods due to various reasons, such as technical problems and the security situation. A large number of Afghans have sought to apply for a new passport, which has resulted in overburdened passport offices and long waiting times to obtain a passport. Landinfo is not aware that the possibility of some population groups to apply for a passport would be restricted. However, the Taliban has restricted women's freedom of movement, which may reduce women's ability to apply for a passport. It is also still possible to obtain an Afghan ID card, the tazkera , in Afghanistan. Paper tazkera is primarily used , but in big cities, so-called e- tazkera are also issued . However, there are technical challenges especially in issuing e -tazkeras and their waiting times can be long. It is said that the authorities of the regime installed by the Taliban are still issuing passports in the names and symbols of the previous regime. " (Translated)

2. Are passports currently issued at the embassies in the neighboring regions of Afghanistan or Finland (especially Sweden, Iran, India and Pakistan)?

" Afghan embassies have been in a state of confusion since the Taliban came to power, and based on available public sources, it is not possible to get a clear picture of whether it is possible to obtain a passport from Afghan embassies abroad at the moment." (Translated)

" Foreign According to the policy, Afghan embassies in Canada, Great Britain, Australia and Norway, among others, are still open, and Afghans staying in the United States are directed to do business at the Canadian embassy in Ottawa. The Indian embassy in Delhi and consulates in Hyderabad and Mumbai are also operational. According to the embassy's website, the embassy in Stockholm is also still in operation." (Translated)

"According to the website of the Afghan embassy in Oslo, issuing new passports is currently not possible at the embassy, but the validity of previously issued passports can be extended. Also, according to the website of the Afghan Embassy in Stockholm, you cannot apply for a new passport or tazkera from the embassy, but the validity of previously issued machine-readable passports can be extended. Afghans who have had a tazkera application pending at the Afghan Population Registration Authority before the change of power can inquire about the status of their application through the embassy. No new information was found from the available sources about obtaining passports from the Afghan embassies in Iran and Pakistan." (Translated)

3. Is it possible to get a certificate from these embassies that a person is or is not an Afghan citizen?
" From the currently available sources, no information was found that specifically such a certificate would be possible to obtain from the relevant Afghan missions." (Translated)

4. Can the documents be legalized at the respective embassies?

" According to the list on the website of the Afghan Embassy in Stockholm, legalization of documents is possible at the embassy on the spot. Regarding other missions, no information was found specifically about the legalization of documents." (Translated)"

Pajhwok Afghan News (Afghan News Agency), Pakistan OKs new visa regime for Afghans, 29 June 2022

"Pakistan's federal cabinet has approved a new visa regime for Afghan citizens including traders and patients.

The visa policy for Afghans was discussed on Tuesday at a meeting, which was attended by representatives from the Foreign Office, NADRA and Board of Investment.

Minister of Information Maryum Aurangzeb said Pakistan missions abroad would process visa applications

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of Afghans on the basis of existing passport and nationality.

Under the reviewed policy, Pakistan missions abroad will process visa applications of Afghans on the basis of their existing passports and nationality instead of their country of origin.

She told a news conference in Islamabad cabinet approved the inclusion of a sub-category in the work visa category for drivers, transporters and helpers to promote trade with Afghanistan.

A multi-entry visa for six months would be issued within 48 hours, while the Interior Ministry was authorised to extend the period to one year.

Documents required for obtaining a visa on arrival will include the applicant's picture, passport, transport company registration and employment letter. The entry visa page will need to be submitted for a visa extension.

The minister said the Afghans seeking visas in driver, transporter and helper categories were exempted from obtaining the BOI's letter of recommendation and registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

The initiative is aimed at ensuring the ease of doing business which would eventually boost the trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"Women cannot travel alone. Already in December 2021 came the directive that women who travel longer than 72km. must be accompanied by a male family member (BBC News 2021). From different parts of the country it is reported that women have been denied health care because they did not have male companion (mahram). Women who visit health centers with the sick children, are rejected because they come unaccompanied (Nader & Amini 2022). Another measure that restricts women's freedom of movement is that they no longer receive a driver's license (Free Press Journal 2022). Furthermore, the Taliban has banned that women can fly without a male companion. The order for a companion applies to both domestic and international flights. The airlines were informed of the restrictions in a letter from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (Reuters 2022)."

Tolo News, Travelers Face Trouble at Spin Boldak, Chaman Crossings, 21 June 2022

"According to people interviewed by TOLONews, residents who live near the Durand Line, particularly people living in nearby Qila Abdullah and Chaman, can cross with either with Kandahar-issued or Pakistani ID cards, while other Afghans with legal documents must wait several days. Bismillah, who is a resident of Ghazni, said that he has tried twice to cross into Pakistan but has not been allowed. "We were not allowed, we were told that we should have a passport or a sick visa in order to pass at the crossing," said Bismillah, a resident of Ghazni. "Yesterday I went three times to the crossing, they sent us back, there were women also with us, they mistreated us and also the women. They threw away our IDs," Abdul Rahman Shah, a resident of Uruzgan, told TOLONews. According to residents of Kandahar, sometimes even those residents of Kandahar who have ID cards and legal documents cannot cross. Citizens asked the Islamic Emirate to solve the problem permanently. "This is the third time that we have gone, they send us back and do not accept our Kandahar ID cards and they are not allowing us through," said Khan Wali, a resident of Kandahar. Meanwhile, local officials in Kandahar said that they are trying to solve this problem through dialogue with Pakistani officials. "We have talked to the Pakistani officials about this problem so that all the people of Afghanistan can move freely so that there is no gap between them and their relatives," said Hafiz Esmatullah, an official."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Ariana News, India grants priority e-visas to Afghan Sikhs, Hindus after Kabul attack, 19 June 2022

"India's ministry of home affairs has moved to grant emergency e-visas to over 100 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus after Saturday's attack on a gurdwara in Kart-e-Parwan in Kabul. Two people, one Sikh and one security force member, were killed in the attack. According to the Hindustan Times, the e-visas will facilitate the evacuation of Sikhs and Hindus from Afghanistan. Officials said India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) will likely investigate the incident. The NIA is already probing the March 25, 2020 attack on another gurdwara in Kabul, in which 27 Sikh devotees including an Indian national were killed. Indian officials said around 150 Hindus and Sikhs are living in Afghanistan currently. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned Saturday's attack. He said: "Shocked by the cowardly terrorist attack against the Karte Parwan Gurudwara in Kabul. I condemn this barbaric attack and pray for the safety and well being of the devotees"."

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Pakistani Visas, Taliban Taxes, Afghan Bodybuilders, 17 June 2022

"Radio Mashaal and Radio Azadi report on the thriving black market for Pakistani visas in Afghanistan, which can cost up to \$1,000. The exorbitant prices line the pockets of corrupt Pakistani officials and their Afghan go-betweens. There is no shortage of Afghans willing to do whatever it takes to flee Taliban persecution and the economic meltdown in their homeland. "People can get a monthlong visa by paying \$300, a five-month visa for \$500, and \$700 for a yearlong visa," said Farhad Salehi, a resident of Herat who has already spent \$500 in bribes without success. Pakistani officials have clamped down on corruption and fired 12 embassy staff during the past three months. A senior embassy official told us that the employees were sacked after a "thorough investigation" that established that they were "minting money from Afghans." Islamabad has also unveiled a new visa policy, making it easier for Afghans seeking asylum in Western countries to transit through Pakistan."

Gandhara, Afghans Say Black Market For Pakistani Visas Thriving, 14 June 2022

"Farhad Salehi, a resident of the western Herat Province, has been chasing a Pakistani visa for weeks. Like hundreds of thousands of his compatriots, he wants to escape the uncertainty brought on by the economic collapse that followed the Taliban's seizure of power last year. He first attempted official channels, applying directly to the Pakistani Embassy in the capital, Kabul. But after being denied a visa, he took a route often used by Afghans in a similar situation: the black market, where the business of providing permits to travel or live in the neighboring Muslim country is thriving."

Khaama Press, About 5,000 Afghan citizens await German family reunification visas, 25 May 2022

"Afghan citizens must apply for family reunification visas through the German embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad after the German embassy visa office in Kabul closed in 2017.

The German government has said that in order to facilitate this process, visa offices have been directed to "make full use of their authority". The time-consuming document evaluation will be suspended, and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs will begin processing the applications, according to reports.

The difficulty of leaving family reunification visa applicants out of Afghanistan, particularly women who desire to travel alone, has been noted by the German government as a key impediment to the procedure. The Taliban, on the other hand, will not let them leave Afghanistan without a passport, and obtaining one is a difficult and time-consuming process."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"In October [2021] the Taliban stated they would resume issuing passports, ending a months-long

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

suspension that had diminished the limited ability of citizens to depart the country. According to local media, more than 170,000 passport applications received in August and September remained adjudicated as of December 31. In December the Taliban announced that passport offices had opened in 25 provinces. Anecdotal reports suggested passports were not always issued impartially but rather reserved for individuals whom the Taliban deemed “unproblematic” or who could pay substantially higher prices for the passport. Some individuals associated with the previous administration reported being detained and beaten following their visit to passport offices. [...] NGOs noted the lack of official birth registration for refugee children in the country as a significant problem and protection concern, due to the risk of statelessness and potential long-term disadvantage.”

Ariana News, IEA calls for investors, says visas for foreigners will recommence, 11 April 2022

“The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has called on national and international agencies to start interacting with local traders and business owners and promised to start issuing visas to foreigners.

IEA officials said the ministry of mines and petroleum has been granted permission to secure contracts with domestic and foreign companies. Officials said at a economy-focused meeting Monday that a process is being put into place for visas to be issued to foreigners. According to officials, contracts have already been signed with companies for the extraction of iron ore in Herat province and for the extraction of lead in Ghor province.

An IEA official said government is also looking at ways to issue visas for business owners arriving at Kabul airport.”

Human Rights Watch, New Evidence that Biometric Data Systems Imperil Afghans, 30 March 2022

“The Taliban control systems holding sensitive biometric data that Western donor governments left behind in Afghanistan in August 2021, putting thousands of Afghans at risk, Human Rights Watch said today.

These digital identity and payroll systems contain Afghans’ personal and biometric data, including iris scans, fingerprints, photographs, occupation, home addresses, and names of relatives. The Taliban could use them to target perceived opponents, and Human Rights Watch research suggests that they may have already used the data in some cases [...] Aziz Rafiee, executive director of the Afghan Civil Society Forum, who is familiar with many of the systems and the risks posed, said, “The international community might have thought it was helping us, but instead it played with our fate and ended up creating systems more dangerous than they were helpful.” A person familiar with the development and management of one of the systems examined, who asked to remain anonymous, said that some people who had been working for the company that maintained the system were still in Afghanistan and at risk from the Taliban. He said the Taliban had detained two senior staff members to force the company to continue supporting and maintaining the system, something it refused to do [...] The six Afghan judges interviewed included four men and two women. Three of the six are in hiding in the country. Those interviewed said that the Supreme Court has a payroll system with extensive personal data on all judges and their families including their biometrics (fingerprints, iris scans, and photographs), current addresses, and their car’s model, color, and license plate number [...] All six judges thought that the Taliban was using the system to try to find or arrest them or others. A judge known for her work combatting domestic violence said that the first night the Taliban took control of her city, its members stormed her home after she had already fled. Taliban members then went to her mother’s home looking for her. “How did they have the details of my mother’s home?” she asked. “She doesn’t even live with my father. Those details were only in the Supreme Court system.” Other judges shared a screen shot of a post in early December on a Telegram group for Afghan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

judges about a judge in Bamiyan whom Taliban officials arrested at the local passport office after learning his occupation. The judge had been trying to renew his passport so he could leave the country. The judges said that according to the Telegram group members, the judge's fingerprints helped the Taliban identify him as a judge."

TOLO News, Passport Processing to Begin Countrywide on April 5th: Officials, 29 March 2022

"Officials at the Passport Department said on Tuesday at a press conference that passport processing is set to begin across Afghanistan on April 5th.

Shafiullah Tasal, spokesman of the passport department, also said the department has recruited female staff to assist with the processing and distribution of passports for women.

"From sixteen of Hamal (solar month), April 5th, the processing of online passports will begin normally in Kabul and all provinces," said Shafiullah Tasal.

Tasal expressed hopes that female staff could accelerate the processing of passports for women."

Al Jazeera, Afghans with correct legal documents may travel abroad: Taliban, 2 March 2022

"The Taliban says Afghans with legal documents could travel abroad after the United States and United Kingdom raised concerns over previous comments that travel restrictions would be put in place.

"Our countrymen who have legal documents and invitation can travel abroad," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a tweet on Tuesday, adding that his previous announcement had been aimed at concerns over Afghans leaving without legal documents and travelling with smugglers.

The US State Department and the UK's charge d'affaires sought clarity over Mujahid's statements at a news conference on Sunday that raised concerns that travel restrictions could hinder freedom of movement and continuing evacuation efforts by Washington and other capitals.

Mujahid had originally said the Taliban's travel restrictions would apply to Afghans who worked with NATO and American forces, but did not elaborate under what, if any, circumstances they would be able to evacuate.

The charge d'affaires of the UK Mission to Afghanistan, Hugo Shorter, said in a tweet on Tuesday evening, "Welcome clarification by Taliban spokesperson that Afghans with the right documents can still travel out of Afghanistan.

"We expect that unchanged rules mean that there is no new requirement for women leaving Afghanistan to be accompanied by a male guardian," Shorter added.

Mujahid had said on Sunday that women could not travel overseas for education without a male guardian."

Ariana News, IEA says more than one million electronic IDs have been distributed, 27 February 2022

"The Islamic Emirate's Central Statistics and Information office says more than one million electronic IDs have been distributed in the past six months.

The IDs have been distributed in Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar, Khost and Kandahar provinces, according to a statement released by the department on Saturday.

According to the IEA, the process of distributing printed ID cards is underway in all provinces, and in 21 provinces, the process of printing and distributing new ID cards is underway.

The department says that on average 18,000 ID cards are distributed daily to applicants.

The department added that the online ID application system is active in 12 provinces, including Kabul."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Government of the Netherlands, 294 Afghans destined for the Netherlands arrive in Pakistan, 23 February 2022

“Over the past few days, 294 Afghans ultimately destined for the Netherlands have arrived in Pakistan. Some of the individuals and families concerned are not in possession of valid travel documents. The Pakistani authorities have made an exception for this specific group of people and have given permission for them to travel to the Netherlands via Pakistan. [...] The government is continuing its strenuous efforts to bring eligible Afghans to the Netherlands.’ Permission The preparations for this operation began in October. Following intensive diplomatic talks, Pakistan offered the Netherlands the opportunity to submit a list of Afghans who were eligible to be brought to the Netherlands but who were not in possession of valid travel documents. With the consent of those involved, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted the names to the Pakistani authorities in November. [...] As soon as official authorisation had been obtained, the Afghan families in question were informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and provided with instructions. With the help of the Dutch embassy, they crossed the border between 19 and 23 February. In Pakistan, they were received by the Dutch embassy in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration. The Dutch government is committed to ensuring that these people are able to continue their journey to the Netherlands as soon as possible. [...] The group consists of a number of Dutch residents, Afghans who have performed high-profile duties for the Netherlands as interpreters or other officials in an international military or police mission, Afghan NGO staff covered by the special provisions as set out in the letter to parliament of 11 October 2021 and members of their immediate families. In January, the Netherlands was granted permission by the Pakistani authorities to allow the first group of 35 Afghans to enter the country without valid travel documents. Most of them were able to travel to the Netherlands on a German charter flight via Hannover last Friday. For the time being, it is not possible to help other Afghans who are eligible to be brought to the Netherlands but have no passport. The Dutch government is continuing to seek a solution and advises people in the meantime to apply for a passport wherever possible. It is impossible to say exactly how many Afghans are still eligible for travel to the Netherlands as assessments are still being carried out in various parts of the Dutch government.”

AVA Press, Taliban collected 1.3 million afghanis from passport distribution in Parwan, 3 January 2022

“Local Taliban officials in say they have collected more than 1.3 million afghanis in distribution in the past 43 days.

“This revenue has been collected in the last 43 days,” said Mohammad Kamran , a Taliban spokesman for the Parwan Police Command in an interview with Hasht-e Subh today Monday, January 3rd.

During this period, they have processed the documents of 2,105 passport applicants, according to Kamran. The process of distributing passports in Parwan province began on November 27th, however, the process of collecting documents from new applicants, with the exception of patients, has been stopped by the end of the year.”

Khaama, Taliban issue 340,000 national IDs in four months, 1 January 2022

“National Statistics and Information Administration of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that they have issued up to 340,000 electronic National IDs in the capital Kabul and provinces in the past four months.

“A statement released by the Administration on Saturday, January 1, 2022 reads that, already printed IDs have been issued while the process of printing new IDs is going on in twenty provinces of the country.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

““Kabul, Nangarhar, Paktia, Khost, Logar, Kandahar, Zabul, Balkh, Herat, Jawzjan, Baghlan, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Farah, Nuristan, Samangan, and Takhar are provinces where the process of both printing and issuing IDs are ongoing.” Reads the statement.

“The statement reads that they issue from 13,000 to 15,000 IDs on daily basis in the above-mentioned provinces.

“In the meantime, the administration has assured of resuming issuance of IDs after completing a technical assessment of the centers in provinces where the process is stalled.

“ID applicants in Kabul and Herat provinces are reportedly allowed to apply online while people in other provinces have to apply in person.”

The Guardian, Hundreds queue for passports in bid to leave Afghanistan, 19 December 2021

“The Taliban initially stopped issuing passports shortly after their return to power, which came as the previous, western-backed regime imploded in the final stages of a US military withdrawal. In October, authorities reopened the passport office in Kabul only to suspend work days later as a flood of applications caused the biometric equipment to break down. The office said on Saturday that the issue has been resolved and people whose applications were already being processed could get their documents.”

TOLO News, '32 Provinces' to Offer Passport Services: Officials, 5 December 2021

“Speaking at a press conference at the Government Media and Information Center (GMIC), passport department officials said that the passport-issuing process is set to begin tomorrow (Monday) in 14 more provinces of Afghanistan.

Alem Gul Haqqani, director of the passport department, told reporters that with these 14 additional provinces, a total of 32 provinces will be completely capable of issuing passports for applicants.

Based on Haqqani’s remarks, Kabul and Helmand provinces would not start services for now due to technical problems.

“Everyone can go to his or her own province to get a passport based on their identity cards. We will not give them passports in Kabul,” said Alem Gul Haqqani.

After resolving the technical problems within the Kabul passport department, the capital’s office will resume service to the citizens, he said. “We have provided most of the equipment needed for the Kabul department and other provinces; we bought some equipment and the process will start in the coming days in Kabul,” said Haqqani.

At the same time, Kabul residents declared they desperately need passports, and they asked for a quick reopening of the passport department in Kabul.

“The Islamic Emirate cannot provide facilities that existed previously in the Kabul passport department-- during the previous government. People are spending days and nights waiting to receive passports,” said Saifullah, a resident.

Based on passport department figures, about 125,000 passports have been issued to the people since the reopening of passport offices across the country.”

TOLO News, Passport Distribution is Still Halted in the Capital, 29 November 2021

“Twelve days have passed since the suspension of the passport distribution process in Kabul, even though offices are open in 17 provinces. A number of passport applicants said that even though they are ill and have medical conditions requiring travel, they have not been able to get their passports for days.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA Press, Processing of passports suspended due to 'technical problem', 16 November 2021

"Alam Gul Haqqani, head of the General Directorate of Passports, said late Monday in a video message that processing of passports at the office in Kabul has been suspended until further notice.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_He attributed the decision to a technical problem – specifically with the biometric system.

, head of the passport department, said the process would resume in Kabul once the problem was resolved.

He also said that the distribution of passports had started in provinces other than Kabul, and that this would continue.

The distribution process started last week in , Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Khost and Paktia provinces.

Meanwhile, Interior Ministry spokesman Saeed said the ministry had arrested 60 people on charges of forging documents, including passports.

Khosti wrote on Twitter: "The Ministry of Interior (Moi) has arrested 60 fake passport makers, commissioners, and fake notice makers in the name of the Islamic Emirate. Among them are employees of the passport department."

After the fall of the previous government, the distribution of passports was suspended for almost two months.

According to officials from the , about 100,000 passports have been issued in the last 40 days."

Reuters, Kabul passport office suspends work as demand crashes system, 16 November 2021

"The Kabul passport office has been forced to suspend operations after equipment used for issuing biometric documents broke down under the pressure of processing thousands of applications a day, the head of the office said.

[...] Alam Gul Haqqani, director of the passport department, said as many as 15,000-20,000 people a day were camped outside the office in Kabul, five or six times more than the office was able to handle, with many sleeping on the pavement overnight.

Many were forced to come back day after day after failing to file their application and the biometric machines regularly broke down as they processed the documents, causing further delays, he said.

"To stop people suffering this and to avoid disturbance, we have decided to stop the activities of the passport department activities for a few days," he told TOLO News television on Monday night, adding that the office would re-open soon.

On Tuesday, the interior ministry said 60 people, including a number of members of the passport department, had been arrested for using forged or fake documents to obtain a passport. There have also been growing complaints of people being forced to pay bribes to officials to get their applications approved."

Khaama Press, Taliban to begin issuing passports in seven other provinces, 13 November 2021

"Officials of the Passport Directorate said that they will start the issuance of passports in Balkh, Paktia, Kandahar, Kunduz, Herat, Nangarhar, and Khost provinces on Sunday, November 14. [...]

"The passports will be issued based on the e-ID or the previous IDs that are verified officially. The rumors about lack of passport are not true." Said Haqqani.

Haqqani added that there are 900,000 passports in the directorate, 600,000 passports with the company responsible for their printing, one million passports are in the process of printing, and one and a half

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

million more are going to be printed. [...]

As per statistics, the Taliban have issued one hundred thousand passports since they resumed the process and have made 500 million Afghanis from it.”

TOLO News, Passport Services to Begin in Provinces: Officials, 25 October 2021

“A number of passport applicants in Kabul complained about irregularities in the Kabul passport department and demanded the officials to end the problems. The passport issuance process is scheduled to begin in the next two weeks in a number of major provinces, officials from the passport department said.

Alam Gul Haqqani, head of passport department, said that the process in the provinces was stopped due to technical problems and once the problems are resolved, the distribution process will begin again. [...] The passport distribution process is going well in Kabul and over 50,000 passports have been distributed so far, he said.

On the other hand, a number of passport applicants in Kabul complained about irregularities in the Kabul passport department and demanded the officials to end the problems. [...]

It has been a month that the passport distribution process has been operating in Kabul, but still this process has not started in other provinces.

Statistics of the passport department show that over 5,000 passports are being issued every day in Kabul and since the beginning of this process more than 50,000 passports have been distributed.”

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: Few routes to safety for Afghans at risk of Taliban reprisals, 20 October 2021

““Trying to get out of Afghanistan right now is like an obstacle course. Since the Taliban takeover it has been near-impossible to obtain travel documents, forcing many Afghans to make irregular journeys which result in punitive treatment by other governments. Instead of finding safety and protection, Afghans who fled the Taliban end up trapped in makeshift camps at border zones, or detained while they await deportation to an uncertain fate,” said Francesca Pizzutelli, Head of Amnesty International’s Refugees and Migrants’ Rights Team.”

TOLO News, 30,000 Passports Issued Since Office Reopened, 13 October 2021

“The passport department has distributed 30,000 passports since the office reopened ten days ago in Kabul, officials said on Wednesday.

According to officials, the department is able to issue 4,000 passports per day and efforts are underway to increase capacity to 6,000 per day.

Officials further added the department has been paid 110 million Afghanis since the office started its services.

“First, we start the process of issuing passports for those who pay the fees to the banks, and then we work on the issuing of passports for those who filed documents online,” said Alim Gul Haqqani, head of the passport department.

Reportedly thousands of Afghans flocked to the passport department to receive travel documents.

Many reasons caused them to come together and file documents for passport.

Some of the applicants said they are fleeing the country to seek work opportunities, while others said they were traveling for school or medical treatment.”

TOLO News, Officials: Identity Card Centers to Resume Operations Soon, 11 October 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Following a recent announcement by the Islamic Emirate over the distribution of national identity cards, the National Statistics and Information Authority said on Monday that electronic National Identity Card (eNIC) centers are going to reopen on Wednesday across Afghanistan.

Officials further said that around 30,000 identity cards that are already printed will be distributed in the first step.

“30,000 identity cards have been printed and are ready to be distributed. The process will begin on Wednesday,” said Yousuf Ahadi, who is in charge of information technology at the NSIA.

Meanwhile, several residents told TOLONews that people require ID cards for various purposes. A resident in Kabul, Shabir Ahmad, said he intends to travel abroad to get medical treatment for his family member. Shabir Ahmad said: “We seriously need ID cards. Everyone needs to take their patients abroad. Having ID cards is necessary for getting a passport.”

“Before the reopening of the passport department, it was necessary that ID centers be opened. People have many problems that are related to the opening of the ID card center,” said Husamudin, a resident. Officials at the NSIA added that so far about 6 million Afghan citizens have received their eNIC cards and there are 104 centers in total for the distribution of ID cards in the country, 25 of which are based in Kabul.”

AVA Press, Taliban to continue issuance previous government’s e-NIDs, 10 October 2021

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The cabinet has directed the National Statistics and Information Administration of the country to resume issuing -NIDs under the name of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, BNA reported.

The process has been stalled for the past nearly two months since the Taliban took over on August, 15.

Earlier, the Taliban had directed to resume issuance of the same passports of the previous government that started on Wednesday.

Taliban officially started the issuance of passports last week and pledged to be issuing up to six thousand each day.

E-NID is a must require card to apply for passports in Afghanistan.”

Al Jazeera, Hundreds throng passport office in Afghanistan capital Kabul, 6 October 2021

“Hundreds of Afghans have flocked to the passport office in Kabul a day after it was announced it would reopen to issue travel documents.

Taliban soldiers beat back some in the crowd in efforts to maintain order on Wednesday.

Taliban officials said the service will resume on Saturday after being suspended since the armed group’s takeover and the fall of Ashraf Ghani’s government in August, which stranded many of those desperate to flee the country.”

Khaama Press, We will issue 6,000 passports daily: Taliban officials, 5 October 2021

“Officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan resumed the issuance of passports on Tuesday, October 5, and promised that the previous government was issuing three thousand passports but they intend to issue six thousand passports per day.

The department of passport opens nearly two months after the Taliban took over the country.

Head of the department Alamgul Haqqani said that they currently have one million notebooks of passport- on which they print passports- and added that there are 25 thousand passports ready to be issued.

Unlike other government bodies-except for education and health sectors- the Taliban asked the female employees of the department to come to their jobs and promised to pay the salaries for the past three

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

months.

The Taliban does not intend to print their own passport having their logo and said that they will continue with the passports and NIDs of the previous government, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan had promised to resume the issuance of NIDs as well but they did not comment on the issue in Tuesday's press conference.

As per the policy of the previous government, those who apply for passports should have electronic NID thus, there is desperate need for the issuance of NIDs first so that the applicants get eligible to apply for passports."

TOLO News, Afghan People Call for Govt Offices to Open, 12 September 2021

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

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

Noor Agha, who is from Herat province, along with several others is waiting for the passport office to be opened.

He intends to leave for Pakistan to receive medical treatment.

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

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

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

How do people obtain documentation for mobile telephone and internet services (including sim cards)

Khaama Press, Is Internet Down? Users in Afghan Capital Report Internet Disruption, 8 August 2022

"According to a resident of Kabul, mobile networks are currently not working in the third, fifth, and thirteenth districts of the capital of Afghanistan.

Another 13th district resident said that the networks have been down since yesterday.

They express their concern regarding the internet outage and say that no one is willing to provide an answer for the reason the internet is not accessible.

Despite the Taliban authorities' silence on the matter, a telecommunications company claims that the Muharram ceremony has caused technical issues with telecommunications services in Kabul's western districts.

Security threats against mourners have recently increased in the Shia-populated area west of Kabul.

Not only are there disrupted internet and telecommunications services, but several of the roads in Kabul's western areas are also inaccessible."

Ariana News, AWCC signs deal with Afghan Post to distribute SIM cards to Balkh residents, 15 June 2022

"A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Wednesday between Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC) and Afghan Post, the state postal service, for SIM cards to be distributed and sold in Balkh province. AWCC officials said the move would provide communication and internet services to people across the province and that residents, especially those who live in remote districts, will now have easy access to obtaining SIM cards. Afghan Post officials confirmed they will

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

facilitate the sale and distribution of SIM cards, which will enable more people to have access to mobile telephone and internet services. “We will start in 14 districts and in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif. This program is to make it easier for people who come from far to get a SIM card,” said Hamidullah Rahmanyar, General Manager of Afghan Post. Mohammad Yaqub Saqib, regional director of AWCC in the north, said the purpose of the deal was to provide communication facilities for the people. “The registration system is based on the person, ID card and photo, and if we sell the SIM card for 150 afghanis, 75 afghanis of credit will be given to the new subscribers,” said Saqib. AWCC officials, from the regional office, said the company currently provides telecommunication services to people in many areas, including remote districts and villages but they hope to expand their services in order to improve the quality of telecommunication services across the country. AWCC is a leading wireless communications company in Afghanistan. It was the first mobile phone company in the country and was founded in 2002. For over a decade, AWCC drove the rapid growth of the country’s communications market through its innovative development and deployment of global-class High-Definition (HD) Voice Communications, Internet, Data and Mobile Payments Services. Today, AWCC delivers rapid, reliable and robust HD Voice, 2G, High-Speed 3G and 4G/LTE Data, Internet and My Money Mobile Payment Services to five million business and consumer clients located in all of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. The company also has strategic partnerships with 425 wireless carriers in 125 countries.”

Online and in-person passport registration and application in Kabul (2022)

Tolo News, Officials: 3 Million Passport Booklets to Arrive in 2 Weeks, 23 May 2022

“The Passport Authority confirmed there is a lack of five-year passports and said the problem will be resolved in two weeks. [...] In two weeks, three million five-year passports will arrive in Kabul, officials said. The General Directorate of Passports says that talks have taken place with the UN mission in Kabul about transferring the passports to the country. “Three million passports have been printed and we have paid the money too. Talks have finished in this regard. They have been printed in Lithuania and they are supposed to be transferred, and there has been talk of their transferring them, and in the coming days they will arrive in the country and this problem will be completely solved,” said Shafiullah Tassal, press director of the General Directorate of Passports.”

Tolo News, Passport Processing Resumes in Kabul, 9 April 2022

“After a long delay, on Saturday the General Directorate of Passports restarted the online passport registration process for citizens in Kabul. Shafiullah Tassal, spokesman of the directorate of passports, said that 2,000 applications would be accepted daily, and that this number would increase to 3,000 after the month of Ramadan. “These activities started online. Today is 20 of Hamal (first month of the year). From today on, all citizens can register online to get passports, and we ask all our compatriots not to apply to the passport office with written papers,” said Shafiullah Tassal, spokesman of the General Directorate of Passports. Meanwhile, some passport applicants said they have been trying to get passports for months.”

Taliban’s ability to track individuals of interest

What are the Taliban’s capabilities to track individuals?

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, [A year on, Afghans hide out fearing death by data](#), 8 August 2022

"A year after the Taliban takeover, thousands remain in hiding, fearful that biometric data can be used to track them. [...] The 48-year-old, who asked that her last name not be used, knew only too well the danger she faced. The Taliban had previously bombed their vehicles; Sadaf was injured in two of those attacks and had lost several colleagues. "I didn't want anything to fall into the hands of the Taliban," she said by text message from an undisclosed location in Afghanistan. A week after the Taliban took over, men knocked on Sadaf's door and spent hours searching her home. They knew where she worked, and left with a warning that they were watching. The next day, Sadaf packed her belongings and fled, along with her children and husband, a carpenter. They have been in hiding ever since, lodging with relatives and friends, and never staying anywhere for more than two weeks.[...] Sadaf is among the tens of thousands of Afghans - including former government officials, judges, police and human rights activists - who remain in hiding one year on, fearful of being tracked with digital ID and data systems that the militants gained with regime change.

In the past year, human rights groups and the United Nations have documented the killing or enforced disappearance of hundreds of former members of the security forces, as well as journalists, judges, activists and LGBT+ people. A Taliban spokesman did not respond to a request for comment."

Tolo News, [Congress Wants Answers Over Biometric Systems Left in Kabul](#), 4 May 2022 [last edited 5 May 2022]

"US Republican congress members are demanding answers from the Biden administration following a disclosure that biometric data abandoned by the United States during its hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan is being used by the Islamic Emirate to target American allies still stuck in the war-torn nation, a media report said. According to the report of the Washington Free Beacon, the congress members believe that the Islamic Emirate is using the data to target former security forces and local Afghan allies of US and NATO forces. However, the Ministry of Interior denied the report. Eight Republican members of the senate committee, led by Sen. Marsha Blackburn, are asking the State and Defense Departments to turn over information related to the evacuation of US troops in Afghanistan, the Washington Free Beacon said. "These systems, which were abandoned when the US military withdrew from Afghanistan, contained iris scans, fingerprints, photographs, occupational data, home addresses, and names of relatives," the senators wrote, according to a copy of the letter obtained exclusively by the Washington Free Beacon. "The Taliban is using this personal information to increase targeted killings, torture, and forced disappearances of Afghans who helped the United States." Earlier, the US Department of Defense in a letter said military hardware worth \$7 billion was left behind by US troops. "The biometric system should not be provided to the neighboring countries or others. The government is responsible for maintaining the secret and important national data," said Hekmatullah Hekmat, a military veteran. "This can cause risks for the Afghanistan security system even for their (Islamic Emirate) government because if some of the groups under their command stand against them they could use the data against the Taliban," said Asadullah Nadim, a military veteran. The Interior Ministry confirmed it has access to the biometric devices but denied it is using the information to target the former military and civilian personnel. "We have denied this claim many times--that the Islamic Emirate targets or threatens the former security forces through this. We deny it," said Abul Nafay Takor, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. Earlier, Human Rights Watch in a report claimed the biometric data left by the foreign troops put the lives of many Afghans at risk, but the current Afghan government denied it."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

HRW, New Evidence that Biometric Data Systems Imperil Afghans; Taliban Now Control Systems with Sensitive Personal Information, 30 March 2022

“The Taliban control systems holding sensitive biometric data that Western donor governments left behind in Afghanistan in August 2021, putting thousands of Afghans at risk, Human Rights Watch said today. These digital identity and payroll systems contain Afghans’ personal and biometric data, including iris scans, fingerprints, photographs, occupation, home addresses, and names of relatives. The Taliban could use them to target perceived opponents, and Human Rights Watch research suggests that they may have already used the data in some cases. [...] Afghanistan currently has no data protection law. Having such a law, even assuming it met international standards, would not have guaranteed adequate data protection, but it could have helped to ensure better practices and to reduce the potential harm to those whose data has fallen into Taliban hands. Human Rights Watch interviewed 12 Afghans with expert knowledge of the country’s biometric systems, including 6 judges; 5 foreign privacy and human rights researchers documenting the potential impacts of the systems being accessed by the Taliban; 3 UN staff members working on Afghanistan; and 2 US military officers formerly based in Afghanistan. A former military commander still in Afghanistan said that Taliban detained him for 12 days in November and took his fingerprints and scanned his irises with a data-collection tool. “They told me they took my fingerprints to check if I was military and if they could confirm it, they would kill me,” he said. “I was very lucky that for some reason they did not get a match.” Human Rights Watch examined six systems built by private companies for or with the assistance of foreign governments and international institutions: Afghan National Biometric System, used to issue Afghan national identity cards, known as e-Tazkira; US Defense Department Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS), used to identify people whom the US believed might pose a security risk as well as those working for the US government; Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System (AABIS), used to identify criminals and Afghan army and police members; Ministry of Interior and Defense Afghan Personnel and Pay Systems (APPS) for the army and police, into which the AABIS was integrated in early 2021; Payroll system of the National Directorate of Security, the former state intelligence agency; and Payroll system of the Afghan Supreme Court. In late 2021, several privacy rights organizations and media outlets raised their concerns about the Taliban gaining access to some of these systems, particularly the APPS and ABIS systems. Concerns about Taliban access to the other systems has received little coverage. However, information that a former government adviser shared with Human Rights Watch suggests that the Taliban may not have access to APPS.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 4th March 2022, 10 March 2022

“Violence targeting civilians also continued in Afghanistan last week. During search operations, Taliban forces reportedly detained and tortured seven civilians in Baghlan province, a former security officer in Helmand province, and the relatives of another former soldier in Daykundi province. The Taliban also reportedly tortured residents in Khost province under detention after they raised the tricolor Afghanistan national flag, which has become a symbol of anti-Taliban protests since the group seized governance (Baghi TV, 1 March 2022). In a separate development, engineers from the Ministry of Public Works and former judges held separate protests in Kabul demanding unpaid salaries last week. Demonstrating engineers also complain about the dismissal of large numbers of engineers since the Taliban came into power, while demonstrating former judges demand to be reinstated to their former positions. The Taliban dispersed the protest of former judges. This is the first time ACLED records a protest involving judges since August 2021.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 1 / 4

Afghans cannot freely engage in private discussion without risking offline and online surveillance. Criticism of the new regime or its moral code are grounds for arrest, as are sympathetic statements towards the National Resistance Front (NRF), an armed group that has resisted Taliban rule in the Panjshir Valley. The Taliban also rely on individuals to inform them of neighbors’ activities. Taliban search mobile phones for social media comments criticizing the regime.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because political discussion is more dangerous for Afghans under the Taliban.”

Brookings (Afghanistan), The enduring risks posed by biometric identification systems, 9 February 2022

“The risks posed by the collection and use of biometric data were disturbingly illustrated by the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan late last year, when anti-government forces seized power and inherited a powerful biometric identification system built by the U.S. military. The Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment (HIIDES) system was designed as a way for U.S. forces to be able to easily identify individuals in the field and tell friend from foe. But in the hands of the Taliban, these systems risked revealing the identities of individuals who had worked with American forces, potentially exposing them to reprisal. An unshakeable identification risked becoming a mechanism for revenge, punishment, or exclusion.”

ICRC, Cyber-attack on ICRC: What we know, 21 January 2022

“The ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] determined on 18 January that servers hosting the personal information of more than 500,000 people receiving services from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were compromised in a sophisticated cyber security attack. We take this cyber-attack extremely seriously and have been working with our humanitarian partners around the world to understand the scope of the attack and take the appropriate measures to safeguard our data.”

HRW, “No Forgiveness for People Like You: Executions and Enforced Disappearances in Afghanistan under the Taliban”, 30 November 2021

“The Taliban, through their intelligence operations and access to employment records that the former government left behind, have identified new targets for arrest and execution.”

“The Taliban leadership has directed members of surrendering ANSF units to register with them to receive a letter guaranteeing their safety. Under this amnesty program, individuals who have registered have been screened for ties to particular military, police, militia, and special forces units, or to commanders or former provincial authorities, in addition to being required to surrender weapons. However, the Taliban have used these screenings to detain and summarily execute or forcibly disappear individuals within days of their registration, leaving their bodies for their relatives or communities to find.”

“Many Afghans interviewed expressed fear that if they register with the Taliban to receive the amnesty letter, they might be identified or recognized and face violent retaliation. At the same time, the Taliban have also searched for and detained people who failed to register. Some former government and security force officials have relied on their personal connections to get letters from the Taliban via third persons. Others, including some former civil servants in key government posts, such as the judiciary, have been unaware that they could obtain this “forgiveness” letter and have faced punishments—including beatings and detention—for not having done so. Even if aware of the letters, many have not been sure how to obtain them where the Taliban have not announced specific registration centers.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

France 24, Four Women Slain in Afghanistan after phone call 'to join evacuation flight', 6 November 2021
"Two suspects have been arrested after the four bodies were found at a house in the city, interior ministry spokesman Qari Sayed Khosti said.

The arrested people have admitted in initial interrogation that the women were invited to the house by them. Further investigations are under way and the case has been referred to court," he said.

Khosti did not identify the victims, but sources in Mazar-i-Sharif told AFP that one of the dead was a women's rights activist and university lecturer, Frozan Safi.

Three sources in Mazar-i-Sharif told AFP that they had heard the women received a call that they thought was an invitation to join an evacuation flight and were picked up by a car, only to be found dead later. [...]

The source said that three weeks ago she had herself received a call from someone pretending to offer assistance in her efforts to get to safety abroad.

"He knew all information about me, asked me to send my documents, wanted me to fill a questionnaire, pretending to be an official of my office in charge of giving info to the US for my evacuation," she said."

The Guardian, Women's rights activist shot dead in northern Afghanistan, 5 November 2021

"A 29-year-old activist and economics lecturer, Frozan Safi, has been shot and killed in northern Afghanistan, in what appears to be the first known death of a women's rights defender since the Taliban swept to power almost three months ago.

Frozan Safi's body was identified in a morgue in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif after she went missing on 20 October.

[...] Activists say they are being hunted down by the Taliban, who have perfected ways to infiltrate and intimidate women's groups.

Towards the end of last month, Frozan received a call from an anonymous number, telling her to gather proof of her work as a rights defender and leave for a safe house."

Foreign Policy, Afghan Crime Wave Adds to Taliban Dystopia, 29 October 2021

"Officials of the former government, intelligence service, and military have been snatched from their homes after applying for passports and providing biometric and other identification information, he said. The Taliban are also using lists of former officials and civil activists to pinpoint their children. "They took four such sons from a prominent school in Kabul. When the police station was asked, they said, 'We don't know who entered the school,'" the source said. "Life is broken."

Reuters, The Taliban vowed no revent. One Afghan family tells a different story, 28 September 2021

"When the Taliban won back control of the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar last month, they set out to settle a score with an old foe.

As they searched for prominent local politician Ajmal Omar - who had helped drive the militants out of a Nangarhar district a year earlier and tried to dissuade young Afghans from joining them - Taliban members detonated explosives at his ancestral home."

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

"20. After seizing Kabul, Taliban fighters erected checkpoints throughout the capital and increased patrols, without uniforms. Reports also suggested that some people had been shot after having crossed checkpoints without approval. While statements by the Taliban included instructions not to enter

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

anyone's house without permission and that "life, property and honour" would be protected, numerous reports emerged of the Taliban conducting house-to-house searches for government personnel, weapons and property, and in some cases confiscation of the latter. Some reports indicated that the Taliban were allegedly searching for people who had "worked with foreigners" and at times, beating them."

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

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

The Guardian, The Taliban are showing us the dangers of personal data falling into the wrong hands, 7 September 2021

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

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

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

The New Humanitarian, Biometric data and the Taliban: What are the risks?, 2 September 2021

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

OHCHR, Afghanistan: Taliban attempting to steadily erase women and girls from public life – UN experts, 17 January 2022

"Taliban leaders in Afghanistan are institutionalizing large scale and systematic gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls, a group of UN human rights experts* said today. [...] "We are also deeply troubled by the harsh manner with which the de facto authorities have responded to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghan women and girls claiming their fundamental rights, with reports of peaceful protesters having been often beaten, ill-treated, threatened, and in confirmed instances detained arbitrarily," the experts said."

BBC News, Afghanistan: 'Terrified' British Council teachers still in hiding, 14 January 2022

"Afghans who were employed to spread British values and teach English in Helmand province have told the BBC they are still in hiding from the Taliban and remain "terrified of reprisals".

Around 100 ex-British Council staff are still in Afghanistan having so far been denied the right to come to the UK.

"We are all sitting inside, like in prison," one said, while another said they were now running out of money. [...]

"Rahimallah", a man in his 20s whose real name we are not using, spent two years working for the British Council in "risky and dangerous" circumstances in Helmand, where British troops were based until 2014. [...]

"A relative of mine posted on Facebook against the Taliban, saying that they could not pay teachers' salaries," he says. "The next day, Taliban intelligence men abducted him, tortured him and killed him, and then threw his body in the Helmand River. Just for a Facebook post." He added: "I'm sure they will do the same with me."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, 'Tortured From Head To Toe': Taliban Accused Of Killing Afghan Man Over Critical Facebook Post, 3 December 2021

"Taliban fighters detained Naweed Azami after he made a Facebook post criticizing the militant group.

Three days after he was taken into custody, the 30-year-old's body was found along a riverbank on the outskirts of the southern Afghan city of Lashkar Gah.

The Taliban claimed that Azami escaped detention. But his family has accused the militant group of torturing and killing him.

"My brother was tortured from head to toe," Sharifullah Sharafat, Azami's older brother, told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "There were torture marks everywhere on his body. The doctors at the local hospital have confirmed this. They took photos of his body and have video evidence."

Azami appears to be the latest victim of the Taliban's campaign of targeted killings in Afghanistan. Despite declaring a general amnesty after it seized power in August, the militant group has been accused of extrajudicially killing civilians and former members of the previous government and armed forces. [...]

Azami was detained in Lashkar Gah on November 25, just days after he criticized the Taliban on Facebook. In his post, Sharafat said, Azami questioned how the Taliban could keep its promise of paying teachers their salaries when the regime was "surviving on donated food." Azami deleted the post before he was detained, Sharafat added."

AVA Press, Taliban Must Be Accountable for the Targeted Killings of Civilians, 1 December 2021

"Helmand residences also report that a young man has been arrested and killed by Taliban forces for posting critical content on Facebook. The man has allegedly been assassinated after being beaten. The next day, with the help of Kuchis (nomads), they retrieved their son's corpse from a sea in [sic]. Local Taliban officials confirmed the incident, promising the victim's family that they would investigate how their son was killed. Gunmen also assassinated a employee in [sic], and no one has claimed responsibility for his death."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA Press, A Young Boy Killed for Listening to Music in Badakhshan, 13 November 2021

"According to the sources, the Taliban first checked his cell phone, and when they found out that he was listening to music they beat and shot him."

The Guardian, They stayed to fight the Taliban. Now the protesters are being hunted down, 4 November 2021

"Women's rights activists fear for their lives as Afghanistan's new rulers infiltrate, detain, beat and torture groups of protesters"

Khaama Press, Taliban creates commission to expel unfavorable members, 13 October 2021

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has created a special commission to expel those who misuse the name of the Taliban, do not treat people well, and have nasty backgrounds.

The commission which has been named "filtration commission of forces" is composed of representatives from the defense ministry, interior affairs ministry, and high directorate of intelligence and was officially announced on Wednesday, October 13.

Spokesperson on the ministry of interior affairs Saeed Khostai said that the commission will get functional in all provinces of the country and heads of the intelligence of the provinces will be leading the provincial offices of the commission.

Saeed Khostai though did not disclose details of the unfavorable people, said that these are some people who stand against the government and Islamic system.

The IEA created the commission after gunmen started entering the houses of people pretending to be the Taliban fighters.

Earlier, it was said the IEA will also send back to provinces the Taliban fighters who are not trained enough to deal with people of Kabul especially the women."

BBC News, Afghanistan: social media users delete profiles over fear of attack, 28 September 2021

"Since 15 August, Afghans have been deleting photos and tweets from their past - and many have turned away from social media altogether for fear of being targeted by Taliban forces."

Wall Street Journal, Killings of Islamic State Militants Highlight Power Struggle With Afghanistan's Taliban, 26 September 2021

"While offering an amnesty to security officers of the former Afghan republic, the Taliban have shown no mercy to Islamic State, killing one of the group's main leaders in a Kabul prison hours after seizing the Afghan capital."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The fate of thousands hanging in the balance, 21 September 2021

"In this report, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) have documented incidents of human rights violations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August". The report references a number of sources, including: [...]

- 5 September 2021. 7:04 PM.
<https://twitter.com/adityarajkaul/status/1434510349609299971?lang=en>. 22 Alex Horton and Ezzatullah Mehrdad. The Washington Post. 28 July 2021. "After 'comedian' is killed by Taliban, videos of his treatment spark outrage across Afghanistan".

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/28/nazar-khasha-afghanistan-comedian/>. ANI. "Popular Afghan comedian killed by gunmen, family blames Taliban". <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/popular-afghan-comedian-killed-by-gunmen-family-blame-taliban20210723165601/>.

- Yogita Limaye. BBC. 1 September 2021. "Amid violent reprisals, Afghans fear the Taliban's 'amnesty' was empty". <https://www.bbc.com/news/worldasia-58395954>
- Zarifa Ghafari. Al Jazeera. 16 September 2021. "The world should not yet engage with the new Taliban government". <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/9/16/the-world-should-not-yet-engage-with-the-new-taliban-government> [...]
- France 24. 5 September 2021. "Taliban fire into air, use tear gas to break up Afghan women's protest in Kabul". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBep8nD7NCQ>. Tweet. Farhan Amiri Official [@FarhanAmiree](#) خبر های تازه
- FarhanAmiree. 4 September 2021. 6:06 PM. <https://twitter.com/FarhanAmiree/status/1434133338122596357> [...]
- Reuters. 10 September 2021. 9 September 2021. "Afghanistan commercial flights resume as U.N. accuses Taliban of harassment". <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taliban-interim-government-agrees-let-foreigners-leave-afghanistan-2021-09-09/>. New York Times. "A Qatari jet carries more than 100 foreigners from Kabul". <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/09/world/asia/taliban-americans-afghanistan.html>. [...]
- Foreign Policy. 9 September 2021. "In Afghanistan, It's Back to the Future—of Taliban Tyranny". <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/09/taliban-afghanistan-government-future-tyranny/> [...]
- UN. 10 September 2021. "Taliban response to protests increasingly violent, warns OHCHR". <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1099552> [...]"

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

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

[...] From 15 to 19 August, people gathered in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces to mark national flag-raising ceremonies. According to credible reports, during these three days when protests took place, the Taliban reportedly killed a man and a boy, and injured eight others, when firing in an apparent attempt to disperse the

crowds. On Tuesday this week (7 September), during a protest in Herat, the Taliban reportedly shot and killed two men and wounded seven more. That same day in Kabul, credible reports indicate that the Taliban beat and detained protesters, including several women and up to 15 journalists. On Wednesday, 8 September, reports emerged that as a largely female group of demonstrators gathered in the Dashti-Barchi area of Kabul, at least five journalists were arrested and two severely beaten for several hours. There were also reports that during a demonstration in Faizabad city in Badakhshan province held by several women, including activists and human rights defenders, the Taliban fired in the air and allegedly beat several of the protesters. A small group of women who had gathered to protest elsewhere in Kabul were violently dispersed, as the Taliban fired shots into the air over their heads. That same day, women were violently dispersed during protests in Kapisa and Takhar provinces, and several women's rights activists in Kapisa were detained."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

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

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

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

Targeted groups

Individuals who are critical or in opposition of the Taliban (e.g. peaceful protesters) or those going against Taliban's prescribed way of life

European Union Agency for Asylum, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals: Country of Origin Information Report, 16 August 2022

HRW, Afghanistan's Taliban Crack Down on Vloggers, 14 June 2022

"On June 7, Afghan vlogger Ajmal Haqiqi – well known for his YouTube channel and modeling shows – appeared in a very different kind of broadcast. Taliban officials arrested Haqiqi and his three colleagues and released a video showing the men, with bruised faces and clearly under duress, apologizing for encouraging "prostitution" and "insulting verses of the Quran." On May 28, the four had posted a YouTube video in which they recited Quranic verses in Arabic in a comical tone. Within a week, the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) had detained them. "We have been promoting Western culture and values, and for this I apologize," Haqiqi said in his evidently scripted "confession." As of mid-June, the men remained in custody. No charges have been filed against them, and no lawyers or family members have been able to see them. These arrests are among the latest in the Taliban's crackdown on free expression. On May 24, Taliban authorities detained Mirza Hassani, director of Radio Sedai Aftab, at a checkpoint in Herat city, accusing him of supporting opposition groups. On May 10, GDI officials detained Khan Mohamad Sayal, a TV journalist, in Urzugan, without explanation. By mid-June, neither man had been released. A Kandahar journalist who had been detained for four days in April for broadcasting music told me he had been accused of working with foreigners. His "confession" was also forced: "They were beating and telling me that I had to admit it," he said. The Taliban have used various measures to silence media in Afghanistan, ranging from establishing restrictive guidelines to sending intelligence officials to meet with media staff. Forcing media workers to confess to dubious crimes sends a message to others to adhere to the Taliban's rules – a tactic also used against women protesters who were detained and compelled to confess. A media worker in Herat recently told me, "Freedom of speech has died in Afghanistan." For journalists, social media activists, and others publicly resisting the Taliban's onerous restrictions, his words seem all too true."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, Video 'Confession' Of Popular Afghan YouTuber Prompts Outrage, 9 June 2022

"Afghan social media influencer Ajmal Haqiqi gained popularity for his entertaining videos on YouTube. On June 7, the fashion model appeared on another widely viewed video. But this time, he was handcuffed, wearing a prison uniform, and sporting bruises on his face as he addressed the camera. In the 2-minute video issued by the Taliban, Haqiqi apologized to Afghanistan's new rulers for "insulting" the Koran, Islam's holy book, in one of his recent YouTube clips. "We are ready to accept any punishment," said Haqiqi, standing next to three of his colleagues. He added that his popular YouTube channel promotes "moral corruption" and is supported by the ousted Western-backed Afghan government. The video uploaded by the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence was accompanied by a tweet saying: "No one is allowed to insult Koranic verses or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The Taliban must immediately release YouTuber Ajmal Haqiqi and his colleagues, 8 June 2022

"Responding to the arbitrary arrest of YouTuber Ajmal Haqiqi and his colleagues yesterday on charges of "insulting Islamic sacred values" after they posted a video in which they allegedly used Quranic verses in a humorous manner, Samira Hamidi, Amnesty International's South Asia Campaigner, said: "Arbitrarily detaining YouTuber Haqiqi and his colleagues and coercing them into apologizing because the Taliban de-facto authorities were offended by the video is a blatant attack on the right to freedom of expression. The Taliban must immediately and unconditionally release the YouTubers and end their continued censorship of those who wish to freely express their ideas." "Restrictions to the right to freedom of expression must be clearly provided by law and be strictly necessary and proportionate to a legitimate aim. International human rights law does not permit restrictions of freedom of expression simply on the grounds it has the potential to offend or insult nor for the protection of religious beliefs or the religious sensibilities of their adherents. This incident is a classic example of how the Taliban is creating a climate of fear in Afghanistan by using arbitrary arrests and coercion to force people into silence." "Since assuming power, the Taliban have been using intimidation, harassment, and violence on anyone who has expressed support for human rights or modern values, especially human rights defenders, women activists, journalists, and members of academia among others. As the de facto authority, the Taliban must abide by international human rights law and respect everyone's right to freedom of expression without discrimination." Background Ajmal Haqiqi is a model and social media influencer based in Kabul, Afghanistan. Last week, a video was posted on Haqiqi's YouTube channel in which he along with three other colleagues allegedly used Quranic verses in a humorous manner. On 5 June 2022, Haqiqi posted another video apologizing for the previous video. On 7 June 2022, the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence arrested Ajmal Haqiqi and three of his colleagues on charges of "insulting Islamic sacred values". Later in the day, a video 'confession' of Haqiqi was released where he again apologized."

AVA Press, The Islamic Emirate Arrests Afghan YouTuber in Charges of Blasphemy, 8 June 2022

"The Islamic Emirate's General Directorate of Intelligence has arrested Ajmal Haqiqi, a YouTuber from Afghanistan, and three of his colleagues on charges of "insulting Islamic sacred values." Four of the young activists are handcuffed in a video released on the Islamic Emirate's intelligence agency's Twitter handle, with Ajmal Haqiqi confessing to "promoting indecency and lewdness, and insulting Quran verses." One of Haqiqi's colleagues, Gholam Sakhi, who was once addicted to drugs and claimed to have a "mental condition," recited verses from the Qur'an in a humorous voice in a video posted by Haqiqi's YouTube channel, where Sakhi sings and dances. Haqiqi laughs in that widely shared video as Sakhi mimics recitations in a humorous voice. Sakhi's conversational style is noted for being funny and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

amusing... No one is allowed to insult or ridicule the verses of the Qur'an, the Prophet's hadiths, or Islamic sanctities under the rule of the Islamic system," the Islamic Emirate intelligence agency wrote on Twitter. Those who have recently insulted and disrespected the Qur'an's holy verses; "They are arrested."

Gandhara, Taliban Accused of Forced Evictions As Fighting Intensifies In Northern Afghanistan, 7 June 2022

"The Taliban captured Baghlan and Panjshir in early September, weeks after toppling the Western-backed Afghan government and seizing power in Kabul. Since April, deadly clashes have erupted between resistance forces and the Taliban in both provinces. Last month, heavy clashes broke out in parts of Panjshir, a traditional hotbed of ethnic Tajik resistance to the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Residents alleged that some civilians accused of having links with the NRF were executed. Others were beaten and tortured in Taliban custody, they said."

"Meanwhile, locals told Radio Azadi that the Taliban detained more than 100 civilians in the Paryan district of Panjshir in the past week. Their whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, the Taliban said it had detained an unspecified number of people accused of having links with the NRF. Locals have also alleged that Taliban fighters have recently beheaded several NRF fighters who were captured, a claim the Taliban has rejected. The ongoing fighting has forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Panjshir."

DW, Taliban faces threats from 'Islamic State', UN Says, 3 June 2022

"On the security front, insurgent groups the National Resistance Front, and the newly established Afghan Freedom Front have stepped up their operations recently, staging attacks in multiple provinces. "Taliban forces may be hard pressed to counter several insurgencies simultaneously," the report's authors said. As a consequence, Taliban forces are taking a harsher approach to groups and communities they perceive as a threat."

Gandhara, Gandhara Briefing: Taliban Rift, Afghan Musicians, People Smuggling, 3 June 2022

"I write about the hundreds of Afghan musicians who have fled Taliban persecution to neighboring Pakistan, where they now face arrest and deportation. Since seizing power, the militant group has banned music and publicly beaten and humiliated musicians in Afghanistan."

The New Humanitarian, For this Afghan woman, taking the wheel is a protest, 19 April 2022

"When the Taliban seized power across Afghanistan last August, Aaila's first reaction was to stage an act of quiet protest. As Taliban fighters swept into Bamiyan, the ancient city in central Afghanistan, the 37-year-old got behind the wheel of her white Toyota and drove around town. "I wanted to tell the Taliban that I would continue to drive even if I am a woman," she recounted months later, still driving the same car. Aaila is a pseudonym requested to protect her and her family's safety. Aaila was one of the first women to drive a car in Bamiyan, and she intends to hold on to that right – no matter who is running the country."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"During the year antigovernment forces, including the Taliban, carried out numerous deadly attacks against religious leaders, particularly those who spoke out against the Taliban. Many progovernment Islamic scholars were killed in attacks for which no group claimed responsibility. On January 24, unidentified gunmen shot and killed Maulvi Abdul Raqeeb, a religious scholar, imam, and teacher. On March 3, Kabul University professor and religious scholar Faiz Mohammad Fayez was shot and killed on

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

his way to morning prayers. On March 31, the ulema council chief in northern Takhar Province, Maulvi Abdul Samad Mohammad, was killed in a bomb blast when an explosive attached to his vehicle detonated. [...] On July 22, the Taliban executed a popular comedian from Kandahar, Nazar Mohammad, after beating him, according to HRW. After a video of two men slapping and abusing him appeared in social media, the Taliban admitted that two of their fighters had killed him. A former police chief of Kandahar and a member of the High Council on the National Reconciliation on August 4 stated that the Taliban had killed as many as 900 individuals in Kandahar Province in the preceding six weeks. On August 24, Michelle Bachelet, UN high commissioner for human rights, stated during the 31st Special Session of the Human Rights Council that her office received credible reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses in many areas under effective Taliban control. [...] Following August 15, the Taliban used force against protesters and journalists and suppressed political discussion and dissent. Journalists reported a chilling effect on free speech and press in the country as a result of the Taliban's policies, particularly following media reports of torture of two local journalists covering women's protests after the Taliban takeover. The Taliban announced restrictive media regulations in September and additional guidelines in November, in line with the Taliban's strict interpretation of sharia. [...] The August Taliban takeover prompted numerous, small-scale protests by women demanding equal rights, participation in government, and access to education and employment. Taliban fighters suppressed several women's protests by force.

In the weeks immediately following the August 15 Taliban takeover, several peaceful protests were staged in cities throughout the country, primarily by women activists, without interference by the Taliban. Further protests were increasingly met with resistance and violence by the Taliban, however, and as of December the Taliban suppressed protests against the group and its policies.

On September 5, a march by dozens of women towards the presidential palace calling for the right to work was broken up by the Taliban with tear gas and pepper spray. In a similar incident three days later in Kabul, the Taliban reportedly used whips and batons to suppress a group of women demonstrating for equal rights. On September 8, the Taliban issued instructions banning unauthorized assemblies, motivating civil society, particularly women, to shift their efforts behind closed doors and to online platforms. The UN Human Rights Commission stated on September 10 that peaceful protests in many parts of the country were met with an increasingly violent response by the Taliban after their takeover. The Taliban frequently used force to suppress protests, including firing live ammunition overhead to disperse crowds."

ACLED, [Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 4th March 2022](#), 10 March 2022
"The Taliban also reportedly tortured residents in Khost province under detention after they raised the tricolor Afghanistan national flag, which has become a symbol of anti-Taliban protests since the group seized governance (Baghi TV, 1 March 2022)."

The Atlantic, [These Afghan Women are being Hunted by the Taliban](#), 10 March 2022

"On Monday, Talibs searched houses near hers, checking the identity cards of occupants against names in a computer database seized from the old Ministry of Defense. Fatima believed that her house would be next—surely one of her neighbors would have informed on her—and she fled with her documents to a friend's place. On Tuesday, Talibs entered Fatima's family's house without permission. They questioned her parents, who denied that Fatima had been a soldier; apparently the database left some uncertainty about her name. The Talibs rifled through the family's belongings, handling women's clothes and other possessions in a way that showed no respect, leaving the house in chaos. They confiscated Fatima's

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghan flag and threatened to come back. The Taliban searches are conducted with absolute power and casual brutality. Najibeh, who has two sons, 9 and 3, was hiding in a rented house when we spoke, while Talibs slept in a nearby mosque as they prepared to search the neighborhood. She described how they beat people with rifles and sticks, destroy any passports they find—part of the purpose is to keep unreliable Afghans from leaving the country—and loot money, gold, and jewelry. Noori sent me pictures of the bodies of several military women, murdered a few days ago and left on piles of rubble or trash in alleyways. One of them had been tied with rope by the wrists and legs. Another former soldier named Mahdieh, who is 22, fled her home to hide with relatives. When the Talibs came to her family's house, they took away her 10-year-old brother. That was a week ago, and he still hasn't been returned."

Gandhara, Afghan-Canadian Aid Worker Reappears after Weeks in Taliban Detention, 9 March 2022

"Nadima Noor, a female Afghan-Canadian aid worker who runs a humanitarian organization in Kabul, vanished last month. Noor's family in Canada, who spoke to eyewitnesses, said a group of Taliban fighters entered her office, forced her into a car, and whisked her away in broad daylight. For weeks, Noor's family had no idea where she was or why she was taken. Then on March 9, she was released from Taliban detention. No charges were brought against her. "She was forcefully picked up without any proof of wrongdoing and without any reason," her brother Dastaan Noor told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "Nadima was detained for 24 days without any legal representation," he added. "After an investigation was conducted, she was found innocent of any wrongdoing." Since the Taliban's return to power in August, dozens of rights activists, journalists, and academics have been arbitrarily detained or have disappeared. Some have been released. The whereabouts of others remain unclear. "She was very emotional and very upset about why she was held without any reason," said Dastaan Noor. "It's unfortunate that the citizens of Afghanistan -- be it women or men -- are still picked up without any reason, detained, and then released."

ANI, Another Afghan university professor goes missing who criticized Taliban, 6 March 2022

"An Afghan university professor and political analyst, Sayed Baqir Mohsini who had criticized the Taliban has gone missing since Friday afternoon. According to Mohsini's family, he and a relative were on their way to participate in a TV program in the capital city of Kabul on Friday afternoon when they disappeared, reported Tolo News. His relatives said that they have contacted several security departments but have yet to get a response."

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4

The Taliban suppress demonstrations and use violence to disperse them when they do occur. Unapproved protests are banned. Female protesters have resorted to live-streaming small-scale indoor demonstrations since the Taliban assumed power.

In a September 2021 briefing, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that the Taliban used whips, batons, and live ammunition to disperse protesters. On September 7, two protesters were killed by Taliban in Herat, while Taliban physically attacked female protesters holding an event in Kabul that same day.

Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the Taliban have violently dispersed protests since taking power.

[...]

Perceived opponents were excluded from state employment and humanitarian assistance."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Ariana News, Eight polio workers killed in north Afghanistan, 24 February 2022

"Eight polio workers were killed in four separate attacks in Afghanistan's northern provinces of Kunduz and Takhar on Thursday, a UN official has said.

In Kunduz, four members of house-to-house polio teams were killed in provincial capital, and two vaccinators and a social mobiliser were killed in its Imam Sahib district. One member of the vaccination team was killed in Taloqan district of Takhar province.

These are the first attacks on polio workers since nationwide campaigns resumed in November last year. "We are appalled by the brutality of these killings, across four separate locations. This is not the first time health workers have come under attack. We witnessed the killings of nine innocent polio workers during national polio vaccination campaigns in 2021," UN Deputy Secretary-General Ramiz Alakbarov said on Twitter.

"This senseless violence must stop immediately, and those responsible must be investigated and brought to justice. This is a violation of international humanitarian law," he said."

Tolo News, Family claims former MoD officer detained by Islamic Emirate, 14 February 2022

"A family in Kabul claims that their son, who was a former officer of the Ministry of Defense, has been detained by the forces of the Islamic Emirate. According to Javad Jafari's family, two nights ago some individuals claiming to be members of the Islamic Emirate, entered their house at 8 pm without a court order and forcibly arrested him and took him to an unknown location. "They drew guns on us, they did not ask anyone, they just said 'we are from the Islamic Emirate.' They beat Javad and dragged him out of the house," said Feriba, Javad's wife. "We are very scared, we ask the Islamic Emirate to free my father safe and alive," said Ali Sajad, Javad's son."

AVA Press, Gunmen raid university professor's house in Kabul, beat his wife and daughter, 13 February 2022

"[...] a university professor in , said armed attackers pretending to be the ruling government forces invaded his house and beat his wife and daughter.

"He wrote on his page Saturday night that a group of gunmen with "Taliban-issued " entered his home for inspection, beating his family members. "I experienced a sad and humiliating incident today," Nikouei wrote. My wife and daughter were severely beaten, my and that of my family are in the worst condition. My was severely injured."

"He criticized the continuing unrest in Kabul, adding that there is no order in the city and no one is accountable. "It's as if we're stuck in the middle of nowhere among predatory wolves," he added. "The citizens may be torn apart, looted, and removed. This is the fate of an Afghan man who is doomed to live."

"Mr. Nikouei emphasized that he was not in contact with any and that it was his and his wife's duty to educate.

"The Ministry of Interior has not yet responded to the ruling government.

"With the fall of the previous government, there have been numerous reports of entering homes. The authorities promised to prevent such incidents, but so far, this commitment has not been fulfilled."

Bangkok Post, Afghan Women Defy Taliban, 9 February 2022

"[...] Heather Barr of Human Rights Watch [...] 'There are a lot of very experienced women activists who have been working in Afghanistan for many years... but almost all of them left after August 15.'

'(The Taliban) don't tolerate dissent. They have beaten other protesters, they have beaten journalists who cover the protests, very brutally. They've gone and looked for protesters and protest organisers

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

afterwards,' she adds. Barr believes it is 'almost certain' those involved with this new resistance will experience harm."

Humanitarian Response (Afghanistan) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and technical assistance achievements in the field of human rights - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 February 2022

"Civil society actors, including human rights defenders, journalists and media workers, as well as staff of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, continue to be increasingly targeted and face threats, intimidation and harassment. Several media outlets have stopped their operations due to lack of funds, fear of repercussions and lack of access to information from the de facto authorities. Human rights defenders and media workers remain concerned about the political and security situation and keep low profiles, mostly exercising self-censorship."

United Nations Human Rights (Office of the High Commissioner), Press briefing notes on Afghanistan, 8 February 2022

"Nearly three weeks after their disappearance, there is still no news about the whereabouts and well-being of four women activists and their relatives who were detained or abducted in Kabul in connection with the recent women's rights protests. [...] We are gravely concerned for the safety of the disappeared women and their family members. We continue to press the de facto authorities for information on these cases, and for an effective, transparent investigation. We stress the need to ensure their physical and mental integrity and call for their immediate release [...]"

Insider, The Taliban faces questions about missing women activists as they seek access to \$9 billion in frozen assets, 26 January 2022

"On January 16, a cluster of Afghan women marched near Kabul University to demand the right to return to work and continue their education. Images of the protest were widely publicized, and footage shows Taliban fighters pointing their firearms at the women and calling them "puppets of the West." Three days later, one of the attendees, a 25-year-old journalist and YouTuber named Tamana Zaryab Paryani, put out a frantic video saying the Taliban were at the door of the apartment she shared with her three sisters. "Help! Please, the Taliban have come to my house, my sisters are at home," Paryani said in the recording, which was posted on Aamaj News. The four Paryani sisters – including the youngest, who is just 13 – have not been heard from since. Another woman who attended the march, Parwana Ibrahimkhel, is also missing."

Feminist Newswire, Afghan Women Risk Lives to Protest Taliban Brutality and Harsh Restrictions, 24 January 2022

"Taliban forces pepper sprayed a group of women's rights protesters in Kabul—one of many violent acts waged against Afghans since the collapse of the government in August 2021. [...] In response to the desperate state of affairs in the region, Afghan women activists gathered in front of Kabul University on Sunday, Jan. 16 demanding the right to work and receive an education. The demonstrators also decried the fatal shooting of Zainab Abdullahi at a Taliban checkpoint and the disappearance of Herat women's prison manager Alia Azizi—both of whom are Hazaras, a minority ethnic group that has been targeted by the Taliban—as well as the alleged torturing of women protesters in Mazar-e-Sharif, the fourth largest city in Afghanistan. The protesters chanted "equality and justice" and carried banners that read "women's

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

rights, human rights.” The protest was soon ended by the Taliban fighters who harassed and ultimately pepper sprayed the women protesters.”

Khaama Press, We have rights to suppress dissidents and imprison protestors, 23 January 2022

“Deputy Minister of Culture and Information and spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Zabiullah Mujahid said that the Taliban have the right to suppress the dissidents of the system and arrest protestors. Speaking with AFP, Zabiullah Mujahid said protestors and dissidents trigger chaos and that no one has the right to intrude on the tranquility of cities. It comes after two women activists-Tamana Zaryab Paryani and Parwana Ibrahimkhel-were reportedly detained but the Taliban have denied the women being arrested. UNAMA has expressed concern over the disappearance of the women and has asked the Taliban to disclose the whereabouts of the women. On Sunday, January 23, 2022, a number of women took to the streets in the provincial capital of the northern Balkh province and protested against the detention of women activists across Afghanistan. The protestors said that the Taliban have imposed a “difficult situation” on Afghan women that have laid off thousands of women in the country.”

The Guardian, Taliban arrest Afghan women’s rights activist, 20 January 2022

“Taliban gunmen have raided the homes of women’s rights activists in Kabul, beating and arresting female campaigners in a string of actions apparently triggered by recent demonstrations. Tamana Zaryabi Paryani and Parawana Ibrahimkhel, who participated in a series of protests held in Kabul over the last few months, were seized on Wednesday night by armed men claiming to be from the Taliban intelligence department. [...] The spokesman for the Taliban-appointed police in Kabul, Gen Mobin Khan, tweeted that Paryani’s social video post was a manufactured drama. A spokesman for the Taliban intelligence, Khalid Hamraz, would neither confirm nor deny the arrest. He tweeted that “insulting the religious and national values of the Afghan people is not tolerated any more”, a reference to Sunday’s rally during which the protesters appeared to burn a white burqa, the head-to-toe garment that only leaves a mesh opening for the eyes. Hamraz accused rights activists of maligning Afghanistan’s new Taliban rulers and their security forces to gain asylum in the west. Similar raids were reported across homes of female protesters in Kabul. [...] Since sweeping to power in mid-August, the Taliban have imposed widespread restrictions, many of them against women. They have been banned from many jobs outside the health and education field, their access to education has been restricted beyond sixth grade and they have been ordered to wear the hijab. The Taliban have, however, stopped short of imposing the burqa, which was compulsory when they ruled Afghanistan in the 1990s.”

Human Rights Watch, Taliban use harsh tactics to crush women’s rights protest, 18 January 2022

“The Taliban’s violent crackdown on a women’s rights demonstration in Kabul last weekend marks an alarming and unlawful escalation of efforts to suppress peaceful protest and free speech in Afghanistan. Armed Taliban members were already present when women gathered at a planned meeting place on January 16, reinforcing organizers’ fears that the authorities had infiltrated their communications. Some fled when they saw the Taliban, but about 25 women started marching to Kabul University as planned. Taliban members pointed firearms at the marchers, threatening and insulting them, calling them “puppets of the West” and “whores.” One protester said Taliban members also assaulted bystanders filming the protest and took their phones, which an AFP reporter confirmed.

As the protesters reached Kabul University, a larger Taliban group was waiting in pickup trucks and surrounded the women. Two protesters told Human Rights Watch that Taliban members used an electric device to shock one of them and other protesters. As the protesters tried to escape the Taliban

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

encirclement, they were sprayed with a chemical substance such as pepper spray that caused severe irritation of their skin, eyes, and respiratory tract. A protester said she was still experiencing coughing and painful skin irritation 24 hours later. She said Taliban members hit her and physically assaulted other protesters. They followed some of the protesters as they began to make their way home.”

Individuals (formerly) affiliated with the Afghan government or international governments

Ariananews, Afghanistan an independent nation, no longer influenced by another country: Muttaqi, 31 August 2022

“Afghanistan is now an independent and sovereign government, a government that has complete control over its borders and territory and does not allow anyone to direct threats against the country; sending diplomats from India to Afghanistan, accepting our diplomats at the Afghan embassy in New Delhi and the start of issuing visas to Afghans, as well as the start of business relations, is a great development in our interactions. We want to strengthen and develop relations with India, diplomatic places are a good bridge between us and the Indian authorities.” [Quote by Muttaqi]

BBC News, Afghan contractors: 'I wish I'd never worked for the UK government', 16 August 2022

“He has previously been detained by the Taliban - and fears his work has put his family at risk too. ... Ammar is one of more than 100 teachers who worked with the British Council, in public-facing jobs, who have been left behind in Afghanistan. Many of them are women. ... While the group announced a general amnesty for everyone who worked for the previous regime and its allies, there is mounting evidence of reprisal killings. The UN has documented 160 cases. Nooria has been in hiding since the Taliban seized power in August last year. ... Some of the teachers are from the Hazara ethnic minority, who have been persecuted by the Taliban, and have repeatedly been attacked by Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), the regional affiliate of the Islamic State group. There have been three explosions in Hazara-dominated areas of Kabul in just the past 10 days. But the path to safety is even more uncertain for those who worked with the UK government in some other roles. Jaffer worked as a senior adviser facilitating the implementation of UK government-backed development projects in Afghanistan. Even prior to 2021, Jaffer had received threats from the Taliban, during a wave of killings carried out by the group that targeted prominent Afghan civil society members. He showed us one of the notes he received, which accused him of being a spy for foreign governments and threatened that he would be killed for his “betrayal of the Islamic faith”. Since August last year, Jaffer has moved location seven times.”

Byline Times, ‘They Can’t Survive Inside Afghanistan’: The Vulnerable People Still Stuck Under Taliban Rule One Year On, 15 August 2022

“[C]ampaigners warn that, 365 days since the US and UK were forced to evacuate from the troubled country, vulnerable women, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBTIQ people – as well as those who worked with British forces since 2001 – remain in Afghanistan and at risk of serious harm from Taliban reprisals. “There are almost no safe routes out of Afghanistan for vulnerable people,” Rosie Shaw, co-founder of the Azadi charity that assists at-risk Afghans to evacuate and resettle, said. “The Government announced last August that it would launch the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, under significant pressure and media attention, and a year on the pathway to resettlement for vulnerable people is not open and it’s not clear when it is going to open.”” “After the first year, pathway three will open to wider categories of vulnerable people to apply – such as women and LGBTIQ people. The FCDO guidance is clear

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

that “if you are not a British Council contractor, GardaWorld contractor or Chevening alumnus, you will not be eligible for pathway three in year one”. “Right now, the Azadi charity is in contact with an all-female family – a widow and her adult daughters. Under Taliban rule, it is difficult for the women to leave their house to access even the most basic essentials. Women are expected to have a male guardian with them. “They’re a classic case of a family who would be eligible to come to the UK under the ACRS,” Rosie Shaw said. “All of them were involved in women’s rights activism, they are all well-known in their community. But, 12 months later, they are not even in line for processing, they don’t know when they will be able to apply to come to the UK, or how they can be referred to the scheme. It’s hopeless. While there has been some attention on high-profile vulnerable women – such as former MPs, judges and lawyers – both Shaw and Zehra Zehadi, co-founder of Action for Afghanistan, are keen to emphasise that ‘ordinary’ women are also struggling. “Of course there is one category of risk,” Shaw told Byline Times. “People who are military targets, for example. But you’ve also got incredibly vulnerable, widowed women, single women, women who don’t have male family members, who can’t go outside safely. They can’t travel anywhere. They can’t get jobs, they’ve been told that they can’t go back to work. And so they have no way they can exist. They can’t survive inside Afghanistan.”

The Guardian, ‘I will continue killing foreigners’: soldier who shot dead unarmed Australians treated as ‘returning hero’ by Taliban, 7 August 2022

“Hekmatullah, the rogue Afghan soldier who killed three unarmed Australian diggers in Afghanistan a decade ago, is living in a luxury home in the capital Kabul, treated as a “returning hero” by the Taliban who released him from prison. He has said he does not regret killing Australian soldiers, and has vowed he would again kill Australians, or anyone who opposes the Taliban. “If I am released I will continue killing foreigners,” Hekmatullah told an official of the former Afghan government when his release was being negotiated.

“I will continue killing Australians and I will kill you as well because you are a puppet of foreigners,” he said. “I am among my brothers, we will be free, Afghanistan will be free. We will kill you. Since returning to Afghanistan, Hekmatullah has reportedly been housed in the former diplomatic quarter of Wazir Akbar Khan. He lives in a heavily secured property in a district adjacent to the clandestine former home of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the former al-Qaida leader assassinated eight days ago by a US drone strike as he stood on the balcony of his villa.”

Finish Immigration Service (published by European Union Agency for Asylum), Afghanistan / The situation of former Fatemiyoun fighters under the de facto Taliban regime, 4 August 2022

“Iran Wire -uutissivuston tekemän selvityksen mukaan Taliban-liike on pidättänyt, vanginnut ja kiduttanut entisiä Afganistanin turvallisuusjoukkojen sotilaita syytettynä Fatemiyoun-joukkojen jäsenyydestä. Iran Wire tulkitsee toimien olevan laajemmin osa Talibanin hazaraväestönsaan kohdistamaa väkivaltaa.”

Google Translate: “According to an investigation by the Iran Wire news website, the Taliban movement has arrested, imprisoned and tortured former soldiers of the Afghan security forces accused of being members of the Fatemiyoun forces. Iran Wire interprets the actions as part of a wider violence directed at the Hazara population by the Taliban.”

“Independent Persian -uutissivuston mukaan Taliban-liike on keväällä 2022 alkanut aiempaa aktiivisemmin pidättämään Afganistaniin palanneita entisiä Fatemiyoun-joukkojen taistelijoita. Independent Persian -uutissivuston mukaan Taliban-liike esimerkiksi pidätti keväällä 2022 Heratissa Fatemiyoun-joukkojen entisen jäsenen Ramazan Mohammadin. Samassa yhteydessä pidätettiin muitakin Iraniin sidoksissa olevia henkilöitä. Uutissivuston mukaan heitä on kidutettu vankeuden aikana.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Google Translate: "According to the Independent Persian news site, in the spring of 2022, the Taliban movement has begun to arrest former fighters of the Fatemiyoun forces who have returned to Afghanistan more actively than before. According to the Independent Persian news website, for example, in the spring of 2022, the Taliban arrested Ramazan Mohammad, a former member of the Fatemiyoun forces, in Herat. In the same connection, other persons connected to Iran were also arrested. According to the news website, they have been tortured during their imprisonment."

"Afganistanissa toimiva ISIS-järjestön haara ISKP on Taliban-liikkeen valtaannousun jälkeen jatkanut shiioja ja hazaroita vastaan kohdistettuja terrori-iskuja. Iskuja on suunnattu yleisesti hazaroiden ja shiiojen suosimiin kokoontumispaikkoihin."

Google Translate: "ISKP, a branch of the ISIS organization operating in Afghanistan, has continued terrorist attacks against Shiites and Hazaras after the Taliban movement came to power. The attacks have generally been aimed at popular gathering places of Hazaras and Shiites."

The Guardian, Foreign Office admits multiple errors in UK's exit from Afghanistan, 29 July 2022

"The UK Foreign Office has admitted a catalogue of errors over its handling of Britain's exit from Afghanistan, but has shut the door on many Afghans who helped the UK prior to the Taliban takeover last August, saying it will not provide false hope that they will be given the chance to come to the UK."

"Officials said the slow progress in processing cases this year had been caused by the high number of rejected applications, as well as legal cases challenging UK refusals to provide a right of abode. So far, only 5,000 Afghans have been given permission to come to the UK, in addition to the 15,000 evacuated at the time of the fall of Kabul last year."

The Guardian, Talibans presiding over extensive rights abuses in Afghanistan, says UN, 21 July 2022

"Taliban authorities have presided over widespread human rights abuses since they took control of Afghanistan last August, the UN said, including 160 killings of former government officials and members of the security forces, and dozens of cases of torture, arbitrary arrests and inhumane punishments. A UN report, released on the day an Australian journalist said she had been detained in Kabul and forced to tweet a retraction of her reporting, also detailed a broad assault on the press. In total 173 media workers were affected by abuses including detention, threats, ill-treatment and assault."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Erosion Of Women's Rights, Extrajudicial Killings Plague Taliban Rule, UN Says, 20 July 2022

"Girls have been banned from school beyond the sixth grade in most of Afghanistan. In March, the Taliban ordered girls' high schools closed on the morning they were scheduled to open."

"The report also voiced concern over the Taliban authorities' carrying out human rights violations with impunity, especially extrajudicial killings of individuals accused of affiliation with armed groups, but also cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishments, and excessive use of force by Taliban officials.

The report documented a total of 237 extrajudicial killings -- most of them, 160, targeting former members of the Afghan military and government. Suspected Islamic State militants and members of the armed opposition group identified as the National Resistance Front have also fallen victim to extrajudicial killings, the report said."

The Guardian, 'You called us brothers': Afghans who fought with Australian troops still live in fear of the Taliban, 9 July 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Afghan soldiers who fought alongside Australian troops say they live in constant terror, and have been abandoned by the countries they served.

"We fought on the same battlefield together, against the same enemy. You called us brothers," one former soldier told the Guardian from hiding. "But now you leave us in this hell. Our lives are hell and we are left alone. We trusted each other; we never thought this would happen."

The Guardian has spoken to a number of former soldiers who are being hunted by the Taliban, and to Australian volunteers who are trying to get them to safety.

One former commando, Abbas – a pseudonym to protect him and his family – spent 11 years fighting alongside international forces, including Australian troops in Uruzgan province.

"[...] Every day we despair. We have no food to eat, and we know they, the Taliban, are coming for us."

[...] Since the fall of Kabul, Abbas has had to flee over the border to Iran, where he ekes out a living working 12-hour shifts in a factory. He says he is exploited – underpaid, abused and beaten – because he is in the country without documents, and has no rights, no option to go home, and no one to whom he can complain.

For months Abbas's wife and three-year-old child remained trapped inside Afghanistan. He says his family went hungry regularly, and the Taliban swept his village, looking for anyone with links to the former government or military.

"The Taliban did not adhere to the amnesty they had announced, they are looking for ex-military forces to torture them every day, and they enjoy torturing them very much, and then they kill them."

In recent days, Abbas's family has made it across the border. But their future is precarious, and they may still be forced back. Abbas says Afghanistan's ethnic and religious minorities – for generations targets for Taliban persecution – are more vulnerable than ever.

"The circle is getting tighter day by day for the people of Hazara. They are forcibly evicted from their homes, their cars confiscated, and they are driven away from their homes. In the province of Bamyan, where most of the Hazara people live, young Hazara girls are being tortured and raped every day."

[...]

"Karim, also a pseudonym, is another former Afghan National Army soldier who served alongside US and Australian forces over more than a decade. He is in hiding in an Afghan city with his young child and pregnant wife.

He doesn't know if it will be safe for them to go to hospital when it is time for his second child to be born.

"We try to appear fine, but in reality we are broken. The news you hear about Afghanistan is true but in reality it is even harder. Everything here, day by day, is hopeless.

"To continue our life we need to leave Afghanistan. Please help us."

Karim remembers his time in the military fondly. He believed in the mission: he was building a better country for his family.

"Our job was to destroy, arrest or kill the terrorists groups. I participated in many of these missions in the insecure provinces of Afghanistan. It was our hope [that] one day we have a country free of terrorists."

Now he has hidden the certificates of appreciation from coalition militaries that thank him for his "efforts towards establishing peace and security in Afghanistan". Some of the testaments are even more blunt, stating his role in missions to "disrupt, destroy and kill Taliban insurgents".

Once treasured mementos, they are now a potentially deadly possession. "If the Taliban find me with these, they will not waste a second: they will just kill me."

In the uncertain, hungry months since the fall of Kabul, the Taliban has been to Karim's family home looking for him. They dragged his brother outside, beat and tortured him, demanding information on Karim's whereabouts. Karim says each day is one closer to being discovered."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNAMA, Briefing by Acting Special Representative Ramiz Alakbarov to the Security Council, 23 June 2022

"The human rights situation in Afghanistan remains precarious. Despite the adoption of a general amnesty and repeated assurances by the de facto authorities that it is being respected, UNAMA continues to receive credible allegations of killings, ill-treatment and other violations targeting individuals associated with the former Government of Afghanistan. UNAMA also continues to receive credible allegations of violations committed by the de facto authorities against individuals accused of affiliation with the armed opposition and ISIL-KP."

Tolo News, Muttaqi: Kabul Committed to Security of Former Govt Officials, 21 June 2022

"Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting foreign minister, stated that the Islamic Emirate is committed to ensuring the security of former government officials and politicians who have returned to the country. On Monday, in a meeting with some of the figures who recently returned to the country, Muttaqi stressed that Afghanistan is the common home of all Afghans and he hopes all Afghans will return to the country. "Now is the time to leave everything aside, to forgive everyone and to fulfil what we have promised. We were told that if anyone returns to the country, first of all, pay attention to their safety," he said."

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan: Five UK citizens released by Taliban, 20 June 2022

"Friends and family of Peter Jouvenal, a journalist and businessman, said he was among those released. [...] The Taliban have released several British citizens who were detained in Afghanistan after an agreement was reached between the two countries, Taliban and UK officials have said. The detainees were released on Sunday following a series of meetings between Afghan and British officials, said Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Taliban government, in a statement on Monday."

BBC News, Afghanistan: UK embassy staff allege Taliban beatings and torture, 16 June 2022

"More than 100 men who worked at the British embassy in Afghanistan remain in the country, with some telling the BBC they have been beaten and tortured. The men worked for the global security company, GardaWorld, and many had been in post for more than a decade. Several shared photos of injuries they say were caused by the Taliban. The UK government says it has evacuated more than 15,000 people since last year and is working to bring more to the UK. A spreadsheet listing the names of more than 150 men who worked at the embassy and still live in the country has been seen and verified by BBC Two's Newsnight. One man, who cannot be named to protect his identity, said he was recently beaten by the Taliban because of his previous job as a guard at the embassy. "I was sitting outside when gunmen approached me, one of [them] attacked me," he said. "They said you were working for the British embassy. They started beating me and they threw me on the ground. They attacked me again and again. [...] Another former guard said a militant hit him over the head with the butt of a rifle. He says he was only released after the Taliban was convinced he no longer worked for the British. [...] One Afghan who came to the UK earlier this year under ARAP said many of his former colleagues from the embassy were being threatened on a daily basis. He is not being named to protect his family who remain in Afghanistan. "I feel like the British have been disloyal," he said. "They made a promise - these men worked hard for them and now their lives are at risk. "I can't sleep or eat without thinking of what they're going through. They message me constantly asking for help." [...] This week armed forces minister James Heappey told the Commons 9,500 Afghans have already been successfully relocated to the UK under the ARAP scheme. But he said thousands more still remained in Afghanistan. "We think we've got about the same to go in terms of the number of people who are eligible," he said. [...] The human rights charity, Azadi, works to support

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and evacuate targeted Afghans. Sarah Magill, the charity's director, said there had been no explanation why it had taken so long to begin the next process. [...] A UK government spokesperson said: "Our staff worked tirelessly to evacuate over 15,000 people to safety from Afghanistan within a fortnight in the biggest and fastest emergency in recent history. We are still working hard to assist the people of Afghanistan, having already helped over 4,600 individuals to leave the country since the end of the military evacuation. "We have opened the Afghanistan Citizen Resettlement Scheme, one of the most ambitious resettlement programmes in the world and the first bespoke scheme in Europe to begin resettling evacuees and individuals." GardaWorld added: "Since the closure of the British Embassy in Kabul, we have been working tirelessly with the UK government to ensure the maximum take-up for our Afghan staff on the UK resettlement schemes.""

UK Parliament, UK Government Home Office, Launch of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Pathways 2 and 3 Statement made on 13 June 2022, 13 June 2022

[Statement made by Kevin Foster, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration, Home Office, (Conservative) – Note under pathway 3, the Government states that it is “committed to considering eligible at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni”]

“I am pleased to announce to the House today the opening of the two remaining referral pathways to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. Last August, as the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated rapidly, this Government worked at great speed to evacuate more than 15,000 people from Afghanistan within a fortnight. This was the biggest mission of its kind in generations and the second largest evacuation carried out by any country and we are rightly proud of what we achieved. The evacuation included British nationals and their families, Afghans who had loyally served the UK, and other vulnerable people. Since the events of last August, we have continued to support those at risk with over 4,000 more people being brought to safety. In January 2022, the then Minister for Afghan Resettlement announced the launch of a new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), which will resettle up to 20,000 eligible people over the coming years. This is in addition to those who have been relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). There is no application process for the Scheme, instead eligible individuals will be referred for resettlement via three referral ‘pathways’. The first of these referral pathways offers a place on the ACRS for some of the individuals and families who were brought to safety in the UK under Op PITTING. We will honour our commitments to eligible people who were called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but who were unable to board flights. Today, I am pleased to announce the opening of the two remaining referral pathways onto the ACRS. Firstly, under pathway 2, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will refer for resettlement to the UK, refugees who have fled Afghanistan. UNHCR has the global mandate to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees. We are pleased to announce that we are now ready to begin receiving referrals. We anticipate receiving referrals from UNHCR for up to 2,000 refugees during the first year of this pathway, although this number will be kept under review. We will continue to receive UNHCR referrals to the scheme in coming years. Under pathway 3, we committed to considering eligible at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will refer up to 1,500 people from Afghanistan and the region to the Home Office for resettlement, including any eligible family members. The FCDO will launch an online system on Monday 20 June, where eligible individuals will be able to express interest in UK resettlement. Expressions of interest will be considered in the order they are received, although some groups will be prioritised because the role they performed or the project they worked on mean they are particularly at risk, or

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

because there are exceptionally compelling circumstances. Expressions of interest will be accepted until Monday 15 August 2022, when the online system will close. Guidance on the expression of interest process is available on gov.uk [from Monday 13 June]. Any offer of resettlement under the ACRS will be contingent on security screening, including checks against security and other databases, and provision of biometric information. In the interests of public safety, it is right that individuals who are found to have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, terrorism or other serious crimes will not be eligible for resettlement. Whilst we recognise the plight of many vulnerable individuals who remain in Afghanistan and the region, the capacity of the UK to resettle people under this scheme is not unlimited and difficult decisions have had to be made on who will be prioritised for resettlement. Nevertheless, we will continue to be committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan and after the first year of the third referral pathway, we will continue to work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk.”

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

“During my visit, I recognised the significance of the general amnesty granted to the former officials of the former Government and members of the security forces, as an important step towards reconciliation after so many decades of war. I am however concerned that the Human Rights Service of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to receive credible reports of arbitrary arrests and detention, ill-treatment and extra-judicial killings – particularly of persons associated with the former government and its institutions.”

AVA, Former religious affairs minister also returns home, 13 June 2022

“Former religious affairs minister Sediq Chakari and ex-police cooperative director Brig. Gen. Mohammad Anwar Kohistani have returned to Afghanistan. Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Monitoring, Ahmadullah Waqeeq, head of the Reconciliation Commission, wrote on his Twitter handle that as a result of the panel’s efforts Sediq Chakari returned to Afghanistan. “I feel like I have the entire world,” Waseeq quoted Chakari as saying upon his return to the country. The commission also wrote on its Twitter account that former police cooperative head Brig. Gen. Mohammad Anwar Kohistani had come back to the country. On Sunday, Kohistan met Reconciliation Commission spokesman Anas Haqqani. He was warmly received by government officials.”

CFR, Exclusive: Ex-Taliban detainee secures release of American woman in Afghanistan, 11 June 2022

“An Afghan American freed in April after being detained by the Taliban used his connections to help secure the release this week of another American — a woman held in northern Afghanistan, Axios has learned. Why it matters: The State Department, which has yet to recognize the Taliban government, did not engage in negotiations to free 33-year-old Mahnaz Safi. Her U.S. family reached out to Safi Rauf, co-founder of Human First Coalition, after reading about his own months-long detention in Taliban custody and humanitarian work. Rauf, a former Afghan refugee and U.S. Navy reservist who helped evacuate thousands of at-risk Afghans during the fall of Kabul, arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York with Safi on Thursday morning after arranging her safe passage to Dubai. Between the lines: Nine months after the last American troops withdrew from Afghanistan, the government of Qatar acts as the formal diplomatic intermediary between Washington and the Taliban. Nonprofits like Human First have played an outsized role in organizing evacuations and distributing aid thanks to a level of institutional knowledge and legal flexibility most governments don't possess. But negotiating the release of foreign

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

detainees represents a different level of engagement. Behind the scenes: Safi, who was born in New Jersey to Afghan parents and grew up in Virginia, decided to travel to a village in Jowzjan Province, Afghanistan, in May. She said her goal was to distribute humanitarian aid in famine-stricken Afghanistan after raising about \$18,000 on GoFundMe — and also to explore her own roots in a homeland she had only known from afar. A self-described "risk-taker," Safi told Axios she ignored warnings from family and friends about how dangerous Afghanistan was for women — dismissing it as media alarmism. Three weeks into her stay, Safi was brought in for questioning by the local police, who were suspicious of why an American with thousands of dollars was living with people who were not her family."

AVA, India considers reopening diplomatic missions in Afghanistan, 8 June 2022

"The issue of India reopening its embassy in Kabul was discussed at meetings last week during JP Singh, the special envoy to Afghanistan's visit to Kabul. The Hindustan Times reported New Delhi is looking at the possibility of posting a very limited number of junior officials, mainly to oversee consular matters and the distribution of humanitarian aid. India pulled out all its officials from its embassy in Kabul after the former government collapsed in August last year. Some local Afghan staff are currently responsible for the upkeep of the mission."

Tolo News, Kabul Says Some Politicians Responded Positively to Return Offer, 1 June 2022

"The commission of "Return of and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures" said that some former government officials and politicians responded positively to the offer of the commission. A spokesman for the commission, Ahmadullah Wassiq, said that the Afghan politicians returning to the country can continue their political activities under the structure of the current Afghan government. "The contacts have made with some provincial governors and members of the parliament of the former government. I am optimistic that these people will talk with the media in this regard," said Ahmadullah Wassiq, a spokesman for the commission. He said that eight academic figures including medical doctors and experts returned back to Afghanistan on Monday. According to Wassiq, dozens of Afghan politicians and former officials have filled out forms to return to the country. "We seven people come together. Some of the academic figures came earlier. We are more than 200 people," said a returnee. Earlier, some politicians downplayed the establishment of the commission as symbolic. "The establishment of the Commission of the Return of and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures should have a specific roadmap to pave the way for the return of politicians and influential figures," said Sayed Haroon Hashimi, a political analyst. "They should try to assure the political figures," said Barna Salehi, a political analyst. The US special envoy for Afghanistan, Thomas West, recently kicked off a visit to the region and neighboring countries, where he has so far met several Afghan politicians, journalists and representatives of civil society. Based on some reports, West arrived in Tajikistan last Monday, where he is expected to meet Ahmad Massoud, the leader of the National Resistance Front."

The Guardian, Revealed: Afghan journalists facing death threats and beatings, despite UK pledge to save them, 28 May 2022

"A group of Afghan journalists who worked closely with the UK media for years have revealed how they face beatings, death threats and months in hiding, and accuse the government of reneging on a pledge to bring them to Britain. Having fought in vain for clearance to come to the UK since the return of Taliban rule last summer, the eight journalists are now taking legal action against the government. They have applied for a judicial review after waiting months for their applications to relocate to the UK to be processed. They report only receiving standard response emails from the Afghan Relocations and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Assistance Policy (Arap) programme. Members of the group told the Observer they had worked with British media, reporting on operations against the Taliban, programmes to rebuild Afghanistan's infrastructure, the rights of women and the fight against the drugs trade. They said that since the Taliban's takeover, they had received warnings that they were being targeted. [...] One of the group, Abas*, worked with the UK media over many years, and had hoped to come to the UK months ago. But nine months after the Taliban stormed back to power, he remains trapped and at serious risk. [...] Once, Abas was shot at while sitting in a garden. On another occasion, a car pulled up and men with covered faces got out and began to beat him. "They beat me around the head – my body was full of blood," he said. "I don't know how they didn't drag me in the car – I think others helped me." [...] He has also had messages threatening him for having worked with foreign media. "They said, 'we already have a decree to kill you'. I think I'm on the target list of those people and maybe one day they will find me." [...] "The Taliban and other extremists are openly talking against those who are affiliated to the UK media," he said. "They say we are spies. The Taliban have sent me warnings. That's why I tried many times to convince UK officials to help me relocate. The UK government promised that those who were affiliated with the UK media would be eligible. What happened that they forgot us and don't hear our voices?"

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The granting of the general amnesty to officials of the former Government and members of the security forces could be a first step towards reconciliation. The recently established Commission for the return of leading Afghan personalities may provide an opportunity for dialogue and potentially strengthen governance. However, the expert remains alarmed about reports of ongoing extrajudicial and revenge killings of former members of the security forces and officials and door-to-door searches. "I fear that these killings will only strengthen the atmosphere of animosity and hatred and make any reconciliation efforts challenging. I call on the de facto authorities to enforce the general amnesty and hold accountable after a trial in accordance with international standards those involved in the killing, disappearance, and mistreatment of former Government officials and members of the security forces".

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

"The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] noted that armed hostilities in many parts of the country had ceased and there was a consequent reduction in conflict-related casualties since the Taliban takeover. He said the recently established commission for the return of leading Afghan personalities may provide an opportunity for dialogue and potentially strengthen governance. While the granting of the general amnesty to officials of the former Government and members of the security forces could be a first step toward reconciliation, he remains alarmed about reports of ongoing extrajudicial and revenge killings of former members of the security forces and officials and door-to-door searches."

Ariana News, IEA approves working process to bring exiled Afghan politicians home, 17 May 2022

"Organization procedures for the commission tasked with getting Afghan politicians and former government officials living abroad to return home have been approved by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the commission is expected to start work soon. "In this commission, all faces,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

whether women or men, will be contacted, and everyone's return plan is ready for the patriotic figures to be returned," said Hassan Haqyar, a close ally of the IEA. But some political activists have raised questions about the future of any returning exiled Afghans. They have asked if the politicians for instance will be allowed to carry on with work as previously or whether they will have to give up politics and find another occupation. The same goes for former government employees. "We call on the Emirate, in order to implement the plan of this commission, to facilitate the work and activity of these figures again, and there must be a guarantee for everyone who returns, because everyone must see themselves in the mirror of the government," said Sayed Jawad Hussaine, political analyst. However, Iran, which hosts a number of former politicians has once again called for the establishment of an inclusive government in Afghanistan. Recently, Anas Haqqani, a member of the commission, said that about 50 former government officials have so far returned to Afghanistan and that efforts are underway to bring back other political figures. The meeting of the Commission for the Return of Politicians and Former Government Officials was meanwhile convened shortly after former President Hamid Karzai was ordered to not leave the country."

Tolo News, 'Nearly 50 Former Govt Officials Returned': Anas Haqqani, 13 May 2022

"Nearly 50 officials of the former government including some ministers have returned to the country, said a senior member of the Islamic Emirate, Anas Haqqani. However, he didn't name the individuals who have returned to the country. Earlier, the Islamic Emirate said it had established a commission for the "Return and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures." Haqqani, who is also a member of the commission, said the method of the commission's operation has yet to be finalized. "We have facilitated the grounds. Many officials who worked as ministers and deputy ministers during the former government, they returned," he said. This comes as members of the commission for the "Return and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures" in a meeting on Wednesday once again stressed the need to facilitate the return of the Afghan influential figures living abroad."

BBC News, Afghanistan: UK not delivering on Afghan pledge - ex-Army boss, 5 May 2022

"Gen McColl told BBC Two's Newsnight he believed "hundreds of Afghans who were eligible to come to the UK on the government's resettlement schemes are in hiding from the Taliban" over fears they would be killed for working with the British."

Tolo News, Congress Wants Answers Over Biometric Systems Left in Kabul, 4 May 2022 [last edited 5 May 2022]

"US Republican congress members are demanding answers from the Biden administration following a disclosure that biometric data abandoned by the United States during its hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan is being used by the Islamic Emirate to target American allies still stuck in the war-torn nation, a media report said. According to the report of the Washington Free Beacon, the congress members believe that the Islamic Emirate is using the data to target former security forces and local Afghan allies of US and NATO forces. However, the Ministry of Interior denied the report. Eight Republican members of the senate committee, led by Sen. Marsha Blackburn, are asking the State and Defense Departments to turn over information related to the evacuation of US troops in Afghanistan, the Washington Free Beacon said. "These systems, which were abandoned when the US military withdrew from Afghanistan, contained iris scans, fingerprints, photographs, occupational data, home addresses, and names of relatives," the senators wrote, according to a copy of the letter obtained exclusively by the Washington Free Beacon. "The Taliban is using this personal information to increase targeted killings, torture, and forced disappearances of Afghans who helped the United States." Earlier, the US Department of Defense

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

in a letter said military hardware worth \$7 billion was left behind by US troops. “The biometric system should not be provided to the neighboring countries or others. The government is responsible for maintaining the secret and important national data,” said Hekmatullah Hekmat, a military veteran. “This can cause risks for the Afghanistan security system even for their (Islamic Emirate) government because if some of the groups under their command stand against them they could use the data against the Taliban,” said Asadullah Nadim, a military veteran. The Interior Ministry confirmed it has access to the biometric devices but denied it is using the information to target the former military and civilian personnel. “We have denied this claim many times—that the Islamic Emirate targets or threatens the former security forces through this. We deny it,” said Abul Nafay Takor, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. Earlier, Human Rights Watch in a report claimed the biometric data left by the foreign troops put the lives of many Afghans at risk, but the current Afghan government denied it.”

Tolo News, Abdullah Abdullah Leaves Afghanistan, 1 May 2022

“Most of the former government officials have left Afghanistan for various reasons after the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. [...] Abdullah Abdullah, the former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, for the first time after the takeover the Islamic Emirate left the country on Saturday evening, but did not specify which country he was traveled to. [...] Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah are among Afghanistan's political figures who have remained in Afghanistan since the fall of the previous government, although there have been reports in recent months of their being under house arrest and banned from traveling. Meanwhile, analysts said that not imposing restrictions on the travel of politicians and former government figures could lead to greater trust and the internal legitimacy of the Islamic Emirate. “Lifting restrictions on the trips of politicians is very good because it could lead to a national reconciliation that we need,” said Tariq Farhadi, an international relations expert. Earlier, the current government cabinet has set up a special commission called the “Return and Communication Commission” to address the return of politicians and figures from the previous government. “The commission's task is to reach out to Afghan politicians living abroad and gain their trust so that they can return to Afghanistan and contribute to Afghanistan's political structure,” said Ahmad Munib Rasa, political analyst. Most of the former government officials have left Afghanistan for various reasons after the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. But new government officials have repeatedly asked former officials to return to the country.”

Ariana News, Haqqani calls on former officials to return home, assures them of their security, 25 April 2022

““We invite those who went abroad to return home. High-ranking officials of the former government can live here with dignity. The Islamic Emirate fully defends your honor, dignity and property,” said Haqqani. A number of political analysts have meanwhile said that the Islamic Emirate should create a proper mechanism for the return of skilled Afghans who left the country and that the general amnesty should be implemented properly across the country.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“After August 15, senior Taliban leadership announced a wide-ranging general amnesty that prohibited reprisals, including against officials and others associated with the preAugust 15 government, for actions before the Taliban takeover; however, credible reports were received of retaliatory acts, including extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances, both before and after this announcement. [...] After August 15, there were numerous reports of reprisal killings by Taliban fighters as they consolidated control

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of the country. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) received credible reports of more than 100 individuals associated with the previous administration and its security forces as being killed, tortured, or disappeared following the Taliban leadership's August announcement of a general amnesty. Taliban leaders denied these incidents reflected an official policy and claimed many were attributed to personal disputes. According to BBC news, Taliban fighters executed two senior police officials – Haji Mullah Achakzai, the security director of Badghis Province and Ghulam Sakhi Akbari, security director of Farah Province. A November report by HRW documented “the summary execution or enforced disappearance of 47 former members of the ANDSF – military personnel, police, intelligence service members, and paramilitary militia – those who had surrendered to or were apprehended by Taliban forces between August 15 and October 31, 2021.” Senior Taliban leaders declared a general amnesty and forbade reprisals, although reports persisted of local Taliban leaders engaging in such actions. [...] Thousands of those who worked for or supported the pre-August 15 government or foreign entities, as well as members of minority groups, sought to flee the country on or after August 15 due to fear of reprisals. Others left their homes to hide from Taliban conducting house-to-house searches for government officials. Unknown actors carried out numerous targeted killings of civilians, including religious leaders, journalists, and civil society advocates (see section 1.g.). [...] “There were reports throughout the country in July, August, and September of the Taliban conducting raids on homes and establishments and the detention of citizens as political reprisals, despite assurances from senior Taliban leaders beginning in August that nobody would be harmed and that they did not seek to take revenge. UNAMA documented 44 cases of temporary arrests, beatings, threats and intimidation between August 15 and December 31, 42 of which were attributed to the Taliban. In November a former senior security official reported the deputy chief of the National Directorate of Security in Bamiyan, a former district police chief, the security chief of a copper mine, a former district governor, and a community activist had all been arrested by the Taliban and that their status and location were unknown. [...] The Taliban detained government officials, individuals alleged to be spying for the pre-August 15 government, and individuals alleged to have associations with the pre-August 15 government. Amnesty: In August the Taliban announced a general amnesty for those who worked for or were associated with the pre-August 15 government and those who had fought against the Taliban, saying they had been pardoned. Nonetheless, there were numerous reported incidents of Taliban reprisal killings throughout the year [...] Likewise, numerous reports since August indicated that the Taliban entered homes and offices forcibly to search for political enemies and those who had supported the NATO and U.S. missions. On December 29, the Taliban's “interim minister for the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice” decreed all Taliban forces would not violate anyone's privacy, including unnecessary searches of phones, homes, and offices, and that any personnel who did would be punished. [...] On September 6, Taliban fighters in Panjshir reportedly detained and killed civilians as a part of their offensive to consolidate control over the province. Reports of abuses remained unverified due to a Taliban-imposed blackout on internet communications in the province. According to Amnesty International, on the same day, the Taliban conducted door-to-door searches in the village of Urmaz in Panjshir to identify persons suspected of working for the pre-August 15 government. Taliban fighters executed at least six civilian men, with eyewitnesses saying that most had previously served in the ANSDF, but none were taking part in hostilities at the time of the execution. [...] Human rights groups encouraged human rights defenders to delete or modify their online presence to minimize the risk that the Taliban would link them to the former regime or NATO forces. [...] Some individuals associated with the previous administration reported being detained and beaten following their visit to passport offices. [...] International NGOs reported in August and September that the Taliban conducted house-to-house searches for pre-August 15 government officials

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and others who worked for international and human rights organizations. [...] Investigations and reports by journalists and human rights organizations, however, continued to bring to light human rights abuses and atrocities, including allegations of summary executions of persons associated with the previous government, as well as extrajudicial killings of journalists and activists. Taliban authorities often denied that those abuses were taking place.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 1 April 2022, 6 April 2022

“Taliban forces arrested and severely beat the former governor of Nesay district in Badakhshan province; residents complain about consistent Taliban attacks and torture in the province [...]”

Amnesty International, There is a window of opportunity to negotiate for the rights of Afghan women, but it is rapidly closing, 1 April 2022

“According to reports, women who have a public profile routinely face threats, detentions, abductions and little protection in place. Women associated with the previous administration are among those who have been allegedly hunted down by the Taliban. Among those are Banu Negar, a former female police officer who was killed in Ghor Province in early September 2021, and Alia Azizi, the head of Herat Women’s Prison, who remains missing since 2 October 2021 after responding to a request by the Taliban to report for work.”

OHCHR, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet visits Kabul, Afghanistan, 11 March 2022

“[...] reports suggest that door-to-door searches are continuing and we have publicly documented extrajudicial killings of former officials. Attacks against these former officials, including judges, as well as human rights defenders and journalists, do continue. [...] Civil society activists and leaders, former government employees including judges and prosecutors, and journalists can play a critical role in building a new Afghanistan, and in ensuring justice for human rights violations and abuses – but only if they can continue their work without fear of arrest, harassment, threats and violence.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 4th March 2022, 10 March 2022

“Violence targeting civilians also continued in Afghanistan last week. During search operations, Taliban forces reportedly detained and tortured seven civilians in Baghlan province, a former security officer in Helmand province, and the relatives of another former soldier in Daykundi province. [...] In a separate development, engineers from the Ministry of Public Works and former judges held separate protests in Kabul demanding unpaid salaries last week. Demonstrating engineers also complain about the dismissal of large numbers of engineers since the Taliban came into power, while demonstrating former judges demand to be reinstated to their former positions. The Taliban dispersed the protest of former judges. This is the first time ACLED records a protest involving judges since August 2021.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

“The Taliban engaged in retaliatory violence after their campaign. Some 47 members of the deposed government’s security forces were either executed or disappeared between the middle of August and the end of October 2021 according to Human Rights Watch (HRW). In December, the United Nations claimed that over 100 people had been extrajudicially killed by the Taliban for their ties to the former government. [...]

While the Taliban offered amnesty for those who worked for the deposed government in August 2021,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

former military personnel, civilian employees, and perceived supporters were subjected to harassment and discrimination.”

TOLO News, Restrictions on Afghans Traveling Abroad Sparks Reactions, 28 February 2022

“Restrictions imposed by the Islamic Emirate on Afghan citizens traveling abroad have provoked strong reactions.

[...]

Najim formerly worked with NATO forces in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2012.

Najim and his family members, like thousands of Afghans, are officially allowed to travel to the United States, but he has been deeply concerned by the Islamic Emirate's recent decision to ban Afghan citizens from traveling abroad.

“Those who have legal documents should be allowed to travel. We who have the documents--we will not be allowed to go,” said Najim, a resident of Kabul.

[...]

The United States evacuated more than 120,000 people from Afghanistan during an airlift in August last year. But Washington estimates that more than 60,000 former US colleagues in Afghanistan who have applied for special immigration programs still remain in Afghanistan.

Allowing foreign nationals and Afghans who helped the international forces to leave was a commitment of the Islamic Emirate to the international community, and it is not clear how the international community will react to the halt of this process.”

TOLO News, Former Afghan Security Forces in Afghanistan Report Challenges, 28 February 2022

“On the one-celebrated Afghan Armed Forces Day on Monday, several former security force members of the previous republic government said they are struggling with severe economic challenges.

Afghan Armed Forces Day was previously celebrated annually across Afghanistan on Hot 9, (solar calendar), but the day has been ignored this year.

The former security forces urged the Islamic Emirate to assist them as they face a difficult situation.

Reza, 32, is one of thousands of Afghan soldiers who lost jobs and have faced economic challenges since the collapse of the republic government in August.

Reza served eight years for the former Afghan government.

“We have always feared how they would treat the former security and military forces of the previous government,” Reza told TOLONews.

He asked the Islamic Emirate-led government to use the knowledge of the former forces who have not fled the country. “I ask the Islamic Emirate to recruit professional people--they should be retained by the country,” said Reza.

The day of Armed Forces was celebrated in past years to honor the service and sacrifice of members of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

“The Islamic Emirate should hug the former security and defense forces including police and army soldiers,” said Abdul Wahed Taqat, military expert.

Afghanistan had about 352,000 security and defense forces, according to estimates, which broke up with the fall of the republic government.”

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatch: Taliban house-to-house searches raise privacy concerns, fear in those still trying to leave, 27 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Recently a letter from the Ministry of Interior Affairs to the Airports and Border Police Departments states that they must prevent exit from the country of anyone who worked for the foreign forces in Afghanistan. In particular, the letter states that based on the instructions of the Security Deputy Ministry the exit of those Afghans who worked for the NATO as well as the US forces shall be prevented and no exit shall be given to anyone of the above people.

The Letter is issued to the Border Police which includes a ban for the people to exit the country from air and land. No one is reported to be either evacuated and/or prevented from exiting Afghanistan due to the above letter by the Taliban but the letter has significantly spread fear amongst those who are wishing to leave the country.”

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan - Q&A (14 Feb. 2022), 14 February 2022

“Q: 1) Are there plans to carry out additional evacuation flights from Afghanistan in the near future? If so, how many potential passengers have you identified and how would you characterize them? 2) Many of those who were evacuated during the August airlift arrived in France alone or without all of their family members (spouses, children) because of the chaotic departure conditions. Will France show particular empathy when it studies their family reunification cases? A: 1 – Before the fall of Kabul, we evacuated all local Afghan employees who were working with France, along with their families. On August 15, we launched Operation Apagan, which – up until the attack on August 26 – enabled us to evacuate another 3,000 people, including more than 2,600 Afghans and 110 French citizens, who were able to take advantage of operations conducted with assistance from Qatar. In the course of these operations, we received many requests. We remain fully committed to organizing new operations as soon as possible in conjunction with the Qatari authorities, with whom we are working closely. The priority will have to be given to French, European and third-country nationals, as well as Afghan men and women who are at risk due to their ties with France or their work championing universal values.”

TOLO News, Family Claims Former MoD Officer Detained by Islamic Emirate, 14 February 2022

“A family in Kabul claims that their son, who was a former officer of the Ministry of Defense, has been detained by the forces of the Islamic Emirate. According to Javad Jafari's family, two nights ago some individuals claiming to be members of the Islamic Emirate, entered their house at 8 pm without a court order and forcibly arrested him and took him to an unknown location. “They drew guns on us, they did not ask anyone, they just said 'we are from the Islamic Emirate.' They beat Javad and dragged him out of the house,” said Feriba, Javad's wife.

“We are very scared, we ask the Islamic Emirate to free my father safe and alive,” said Ali Sajad, Javad's son.

Javad's family and residents of Kabul called on the security forces to abide by the amnesty decree of the supreme leader of the Islamic Emirate. “They were neither thieves nor kidnappers, no one but the Islamic Emirate,” said Ghulam Haidar, Javad's brother. “Arbitrary detentions are so disturbing that now people cannot sleep--even in their own homes--for fear,” said Khudadad, Javad's relatives. “Where is the general amnesty? We ask the Islamic Emirate--the general amnesty they announced--why do they not follow up?” said Mohammad Reza, a resident of Kabul. Meanwhile, the Kabul Police Command denied the arrest of the former government officer by the Islamic Emirate forces.”

AVA Press, Armed Men Arrest Former Security Officer in Kabul, 13 February 2022

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Jawad Jafari, a former national security officer in western , has been taken away by armed men who identified themselves as government forces, according to 's_family members.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

According to his family, the incident took place around 8 PM in the ##Dasht-e Barchi area on Friday night, February 11.

“Four gunmen entered our house and took away Jawad by force,” Jafari’s relatives said.

According to them, they have not heard of him since his abduction, adding that when they went to the security districts, the officials were unaware of his fate.

Meanwhile, the detention of former security forces is one of the serious concerns of the citizens of the country, and reports of the arrest and disappearance of former security forces are constantly circulating.”

AVA Press, Armed attack on former Afghan government deputy CE left two dead in Kabul, 12 February 2022

“Armed attack on the house of Deputy Chief Executive of the former Afghan government Engineer Muhammad Khan left two dead and one wounded in Kabul on Friday night.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_Security officials of the Afghan capital Kabul said that the attack was triggered by family issues and conflict inside the house and that no gunman has entered the house to carry out the attack.Spokesperson of the police headquarter said that among the people killed are his younger son and his security guard while the wounded are Muhammad Khan’s wife and his other security guard.Khalid Zadran said the security officials are on the scene and will investigate to further elaborate the incident.CE of the former national unity government in Afghanistan . _Abdullah _Abdullah condoned the incident and said that the was carried out in the personal privacy of a respected family in the country.”

UNAMA, Briefing by Special Representative Deborah Lyons to the UN Security Council, 26 January 2022

“On the other hand, here on the ground there is compelling evidence of an emerging environment of intimidation and a deterioration in respect for human rights. This suggests that the consolidation of government authority may be leading toward control of the population by fear, rather than by understanding and responding to its needs. Afghans now live with different—but no less real—fears than those they faced during decades of war. Despite announcements of general amnesties for those who worked for or defended the former Government, we continue to receive credible allegations of killings, enforced disappearances, and other violations that are not being addressed by the judiciary. In addition, we are seeing a growing number of detentions of political opponents, civil society representatives and those who voice dissent. We note as well the increasing contraction of media space, which is partly for economic reasons but also due to pressure from the de facto authorities to report in ways that are not critical of them. And I must stress to this Council that we remain extremely concerned about the fate of several women activists who were abducted from their homes and have disappeared. No Afghan should live in fear of a knock at their door in the night and no family should be left to wonder about whereabouts and fate of their loved ones. UNAMA is engaging with the de facto authorities on this and other incidents, urging them to investigate such cases, to provide clear information, and to hold perpetrators accountable. We will continue to do so. And I expect that our strong communications with the de facto authorities will lead to results in this area.”

Open Democracy, ‘I had no hope left’: Ex-NATO contractor forced to walk across Afghan border, 24 January 2022

“When the Taliban began door-to-door searches for NATO contractors, Moheeb was left with no choice but to attempt to flee the country on foot [...] Moheeb was supposed to be evacuated to Qatar and then await instructions from NATO representatives to see which country agreed to sponsor him. Some of his colleagues who got out earlier were taken to the US, Canada and Belgium. [...] Moheeb couldn’t secure

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

travel documents for his family since the former Afghan administration offices were shut down after the Taliban takeover. [...] He decided to await further instructions. But with increasing security threats and door-to-door searches for former US and NATO contractors, Moheeb was running out of time to make it out of the country. He moved his family from one relative's house to another while waiting for a response from NATO on the next evacuation. [...] In the last week of October, after Pakistan announced the reopening of the Torkhum border crossing and the issuing of 'free' online visas, Moheeb made his decision to cross. "I decided to take matters in my own hands and set out to cross the Torkhum border and move to Pakistan," he explains, taking a moment to express his anguish and adds, "How can they just ignore our emails after all these years? I kept hearing news of the Taliban searching and killing former US and NATO contractors. It felt like a betrayal." [...] Moheeb confirms that some of his colleagues made attempts to cross the border to Iran via Nimroz, however, many of them returned alleging violence. "The Iranian border police were deporting Afghans who managed to get across. It was clearly not an option for me as I had many witnesses confirm that the Iranian border force was using violence to disperse Afghan refugees," he explains. Left with just one option, Moheeb packed the minimum and took a minibus towards Torkhum. The border had been closed for civilians following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul with exceptions for medical emergencies. Witnesses confirm that thousands of Afghans thronged the border. Families including women and children were camping without access to food and water. When Moheeb arrived in a town closer to the border, the news of swelling crowds at the borders discouraged him from making the journey. But after making a final attempt to request an update on the evacuation, he hit the road. [...] Moheeb's family members haven't been able to get passports because they are worried if they apply, the Taliban will locate them and put their lives at risk. [...] "Although now I don't know how to get out of Pakistan. I've read in the news that the Pakistani authorities are deporting Afghan refugees. What will I do if NATO responds and the evacuation starts from Kabul?" He fears if he receives a response and has to go back to Afghanistan, the Taliban will get hold of him during evacuations. Moheeb concludes our conversation with the hope of hearing a response to his emails. "I hope the new year will bring with it some opportunity for Afghans at risk to start a new life. I request NATO to help us and our families."

The Guardian, 'Dishonourable': report says Afghans left behind 'at high risk of brutal reprisals' due to links with Australia, 21 January 2022

"Senate inquiry finds August evacuation 'heroic' but delay in getting people out earlier meant some local staff reportedly 'injured or killed by the Taliban'

Former Afghan interpreters and other colleagues left behind by the Australian government after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan now face a high risk of brutal reprisals, a Senate inquiry has found.

Australia's last-ditch evacuation mission – launched on 18 August days after Kabul fell to the Taliban – lifted 4,168 people out of the Afghan capital over the course of nine days. Those carried on the 32 Australian flights included 167 Australian citizens and 2,984 Afghans with approved visas.

Shortly after the report was tabled in parliament on Friday, the government announced it would provide at least 15,000 places for Afghan nationals through the humanitarian and family visa program over four years.

Alex Hawke, the immigration minister, said the increased allocation included 10,000 places for Afghan nationals within Australia's existing humanitarian program and at least 5,000 visas within the family stream. He said priority groups would include former locally engaged employees and their immediate families.[...] It said there were process-related delays in the lead-up to the evacuation and "a large number of individuals and their families remain in Afghanistan at high risk of brutal reprisals from the Taliban because of their association with Australia". [...] The report said there had been about 425 Afghan locally

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

engaged employees (LEE) with visas or applications in process, in Afghanistan at the time of the evacuation operation in August. While it was not known how many of these individuals managed to secure places in the Australian evacuation, the report said “a significant number of individuals” who had helped Australia were ultimately unable to secure a visa during the operation. “Tragically, there have now been reports that some LEE applicants have been injured or killed by the Taliban, with others currently in hiding due to their association with Australia.””

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)(Afghanistan), Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 8-14 January 2022, 20 January 2022

“The Taliban also continued to target former security and government workers last week. Two people were killed and several were held incommunicado following detention. The latest attacks come despite Taliban leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada recently demanding that members of the Taliban respect a general amnesty for former security and government workers (Hasht-e Subh, 30 December 2021).”

Amnesty International, Taliban authorities must reveal Alia Azizi’s whereabouts, 20 January 2022

“The Taliban authorities must urgently investigate the abduction of Alia Azizi, a senior female prison official who has been missing for more than three months after she reported for duty in Herat, and immediately and unconditionally release her if in their custody, Amnesty international said.

Alia Azizi, a member of the ethnic Hazara community and the Head of Herat Women’s Prison, never returned home after going to work on 2 October 2021. Despite several pleas by her family to the Taliban to investigate the case, a veil of secrecy still shrouds her disappearance.

“It’s been more than three months since Alia Azizi disappeared and her family still remains completely in the dark about her whereabouts. Her apparent abduction takes place within the context of the Taliban illegally detaining members of the former government, journalists, and assorted critics across the country,” said Zaman Sultani, Amnesty International’s South Asia Researcher.”

Khaama Press, Sarajudin Haqqani asks Taliban commanders not to seek revenge on previous officers - The Khaama Press News Agency, 19 January 2022

“Acting Minister of Interior Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Sarajudin Haqqani directed Taliban commanders in Kabul not to seek revenge on security officials of the previous Afghan government and obey the general amnesty announced by supreme leader Mullah Hebtullah Akhundzada.

Speaking at a capacity-building conference of commanders of Police Districts of Kabul Haqqani said that, anyone who seeks revenge spoils the current system which is not acceptable.

He added that he had met with leaders and officials of the previous government and was given assurance that no one will harm them until and unless they commit a crime.

“I direct you to investigate cases of prisoners, release them if they were imprisoned for no crime and felony. Incarcerate those who have put innocent people at jails.” Said Haqqani.

Sarajudin Haqqani- black listed by the US- told the head of the PDs to serve people as they are only hired to do so.

He added that their success has come from the homes and streets of the people of Afghanistan, thus they should not be misbehaved with.

Sarajudin Haqqani is not the only high-ranking official of the IEA reiterating the general amnesty to be obeyed.”

Khaama Press, Taliban commander arrested, hundreds took to street in Faryab province to demand his

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

release, 14 January 2022

"Hundreds of people in the northern Faryab province on Thursday, January 13, 2022, took to the streets and asked for the release of a prominent Taliban commander Makhdoom Alam who is arrested by the Ministry of Defense.

Makhdoom Alam was arrested in Balkh province.

Protestors in the provincial capital Maimana city of Faryab said that Makhdoom Alam-an Uzbek commander- is arrested on ethnic bases.

They warned of various demonstrations in the future in case the commander is not freed by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

IEA has not commented on the issue yet.

Makhdoom Alam was shadow provincial governor and head of the military commission of the IEA during the previous government."

Khaama, Taliban to investigate torture of former security personnel, 31 December 2021

"Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said they will investigate cases of former security personnel being kidnapped, tortured, and arrested by rank and file of IEA.

A spokesperson of the IEA Ahmadullah Wasil said that they are fully committed to the general amnesty announced by Supreme Leader Hebtullah Akhundzada and will not allow anyone to violate amnesty."

AVA Press, The Ambiguous Fate of Women in Afghanistan's Armed Forces, 28 December 2021

"Female soldiers in province say they have become destitute since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, adding that they are in precarious security and economic situation. They say security threats on the one hand and poverty on the other have made life difficult for them. Meanwhile, the Taliban's interior ministry says they are working on a method to clarify the fate of officers."

VOA, Former Afghan female soldier: 'I am so afraid' under Taliban, 31 December 2021

"Afghan women who served in the country's military are speaking out about how their life has changed under the Taliban.

"I feel like I am in prison," said Jamila, 28, a former Afghan military officer in the western city of Herat. "I have to be at home. I can't work or go out. I am so afraid."

More than 6,300 women served in the former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Now they face not only threats to their life as former members of the military but also the Taliban's imposed restrictions on their gender.

Human Rights Watch and the United Nations accused the Taliban in November of the summary killing of more than 100 former Afghan security officials despite the group's promise of general amnesty.

Jamila served for 10 years in the 207th Zafar (Victory) Corps of the Afghan National Army, headquartered in Herat province. She says she now hears news every day of someone else who was killed or disappeared.

"I fear that they (the Taliban) might find me and kill me," she said."

ABC News, Afghan Air Force pilots trapped in Afghanistan plead for evacuation, 18 December 2021

"Around 50 U.S.-trained former Afghan Air Force helicopter pilots are still trapped in Afghanistan and pleading for the United States government to evacuate them from the country, where they fear they face execution if found by the Taliban.

"The pilots belong mostly to two helicopter squadrons and have been in hiding since the Taliban seized Kabul in August. According to several of the pilots who spoke to ABC News, they are living on the run in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

safe houses and struggling to feed themselves while frantically trying to find a way out of Afghanistan as the Taliban continue to search for them.”

TOLO News, Violators of 'Amnesty Decree' Will Be Prosecuted: MoFA, 6 December 2021

“The reform commission of the Islamic Emirate said that the commission has not registered any cases of killings of former members of the security forces.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted to the report recently issued by Human Rights Watch, saying that any Islamic Emirate member “found breaching the amnesty decree will be prosecuted and penalized.”

The HRW in a report last week said that the Islamic Emirate's amnesty has not stopped “local commanders from summarily executing or disappearing former Afghan security force members.”

The report was followed with a joint statement by the governments of the United States, European Union, and 20 other countries, expressing their concerns over the findings of the HRW.

“Mujahidin are fully committed to implementing amnesty decree and employees of previous admin are not being persecuted for their former opposition,” said Abdul Qahar Balkhi, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry on Twitter.

The reform commission of the Islamic Emirate said that the commission has not registered any cases of killings of former members of the security forces.

“We haven’t received any complaints that the forces of the Islamic Emirate disturb or bother anyone who worked with the former administration,” said Lotfullah Hakimi, head of the commission. [...]

TOLOnews tried to obtain comments from the families of the former security forces who have lost their lives, but for various reasons they were not ready to respond.”

The Guardian, West condemns Taliban over ‘summary killings’ of ex-soldiers and police, 5 December 2021

“Human Rights Watch says 47 former members of Afghan national security forces have been killed or forcibly disappeared.

The US has led a group of western nations and allies in condemnation of the Taliban over the “summary killings” of former members of the Afghan security forces reported by rights groups, demanding quick investigations.

“We are deeply concerned by reports of summary killings and enforced disappearances of former members of the Afghan security forces as documented by Human Rights Watch and others,” read a statement by the US, EU, Australia, Britain, Japan and others, which was released by the state department on Saturday.”

Al Jazeera, US, EU and 20 nations condemn Taliban over ‘summary killings’, 5 December 2021

“The United States, the European Union and 20 other countries have condemned the Taliban over allegations of summary killings of former police and intelligence officers in Afghanistan.

The statement on Saturday came after Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report documenting the killing or disappearance of at least 47 members of the Afghan National Security Forces.

The countries said they were “deeply concerned” by the allegations and underlined that the “alleged actions constitute serious human rights abuses and contradict the Taliban’s announced amnesty” for former Afghan officials.

They called on the Taliban “to effectively enforce the amnesty for former members of the Afghan security forces and former Government officials to ensure that it is upheld across the country and throughout their ranks,” and urged prompt and transparent investigations into the reported killings [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

AVA Press, Kunduz Residents Complain of Assassinations and Kidnappings Amid Rising Poverty, 5 December 2021

"In the last few weeks, kidnappers have abducted a doctor and a former member of national security, according to local sources. Sources say that about a week ago, the body of a former national security officer was found in the district of the province, but the fate of the is still unknown."

AVA Press, More than 20 countries deeply concerned over extra-judicial killings by Taliban, 5 December 2021

"The countries in a joint statement said that the summary killings of the former men in uniform are clear abuses of human rights and in contradiction with the general amnesty announced by the [sic].

The countries include the United States of America, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, , the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine.

The world is expressing worry after Human Rights Watchdog released a report alleging the Taliban fighters of retaliatory killings and disappearance of military personnel of the previous Afghan government.

The joint statement called on the Taliban to fully enforce their general amnesty equally on common Afghan and former Afghan security forces and government officials.

"Reported cases must be investigated promptly and in a transparent manner, those responsible must be held accountable, and these steps must be clearly publicized as an immediate deterrent to further killings and disappearances." Reads the statement. Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has not commented on the allegations yet."

AVA Press, Taliban Must Be Accountable for the Targeted Killings of Civilians, 1 December 2021

"In the last week, several assassinations have been reported in different provinces. In the process, former government soldiers and civilian employees have been targeted and killed. For instance, unidentified gunmen attacked and killed Nasir Ahmad Wakilzada, the former regime's director of criminal investigations in the Ghor's Shahrak district. The incident took place on November 24. No individual or group claimed responsibility for his assassination.

On November 26, unidentified individuals attacked and killed a village elder in [sic]. The incident took place when he was walking towards the Khanqah of Charikar. He was previously a district representative but had no responsibility at the time of his death. The Taliban confirmed the incident, saying that the perpetrators would be identified and punished soon. [...]

Although the number of criminal incidents in the country has decreased compared to the past, on the contrary, targeted assassinations of former soldiers and civilians continue. Unfortunately, the Taliban have not reacted seriously to these events and have not responded to public opinion. In contrast, the Taliban prime minister implicitly legitimized the targeted assassinations of former government employees. He said the Taliban were committed to the principle of amnesty but were punishing those who acted against them."

HRW, "No Forgiveness for People Like You: Executions and Enforced Disappearances in Afghanistan under the Taliban", 30 November 2021

"The Taliban, through their intelligence operations and access to employment records that the former government left behind, have identified new targets for arrest and execution."

"The Taliban leadership has directed members of surrendering ANSF units to register with them to receive

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

a letter guaranteeing their safety. Under this amnesty program, individuals who have registered have been screened for ties to particular military, police, militia, and special forces units, or to commanders or former provincial authorities, in addition to being required to surrender weapons. However, the Taliban have used these screenings to detain and summarily execute or forcibly disappear individuals within days of their registration, leaving their bodies for their relatives or communities to find.”

“Many Afghans interviewed expressed fear that if they register with the Taliban to receive the amnesty letter, they might be identified or recognized and face violent retaliation. At the same time, the Taliban have also searched for and detained people who failed to register. Some former government and security force officials have relied on their personal connections to get letters from the Taliban via third persons. Others, including some former civil servants in key government posts, such as the judiciary, have been unaware that they could obtain this “forgiveness” letter and have faced punishments—including beatings and detention—for not having done so. Even if aware of the letters, many have not been sure how to obtain them where the Taliban have not announced specific registration centers.”

“Human Rights Watch, on November 7, provided its findings on executions and disappearances to Taliban officials and sought information about any investigations into these cases. The Taliban responded to say that all detentions and punishments follow a judicial process, and that no one is punished without a court [ruling]. They said individuals have been detained not for “past deeds, but [because] they are engaged in new criminal activities... [and] create problems and plots against the new administration, [and] keep contacts with notorious individuals who fled the country.... It is not our policy to kill someone without trial, whether he is from ISIS or from another group.” Their full response, including some additional details on the investigation commission, is included as an appendix to this report.”

HRW, “Afghanistan: Taliban Kill, ‘Disappear’ Ex-Officials”, 30 November 2021

“Taliban forces in Afghanistan have summarily executed or forcibly disappeared more than 100 former police and intelligence officers in just four provinces since taking over the country on August 15, 2021, despite a proclaimed amnesty, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today.

The 25-page report, “‘No Forgiveness for People Like You,’ Executions and Enforced Disappearances in Afghanistan under the Taliban,” documents the killing or disappearance of 47 former members of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) – military personnel, police, intelligence service members, and militia – who had surrendered to or were apprehended by Taliban forces between August 15 and October 31. Human Rights Watch gathered credible information on more than 100 killings from Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, and Kunduz provinces alone.”

The Guardian, ‘We will start again’: Afghan female MPs fight on from parliament in exile, Nov 27, 2021

“Until recently, these women made up more than 40% of Afghanistan’s female MPs. Now they are confronted with an unrecognisable alphabet and an uncertain future. (...)

“[Since August], the Taliban have killed schoolgirls, policewomen and women in government. The family members are too afraid to speak up,” says Fawzia Hamidi, 48, a lawmaker from northern Balkh province. Formerly a prosecutor for cases of violence against women, Hamidi describes recent murders in the region as the tip of the iceberg.”

AVA Press, Numerous Taliban Members Jailed and Dismissed, 14 November 2021

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The Taliban interim government has reported that the Filtration Commission has dismissed more than 400 security forces from their duties and jailed many of them.

“The Filtration Commission has removed more than 400 Taliban members over the past few days,” Saeed

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Khosty, the Interior Ministry spokesman.

According to him, these Taliban members have been dismissed due to accusations of abuse and people by the name of the Taliban.

“Many of them in addition to removal, have been jailed as well,” said.

Previously, the Taliban Prime Minister Mullah Hibatullah had said that some agencies and people wanted to disgrace them.

Therefore, the Taliban cabinet decided to establish the in order to identify the among Taliban members.”

AVA Press, Pull Afghanistan Back from the Precipice, 14 November 2021

“Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_In recent days, several cases of assassination of e-soldiers published in the media. Pictures released last week show a Taliban commander shooting a member of the public uprising forces in . It later turned out that the same soldier had killed the son of the Taliban commander during the previous government. The young man had just been deported from Iran and wanted to return to his family.

On November 9, another assassination attempt took place in Takhar. Taliban militants had shot dead two former members of the border guards, Shoaib Aryaei and Sohrab Haqqani. The two men were trying to take advantage of the Taliban’s amnesty at the Shing Saqaw village in district when they were ambushed by local Taliban forces and killed.

Another case of harassment of former soldiers took place on Friday. Unidentified assailants assassinated two former female officers in the first district of on Friday night. Furthermore, on Friday evening, an army sergeant named Shayq Sanjani, former police chief of Bagram district was killed in the 1st part of Kapisa’s Kohistan district. According to relatives, he served in the 111th Army Brigade. forces shot Sanjani after arresting him from his home.

The Taliban’s general amnesty has so far been meaningless. Senior Taliban officials have said they have nothing to do with the former military shortly after taking control of Kabul. These soldiers are now being systematically assassinated every day. The Taliban-led government has not commented on why the soldiers were killed. There have been many cases of assassinations that have not been reported in the media. Some sources have sent a list of 43 former soldiers who have been killed or abducted by unknown individuals in recent days in . In the meantime, even children have been mentioned.”

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatches: Taliban justice minister sets strict criteria for eligibility to work at ministry as purge continues, 14 November 2021

“The Taliban’s acting Minister of Justice Abdul Hakim Ishaqzai in Afghanistan has established criteria for being hired as directors within the ministry—individuals who have a preexisting relationship with the Taliban or whose views are in line with those of the Taliban, individuals who have Jihad experience and individuals who did not work for the former government.

According to local media, Ishaqzai has branded some of the employees who have worked for non-Muslims “not” Muslim and the Taliban is in the process of replacing current employees at the ministry with its own people.

Furthermore, reports about a meeting came to light where Ishaqzai purportedly pressured an audience of 50 existing directors at the ministry to ask for forgiveness for having worked with the US government and a non-Muslim system.

This is a worrisome situation—many employees have now lost their jobs while others left or are leaving due to threats from the Taliban.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Foreign Policy, Afghan Crime Wave Adds to Taliban Dystopia, 29 October 2021

“Officials of the former government, intelligence service, and military have been snatched from their homes after applying for passports and providing biometric and other identification information, he said. The Taliban are also using lists of former officials and civil activists to pinpoint their children. “They took four such sons from a prominent school in Kabul. When the police station was asked, they said, ‘We don’t know who entered the school,’” the source said. “Life is broken.””

AVA Press, Islamic Emirate Welcomes Possible EU Office Reopening, 26 October 2021

“The Islamic Emirate on Monday welcomed the reopening of the European Union’s office in Kabul, saying that the step could be the beginning of engagement with European countries.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) “The decision of the [sic] to reopen its office in the near future is a good step and it is in the interest of the people of Afghanistan,” said Ahmadullah Wasiq, deputy spokesman for the . “They will evaluate their work from the vicinity.”

According to a report in the Financial Times, the European Union is considering restarting its political activities in a limited way in Kabul.

The report said that the move is not intended to recognize the current government in Afghanistan. [...]

Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the foreign ministry’s spokesman, said in a tweet on Monday that the Islamic Emirate would guarantee the security of the European Countries’ embassies and personnel.”

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatches: 'Anyone on the Taliban’s blacklist is in great danger', 26 October 2021

“Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a Staff Correspondent for JURIST in Kabul offers observations on the Taliban’s targeting of perceived or potential opponents in Afghanistan who publicly object to their policies, who were associated with the previous government, or who worked with foreign forces prior to the Taliban takeover. [...]

It’s mostly social activists, former military and government officials, CSOs, and traders who have been targeted, warned, and even affected by the Taliban. In particular, former government officials in Panjshir, Mazar, and Samangan provinces have been targeted, leading to the death of one in Samangan province. A few weeks ago the Taliban even went farther and stated some specific individuals – especially those who worked with the foreign forces – should give themselves up to be prosecuted or they will prosecute their family members if they find them. Anyone on the Taliban’s blacklist is in great danger.

The Taliban are using different techniques in targeting people. They have issued warning letters to some former government officials stating that if they do not give themselves to them then their families would be arrested. Several officials of the the central bank received warning letters in the last three weeks. They all received written warning letters signed and stamped by the Taliban. One of the warning letters shared with me said “You should have stopped working with a slave government under control of Americans; we shall punish you so others take a lesson.” Fortunately, the target of this letter is already out of the country. In another incident from the central bank, the Taliban went to check the former Chief of Staff of the central bank who was said to have worked with the ex-governor of the bank too closely. However, they could not find him.

The Taliban appear to have monitored government officials closely before they seized power in August. Most of the people who got killed by them were government officials. I myself lost three friends in a car bombing several months ago.”

Ariana News, IEA pledges to safeguard all UN operations and staff, 24 October 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), Abdul Salaam Hanafi met with the UN Secretary-General’s special representative to Afghanistan Deborah Lyons on Saturday at ARG (Presidential Palace) to discuss various issues including that of the protection of UN operations and staff. Hanafi asked for the UN’s cooperation in different sectors and assured Lyons the Islamic Emirate (IE) would ensure the safety of all UN organizations in Afghanistan, said a spokesperson of the IEA Zabiullah Mujahid in a statement.”

Ariana News, MoD to form a new, independent national army, 24 October 2021

“Some IEA officials meanwhile said that former government soldiers will be brought back into the army. “We have left the way open for those people who were in security institutions in the former government. Some of them have returned already,” said Qari Saeed Khosti, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior Affairs.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Afghan Pilots Who Fled To Tajikistan Say Taliban Is Threatening Relatives Back Home, 23 October 2021

“Afghan military pilots who fled to Tajikistan when the Taliban seized power in Kabul say the militant group is pressuring them to return to Afghanistan by threatening to kill their relatives.

Trained by the United States, the Afghan pilots say their documents have been completed for traveling and they hope they will soon be able to go to the United States.

But two Afghan pilots who are sheltering at sanatoriums on the outskirts of Dushanbe told RFE/RL's Tajik Service on October 23 that the Taliban is now trying to force them to return to Afghanistan.

One Afghan pilot, speaking on condition of anonymity, told RFE/RL that his son back in Afghanistan was beaten by the Taliban and that the militants threatened to kill the boy if the pilot did not return.

Another pilot told RFE/RL that Taliban militants have gone to the homes of several of his family members to demand that the pilot return to Afghanistan.

He told RFE/RL that the Taliban has a list of the names of all 143 Afghan pilots now in Tajikistan. He said Taliban authorities are increasing pressure on all of the pilots by threatening their relatives in Afghanistan. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid denied that the Taliban is threatening the relatives of the pilots.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Govt sets body to remove undesirable figures from military, 13 October 2021

“The government has created a commission to identify and remove unwanted people from military ranks, an official said Wednesday”

Financial Times, Afghanistan’s hunters become hunted as Taliban conquer old order, 13 October 2021

“Khalid, the former Afghan intelligence service interrogator, said it was impossible for those in his situation to adjust to the new Afghanistan. He is trying to find a way to get his family out of the country and is getting desperate. “There is no place for us here now. We have not even been able to go back to our house since the Taliban came,” he said. “Either we escape or we will run out of money and die here.””

The Guardian, Afghans seeking Australian humanitarian visas say Taliban are ‘hunting us like animals’, 10 October 2021

“Afghans who have applied for Australian humanitarian visas say they are living in fear as the Taliban are “hunting us down like animals”.

Accounts of their “painful” experiences under the Taliban regime – including testimonies of beatings, interrogations and threats to family members – are set to be provided to a Senate inquiry into Australia’s

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

engagement in Afghanistan, which begins public hearings on Monday.

A Hazara man described being interrogated by the Taliban as they demanded to know whether he was a civil activist and had any links to foreigners. The man, whose name cannot be published for safety reasons, said he was taken into a cell where he was blindfolded and gagged.

"I received 26 lashes. I felt the first five lashes and after that I couldn't feel anything anymore, my back became numb."

He recounted later being threatened with execution. "I believed my life would soon be over. I was so frightened," he wrote. He was eventually released from custody and is now in hiding, sleeping in a different place every night.

"The Taliban have been calling me every night," he wrote. "They tell me not to try to run away, that wherever I am, even outside of Afghanistan, they will find me."

It is one of several testimonies compiled by an Australian citizen who has been helping Afghan nationals apply for Australian humanitarian visas, with the support of Rural Australians for Refugees.

In another account provided to Guardian Australia, a former Afghan national army soldier said he had come out of hiding briefly to "send the papers and identity documents to friends who are helping me apply for a humanitarian visa to Australia".

"They [the Taliban] say they forgive everyone who has worked with foreigners, or who worked in government or in the army," he wrote. "But in reality, they are hunting us down like animals. I fear we will all be killed in the end."

A worker for a non-government organisation noted the Taliban were going door-to-door, purportedly to assess humanitarian needs.

"They are using this as a way to spot people, in the guise of a humanitarian assessment, which is disgusting basically. They are doing evil things behind 'good deeds'."

This person said he was hoping to leave Afghanistan legally and had received an acknowledgement letter from the Australian government for his family's humanitarian visa application in mid-September.

Meanwhile, a Hazara hospitality worker described the past few weeks as "the darkest of my whole life". He said many young people were "willing to gamble with their lives to illegally cross the borders into neighbouring countries".

"Living here is much more suffocating and more painful. It's a slow, gradual death," this person wrote.

"I just hope that at least we can get out of here and be somewhere where we will be treated as human."

The Guardian, Former British embassy driver badly beaten in Kabul, 5 October 2021

"A former employee of the British embassy in Kabul has been badly beaten at his home by five armed men, in an attack linked to his 11 years working with UK diplomats in Afghanistan.

The British embassy driver, one of about 150 employees who applied to be evacuated in May, was at home with his family in a village on the outskirts of Kabul last Thursday when five masked men came to his house and attacked him, hitting him with their Kalashnikovs.

The attackers told him they had information he was still working for an international organisation. [...]

The driver, 44, who has asked for his name not to be printed, said his children, wife and neighbours saw the attack, and are now too afraid to leave their houses.

X-rays showed his hand had been broken in two places and his skull fractured in three places. [...] He did not report the attack to the police, believing that the Taliban-run police would not have helped him.

While he did not know the attackers, he suspected they were affiliated to the Taliban. Five years ago he had been targeted by Taliban militants because of his work with the British embassy, and was told he should leave his job. His son was hit in the head when a gun was fired during that attack, suffering brain

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

damage.

Last month a pregnant Afghan policewoman was reported to have been killed by the Taliban, and there have been many other reports of attacks on people who worked for international organisations and the previous regime. Taliban officials have denied responsibility, citing the amnesty they announced for employees of the previous administration. It is not clear whether these attacks are officially organised and state sanctioned, or the work of fractured groups that know they can act with impunity.

The driver worked for the embassy for 10 years under a contract with G4S and then for 18 months in the same role employed by the Canadian security firm GardaWorld, which took over the embassy contract last year. He and about 150 colleagues applied to be evacuated in May under the UK Ministry of Defence's Afghan relocations and assistance policy, but his application was refused on the grounds that British embassy employees hired through subcontracted organisations were not eligible for help."

Amnesty International, [Afghanistan: 13 Hazara killed by Taliban fighters in Daykundi province – new investigation](#), 5 October 2021

"Taliban forces unlawfully killed 13 ethnic Hazaras, including a 17-year-old girl, in Afghanistan's Daykundi province after members of the security forces of the former government surrendered, a new investigation by Amnesty International has revealed.

The killings happened in Kahor village of Khidir district on 30 August. Eleven of the victims were former members of the Afghan National Defence Security Forces (ANDSF), and two were civilians.

According to eyewitness testimony gathered by Amnesty International, the Taliban extrajudicially executed nine of the ANDSF members after they had surrendered, killings that appear to be war crimes. Two civilians were killed as they attempted to flee, including a 17-year-old girl shot when the Taliban opened fire on a crowd of people."

Amnesty International, [Afghanistan: The fate of thousands hanging in the balance](#), 21 September 2021

"In this report, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) have documented incidents of human rights violations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August". The report references a number of sources, including:

· BBC. 5 September 2021. "Afghanistan: Taliban accused of killing pregnant police officer". <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58455826>. Relatives have confirmed she was killed by the Taliban. Tweet. Aditya Raj Kaul @AdityaRajKaul. [...]

Crisis Group, [Afghanistan's Taliban expand their interim government](#), 28 September 2021

"Similarly, the Taliban have resisted calls from regional and Western governments to include figures from the previous Western-backed political establishment. Taliban interlocutors claim to Crisis Group that despite an internal push by some members to include figures associated with the former system in the new government, most of the top Taliban leadership has so far opposed such a move due to the perception that former politicians were corrupt and discredited. Perhaps more importantly, there were also concerns among the Taliban that if they moved to bring in either women or former politicians, they could risk backlash from the rank and file, who might view the leadership as betraying their ideals. The resurgence of the Islamic State Khorasan Province, which has sought to portray the Taliban as compromising their Islamist credentials, is likely to further diminish prospects for inclusion."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

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

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

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, Brother of Afghan opposition figure executed by Taliban, family says, 10 September 2021

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

TOLO News, Taliban Closes Bank Accounts of Officials From Former Govt, 10 September 2021

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

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

At the same time, a letter posted on social media by the Afghanistan Central Bank (Da Afghanistan Bank) said that accounts of some ministers, deputy ministers, governors, deputy governors, members of parliament, members of provincial councils, mayors and other VIPs should be closed in other internal banks, and be reported to Central Bank.

Officials from Afghanistan Central Bank have not commented to the media over the issue."

UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (August 2021), 9 September 2021

"In August, the HAG logged 124 incidents of violence/threats against humanitarian workers and their assets and facilities - the highest number of such incidents on HAG record. The majority of incidents related to intimidations, thefts, occupation of facilities or assets, and hijacking of vehicles and were authored by individuals identifying as Taliban. Most incidents were recorded in Kabul, Herat, Bamyan, Balkh and Nangarhar and had a very chilling effect on humanitarian operations. The notable increase in violent incidents can be attributed to the Taliban's rapid advancement into Kabul and other major cities, where Taliban fighters occupied many humanitarian buildings, in addition to government installations. In the early stages, humanitarian buildings were used as hideouts and as fighting positions against ANDSF. On 4 August 2021, Lashkar Gha City, Taliban members occupied an NGO compound and took position on the rooftop from where they started firing towards the Governor's compound. Once the cities came under full Taliban control, Taliban members, often identifying as members of the intelligence unit, conducted searches of humanitarian offices, seized humanitarian vehicles and asked NGO staff about project details as well as staff and asset lists. In some cases, provincial Taliban NGO Commissioners were successful in getting previously seized vehicles back and in convincing the occupiers to vacate the humanitarian facilities. However, in many cases, seized items remain missing and facilities remain occupied. In at least 18 incidents, ACG members falsely identified as Taliban to get access to humanitarian compounds and looted assets and vehicles from NGOs offices and private residences. In at least 35 instances Taliban members threatened and intimidated UN and NGO staff through phone calls,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

letters as well as during house searches and accused them of spying for foreign intelligence entities. The current environment creates a lot of insecurity and concerns among the humanitarian community and highlights the need to have a functioning problem-solving mechanism with Taliban interlocutors at provincial and national level to quickly resolve issues of occupation and seized assets.”

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

“20. [...] While statements by the Taliban included instructions not to enter anyone’s house without permission and that “life, property and honour” would be protected, numerous reports emerged of the Taliban conducting house-to-house searches for government personnel, weapons and property, and in some cases confiscation of the latter. Some reports indicated that the Taliban were allegedly searching for people who had “worked with foreigners” and at times, beating them.
23. High-profile attacks by anti-Government elements occurred countrywide prior to the Taliban takeover of major cities. Between 16 May and 31 July, 18 suicide attacks were documented, compared with 11 in the prior period, including 16 suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices primarily targeting Afghan National Defence and Security Forces positions. In addition, there were 68 attacks using magnetic improvised explosive devices, including 14 in Kabul. Targeted and usually unclaimed assassinations occurred countrywide, with victims including, among others, the Policy and Planning Director of the Ministry of Urban Development and Land, killed in Kabul on 30 May; the deputy of the Ulema Shura, killed in Herat on 3 June; an appeals court provincial prosecutor and a pro-government religious scholar, killed in Logar on 7 and 12 June, respectively; and the Head of the Government Media and Information Centre, killed on 6 August. On 4 August, the Taliban claimed responsibility for an attack in Kabul on the residence of the acting Minister of Defence.”

BBC, Life in Kabul under Taliban: Where is your male escort?, 4 September 2021

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

(Former) prosecutors, judges and lawyers

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatch: ‘female lawyers are at risk and there is a possibility of losing them’, 15 August 2022

“My name is [redacted], a female defense lawyer in Afghanistan, and I would like to give you a detailed explanation about the crisis of defense lawyers and the problems that have plagued women lawyers who are here. Since the Taliban took over the power of the government, all the work of female defense lawyers has become very difficult. They spend their days in their homes as alternatives to imprisonment or house arrest. My colleagues and I are facing thousands of threats. The Taliban destroy women as defenders of human rights and this is extremely horrible. Our voices are suffocated in our throats and no one in this world hears our voices. We are at home and we are changing our homes due to security threats. The life and limb of the defender is in danger.”

“The economy of female lawyers has collapsed. Poverty and deprivation are rampant. Poverty has increased to the extreme for women lawyers...Female lawyers want to study again and try to continue their education, but because that field is not favorable for them either under the Taliban they can’t even study.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The Taliban took over the independent bar association and that became a part of the Ministry of Justice, and now women lawyers are not allowed inside the Ministry. Only men are allowed. Women do not even have the right to retake the exams to be lawyers. They don’t test women, and they don’t allow them to work, so female lawyers are at risk and there is a possibility of losing them.”

Byline Times, ‘They Can’t Survive Inside Afghanistan’: The Vulnerable People Still Stuck Under Taliban Rule One Year On, 15 August 2022

“[C]ampaigners warn that, 365 days since the US and UK were forced to evacuate from the troubled country, vulnerable women, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBTIQ people – as well as those who worked with British forces since 2001 – remain in Afghanistan and at risk of serious harm from Taliban reprisals. “There are almost no safe routes out of Afghanistan for vulnerable people,” Rosie Shaw, co-founder of the Azadi charity that assists at-risk Afghans to evacuate and resettle, said. “The Government announced last August that it would launch the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, under significant pressure and media attention, and a year on the pathway to resettlement for vulnerable people is not open and it’s not clear when it is going to open.”” “After the first year, pathway three will open to wider categories of vulnerable people to apply – such as women and LGBTIQ people. The FCDO guidance is clear that “if you are not a British Council contractor, GardaWorld contractor or Chevening alumnus, you will not be eligible for pathway three in year one”. “Right now, the Azadi charity is in contact with an all-female family – a widow and her adult daughters. Under Taliban rule, it is difficult for the women to leave their house to access even the most basic essentials. Women are expected to have a male guardian with them. “They’re a classic case of a family who would be eligible to come to the UK under the ACRS,” Rosie Shaw said. “All of them were involved in women’s rights activism, they are all well-known in their community. But, 12 months later, they are not even in line for processing, they don’t know when they will be able to apply to come to the UK, or how they can be referred to the scheme. It’s hopeless. While there has been some attention on high-profile vulnerable women – such as former MPs, judges and lawyers – both Shaw and Zehra Zehadi, co-founder of Action for Afghanistan, are keen to emphasise that ‘ordinary’ women are also struggling. “Of course there is one category of risk,” Shaw told Byline Times. “People who are military targets, for example. But you’ve also got incredibly vulnerable, widowed women, single women, women who don’t have male family members, who can’t go outside safely. They can’t travel anywhere. They can’t get jobs, they’ve been told that they can’t go back to work. And so they have no way they can exist. They can’t survive inside Afghanistan.”

Al Jazeera, A year after Taliban, Afghans who chose to stay fear grim future, 12 August 2022

“Threats and even armed attacks were not uncommon in her line of work. In the year preceding the takeover, several female judges were targeted in assassination attempts in Afghanistan, resulting in the killing of Judges Qadria Yasini and Zakia Herawi.”

The New Humanitarian, One year on, few options for Afghans escaping hunger and Taliban persecution, 10 August 2022

“Hundreds of thousands of Afghans attempting to escape Taliban persecution and the country’s economic collapse are largely being met with closed borders, hardening attitudes, and deportation. Meanwhile, Western governments have been slow to fulfil promises to relocate tens of thousands of Afghan allies left behind in last year’s chaotic withdrawal of foreign troops. Those most at risk of Taliban reprisal are former members of law enforcement and civil servants from the Western-backed government that disintegrated

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

when the Taliban returned to power in Kabul on 15 August last year. Journalists, civil-society activists, women rights activists, and women who have seen their access to education and employment curtailed by the Taliban are also seeking exits from the country. So are members of minority ethnic groups, such as Hazaras, who face persecution from the Taliban and other jihadist organisations. [...] Pakistan and Iran have long hosted the vast majority of people displaced over successive decades of conflict in Afghanistan. Currently, Iran hosts about 3.5 million displaced Afghans and Pakistan hosts about 3.1 million. Only about a third of Afghans in each country are registered with the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR. The rest are undocumented, due to challenges in obtaining legal status, and risk deportation. [...] Hundreds of thousands of others pay still-high, but less exorbitant costs to smugglers who ferry people without documents across the border into Pakistan, according to Samuel Hall. However, the Pakistani army and paramilitary groups frequently push people back across the border, despite UNHCR advising countries not to forcibly return people to Afghanistan. Between January and July of this year, the UN's emergency aid coordination body, OCHA, found that 46,300 Afghans were expelled or deported from Pakistan, which is 40,000 more than in the same period in 2021. In Iran, violent pushbacks and deportations were occurring long before the Taliban returned to power. This year, however, about 462,000 people have been returned to Afghanistan – an uptick of 42,000 from last year, according to OCHA. Those who have been forcibly returned include Afghans who recently crossed the border as well as those living in Iran, sometimes for years without being able to obtain residency documents. "Under the current circumstances, nobody should deport Afghans. The risk on the ground [for many] is imminent," said Sultani, from Amnesty International."

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

"The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] The high number of reports of intimidation, harassment, attacks, arrests, and in some cases killing or disappearance, of journalists, prosecutors, and judges for undertaking their duties, as well as of civil society for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association is of serious concern, Bennett said."

The Guardian, Plight of Afghan judges in spotlight as court hears UK asylum challenge, 17 May 2022

"Alleged inconsistencies in the way the UK Home Office and Foreign Office process asylum applications from vulnerable judges in hiding in Afghanistan are being challenged at the high court in London on Tuesday. Three judicial reviews are being brought on behalf of a male judge and a female judge who have had their applications for asylum rejected, and a prominent female women's rights activist. If successful, the Home Office will be required to undertake a wholesale rethink of how it handles cases. The reviews have been anonymised to protect the claimants from persecution by the Taliban. A 45-strong network of mainly commercial UK lawyers have been representing 28 Afghan judges applying for asylum. The Afghans are just a small proportion of 800 or so judges who worked in Afghanistan before the Taliban takeover last year, more than a quarter of whom are female. They say inconsistencies on the part of the UK's approach are unreasonable, incoherent and arbitrary."

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

"Violent attacks by insurgents against judges, prosecutors, and prison officials made members of the judicial sector increasingly fearful in carrying out their duties. Justice-sector professionals came under

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

threat or attack for pursuing certain cases, particularly corruption or abuse-of-power cases against politically or economically powerful individuals.”

OHCHR, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet visits Kabul, Afghanistan, 11 March 2022

“[...] reports suggest that door-to-door searches are continuing and we have publicly documented extrajudicial killings of former officials. Attacks against these former officials, including judges, as well as human rights defenders and journalists, do continue. [...] Civil society activists and leaders, former government employees including judges and prosecutors, and journalists can play a critical role in building a new Afghanistan, and in ensuring justice for human rights violations and abuses – but only if they can continue their work without fear of arrest, harassment, threats and violence.”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 4th March 2022, 10 March 2022

“[...] former judges held separate protests in Kabul demanding unpaid salaries last week. Demonstrating engineers also complain about the dismissal of large numbers of engineers since the Taliban came into power, while demonstrating former judges demand to be reinstated to their former positions. The Taliban dispersed the protest of former judges. This is the first time ACLED records a protest involving judges since August 2021.”

OHCHR, Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's report on Afghanistan, 7 March 2022

“The safety and security of all Afghan judges, prosecutors and lawyers from the previous administration, particularly women legal professionals, also continues to be a matter of acute concern.”

Jurist, Interview: Attorney Saeed Shajjan – ‘We Need to Raise Our Voices for Afghanistan’s Embattled Lawyers’, 27 January 2022

“JURIST: And in what ways have matters regressed since the Taliban rose to power again? Shajjan: First, as part of its takeover of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), the Ministry of Justice has taken control of the issuance of legal licenses. For years, we [lawyers in Afghanistan] had been working to develop a strong, independent bar. It had its weaknesses, and it wasn’t a resounding voice for all of Afghanistan’s lawyers, but it was certainly better than nothing, and AIBA was working hard to improve day by day. Now that the Ministry of Justice has taken control of licensing, I’ve heard that the oral examination has nothing to do with law. They will ask questions about prayers—how you pray, or how you prepare for prayers. These questions are completely irrelevant to the practice of law, and yet they will have to be answered satisfactorily for lawyers to renew their licenses. I’ve also heard many accounts of courtrooms descending into chaos. There was a case where a judge seemed to be siding with parties based solely on their appearances, and another case where a judge threw a paperweight at a lawyer, hitting him square on the mouth, because the judge didn’t see any reason for him to be involved in the case. I’m trying to gather as much information as I can to record some of these abuses, but I find that people are very afraid to speak [on the record] at this point. [...]”

JURIST: We know the Taliban has effectively banned women from working as prosecutors and judges, but questions remain about if and how they plan to resume the issuance of law licenses for women. Do you know anything about their plans in this regard? Shajjan: As far as I know, so far the Ministry of Justice has not issued a single law license to a woman. I know of a couple of women who tried to get their licenses renewed recently, and they were denied. They were told that the authorities were waiting for a new policy

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

pertaining to women lawyers, but I don't think that policy is going to come. Similarly, education has been essentially prohibited for women at this point. Again, they say they're working on policies, but those policies are nowhere to be found, and meanwhile, months have passed. And a semester is a long time in the life of a student. [...]

JURIST: Given your efforts to help your colleagues and peers in these difficult times, what would you say to the lawyers and legal professionals who remain in Afghanistan, unable to leave, and fearful of persecution? Shajjan: Ultimately, these people need to raise their voices—but now is not the right time for them to do that. They are in hiding, and being vocal would put them in grave danger. So we need to raise our voices for them. The international community needs to ramp up pressure on the Taliban to prevent persecution. We need to work on building a solid international platform to advocate for their rights. [...]"

Byline Times, 'Keep Watch Over Us' A Plea from the Women Abandoned in Afghanistan, 26 January 2022
"Naweeda, Nadira and Noorsama are three defence lawyers. To be interviewed, they met me secretly in a place far from their homes because of the risk that neighbours could report them to the Taliban authorities for speaking to a journalist. "We are no longer allowed to work," says Noorsama. "After the arrival of the Taliban I had to go back to court to take some documents of cases that are still open, but they prevented me. They threatened and chased me away, telling me that I was no longer allowed access. Later, they agreed that I could enter only to get the documents, but I had to wear the burqa and be accompanied by a man. I am responsible for the upkeep of a daughter and my brothers; since I was prevented from working, I had to sell the valuables I had, but even that money is almost over."

The Guardian, My nightmares came true': ex-prosecutor of Afghan women's abusers, 17 January 2022
"I was appointed as a prosecutor to work on cases of domestic violence and abuse more than four years ago. I was promoted this summer to be chief prosecutor in this area, but my new position only lasted seven days. Friends were in my office to congratulate me on the new job when the Taliban entered Kabul.

I've always been under threat because my job was to investigate men who were abusing women. Those who were convicted blame me for putting them in jail, and because the Taliban released all prisoners across Afghanistan, they are now free and hunting for me to take revenge. [...]

Threat calls started on the very first night after the fall of Kabul. Criminals started calling me, saying: "Where will you go now? Your system has collapsed. We'll find you. We'll behead you." And other very frightening threats. I don't go out. I'm so depressed these days that I wish for death."

Canadian Lawyer, International Bar Association expresses concern on Taliban takeover of Afghanistan bar association, 13 January 2022

"The International Bar Association (IBA) has urged the United Nations to denounce and intervene in the Taliban takeover of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA) which took place during a leadership council meeting in November 2021.

As a result of the takeover, the Taliban has gained access to the AIBA's database that contains the personnel and professional records of 2,500 Afghan lawyers, staff, and committee members. The Taliban has also taken control of the AIBA's bank account and funds.

"There is much concern for the personal safety of all who are on the database," the IBA wrote. "Now that the Taliban is furnished with details of cases and home addresses, anxieties are further heightened."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Gandhara, After Realizing Dream, Disabled Afghan Prosecutor Finds Herself Jobless And In Danger Under Taliban, 12 January 2022

"Prosecutors who worked for Afghanistan's ousted government have said they are being threatened by the criminals they helped convict. The Taliban emptied many of the country's jails during their takeover of the country in the summer.

"Prosecutors have had to change residences so that the convicts the Taliban freed could not find us," said [Mosthari] Danesh. "We are now permanently living in hiding, and even our families cannot move freely."

Several prosecutors, judges, and lawyers have been killed in recent months. Others have been attacked or threatened.

Western nations have evacuated and granted asylum to hundreds of judicial workers from Afghanistan. But for the thousands who remain trapped in Afghanistan, particularly women, the future is bleak. Fatana Mohammadi, a lawyer, was attacked by an unidentified man in broad daylight in her home in Kabul last month.

"He shot at me once, but I was able to dodge the bullet by throwing a blanket over him," Mohammadi told Radio Azadi. "After that, his gun jammed."

Mohammadi said the attacker then beat her."

Jurist, Taliban proceed with plans to strip independence of Afghanistan lawyers, 3 January 2022

"Afghanistan's Justice Ministry reiterated Monday that the country's independent lawyers will need to re-certify under a new qualification process set by the Ministry, signaling the intent of the Taliban authorities to plough ahead with plans to strip the country's legal profession of its independence.

"According to the statement, the country's lawyers will be authorized to continue practicing with their previous licenses until the new certification process has been finalized.

"This was the latest step in a series of efforts by the new regime to crack down on the activities of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), an organization established in 2008 to oversee the licensing of new lawyers, and to champion the rule of law and social justice.

"On November 14, the Taliban Cabinet decreed that the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) would gain jurisdiction over AIBA affairs. On November 23, the AIBA offices in Kabul were taken over by armed Taliban who threatened the staff and lawyers who were present with violence before ordering them to leave and installing a new president with questionable professional qualifications. "The person appointed as the new AIBA head is said to be part of the Ministry of Justice but has no relevant experience," according to a Kabul-based JURIST correspondent. These armed forces had apparently interpreted the Cabinet decree to indicate that the MOJ should have sole authority over licensing, as well as control of the AIBA's extensive member database and bank account.

"A group of AIBA members hoping to raise awareness of the importance of the profession's independence organized a press conference for December 5, but their plans were halted when, as they prepared to go live, their plans were thwarted by two carloads of armed Taliban. Many have remained in hiding ever since."

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: UN says 'The safety of Afghan judges, prosecutors, and lawyers – particularly women legal professionals – is a matter for particular alarm., 15 December 2021

"The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has documented 59 apparently arbitrary detentions, beatings, and threats of civil society activists, journalists, and staff of the Afghanistan

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Independent Human Rights Commission attributed to the de facto authorities. Several women's rights defenders have been threatened, and there is widespread fear of reprisals since the violent crackdown on women's peaceful protests in September. In some instances, relatives and family members of civil society actors, and human rights defenders have faced threats and intimidation. Many media outlets have shut down and numerous civil society groups have also closed.

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has been unable to operate since August, and the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association faces a loss of independence following the de facto authorities' decision to administer its activities under the de facto ministry of justice.

The safety of Afghan judges, prosecutors, and lawyers – particularly women legal professionals – is a matter for particular alarm. Many are currently in hiding for fear of retribution, including from convicted prisoners who were freed by the de facto authorities, notably men convicted of gender-based violence.”

Amnesty International, [Afghanistan: Survivors of gender-based violence abandoned following Taliban takeover – new research](#), 6 December 2021

“Essential services for women and girl survivors of gender-based violence in Afghanistan have been decimated following the Taliban's takeover of the country, Amnesty International said today.

In 26 new interviews, survivors and service providers told Amnesty International that the Taliban closed shelters and released detainees from prison, including many convicted of gender-based violence offences. Many survivors – as well as shelter staff, lawyers, judges, government officials, and others involved in protective services – are now at risk of violence and death. [...] Amnesty International interviewed survivors and individuals involved in protective services in the provinces of Badghis, Bamiyan, Daikundi, Herat, Kabul, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Paktika, Sar-e Pul, and Takhar.”

Jurist.org, [Taliban justice ministry summons protesting lawyers after AIBA press conference dispersed](#), 5 December 2021

“Reliable sources in Afghanistan told JURIST Sunday that the Taliban Ministry of Justice has summoned the lawyers who organized a press conference earlier in the day to protest the recent Taliban takeover of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA) and the removal of lawyer licensing authority from the AIBA to the Ministry of Justice. The press conference, orchestrated by a group of young Afghan lawyers comprising both women and men, had been planned for 10 AM AFT but was called off at the last minute when heavily-armed Taliban soldiers arrived at the hotel where it was to have taken place and ordered proceedings to stop even before they had started. The lawyers, several wearing their professional robes, were briefly seen outside the hotel afterwards before they were arrested and held for a brief period.

[...] The exact whereabouts of the lawyers who organized the abortive Sunday press conference are unknown at this time. The International Bar Association (IBA) and other international bar bodies representing lawyers have vigorously protested the Taliban takeover of the AIBA. In a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres dated November 30, the IBA said that it “completely compromised the independence of the legal profession in Afghanistan” and called upon the United Nations to denounce the action as contrary to the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.”

Jurist.org, [Afghanistan lawyers ask Taliban cabinet to restore independence of national bar association](#), 2 December 2021

“Lawyers from across Afghanistan have sent letters to the Taliban cabinet seeking the restoration of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association after the Ministry of Justice took over its premises and assumed

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

its lawyer licensing power last week. On November 23, armed Taliban fighters entered the Association's offices in Kabul, forced objecting lawyers and staff inside to leave, and announced the installation of a new president said to have no professional experience."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, 'No Reason To Stay': Taliban Repression, Economic Collapse Accelerate Exodus From Afghanistan, 2 December 2021

"Murad, a former public prosecutor, has been living in hiding since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in August.

Over the years, the attorney helped put some of Afghanistan's most dangerous criminals behind bars, including Taliban fighters. But many of them were freed as the militant group swept the country in the summer.

Murad, who is at risk of reprisals, is desperate to flee his homeland. He has lodged multiple applications for asylum abroad but has yet to hear back from foreign immigration authorities."

The Independent, Almost 80 female judges, journalists and activists rescued from Afghanistan to Greece, 2 November 2021

"Some 79 female judges, journalists and human rights activists have been evacuated from Afghanistan to Greece after fearing for their lives while stranded in the Taliban-seized country. [...]

It comes after The Independent revealed more than 200 women judges were stranded in hiding from the Taliban in Afghanistan at the beginning of September, while campaigners warned they are at risk of being killed by the Taliban.

The Taliban has freed thousands of prisoners, including terrorists and senior al Qaeda operatives, with experts saying the judges responsible for sending many of the newly released criminals to jail are terrified for their safety now the inmates are free.

Marzia Babakarkhail, who used to work as a family court judge in Afghanistan but now lives in the UK, told The Independent: "There are currently around 100 judges still left in Afghanistan facing grave threats from the Taliban. [...]

Speaking to The Independent in a previous interview, the 55-year-old, who is campaigning for the female judges to be rescued from Afghanistan, accused the Taliban of trying to kill her in Afghanistan in 1997 and again in Pakistan in 2007."

Al Jazeera, Trapped: Afghan women judges fear for their lives, 25 October 2021 [podcast]

"After trying to save Afghan women from violence and abuse, Afghan women judges are trying to escape Afghanistan and save themselves.

Many Afghans are still trying to escape their country after the Taliban took over in August but few are as threatened as women judges. In 2009, the Elimination of Violence Against women was signed by then-President Hamid Karzai and in the years that followed, courts led by female judges opened in provinces around the country, enforcing laws protecting women from violence and abuse.

Since the Taliban opened the prisons, many of those jailed are now free and threatening the lives of the women who locked them up. Now, the chaos that followed the Western exit from Afghanistan has made it that much more difficult for the women to escape. Today on The Take, we hear their stories and the plight of the international legal community trying to get them out."

BBC News, Fleeing Afghanistan: 'Women are imprisoned, while the criminals are free', 26 October 2021

"When Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, hundreds of female judges went into hiding. The Taliban had

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

opened prisons across the country, freeing the very men the judges once incarcerated. [...] For the past three months, Sana said, she has been hunted by the very men she sent to prison for violent crimes against women. The Taliban opened prisons as they advanced across the country, freeing thousands of criminals to take revenge on those who incarcerated them.

"I worked in a court that dealt with lots of different crimes, including murder, suicide, rape, and other complex crimes. The punishments I delivered were long and serious," Sana said.

"But after they were all released, every one of them told us: 'We will kill you if we find you.'" A recent BBC investigation found that more than 220 female judges were living in hiding because they feared retribution under Taliban rule. Speaking from secret locations inside Afghanistan, many of those women said they were receiving death threats on a daily basis.

In response to the accusations, secretary to the Taliban spokesman Bilal Karimi told the BBC: "Female judges should live like any other family without fear. No-one should threaten them. Our special military units are obliged to investigate such complaints and act if there is a violation."

Karimi also repeated the Taliban's promise of a "general amnesty" for all former government workers across Afghanistan.

But Sana described the past few months as a "living nightmare".

"We were changing locations every two to three days, moving from the street to safehouses and hotels," she said.

"We couldn't go back. Our own house had already been raided." [...] After their evacuation, the house was commandeered by a high-ranking member of the Taliban, she said. He lives in her home, drives her car, possesses all of her belongings.

For the judges now living as a part of the diaspora, news from back home is rarely positive. In one of their many Whatsapp groups, a montage of 28 profile pictures is being shared. Every face, one judge said, was a former male prosecutor allegedly assassinated in the past 48 hours by criminals released from prison."

Al Jazeera, Trapped: Afghan women judges fear for their lives, 25 October 2021

"Many Afghans are still trying to escape their country after the Taliban took over in August but few are as threatened as women judges. In 2009, the Elimination of Violence Against women was signed by then-President Hamid Karzai and in the years that followed, courts led by female judges opened in provinces around the country, enforcing laws protecting women from violence and abuse.

Since the Taliban opened the prisons, many of those jailed are now free and threatening the lives of the women who locked them up. Now, the chaos that followed the Western exit from Afghanistan has made it that much more difficult for the women to escape. Today on The Take, we hear their stories and the plight of the international legal community trying to get them out."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Gandhara, Women Judges In Afghanistan Face Threats And 'Uncertain Future' According To Exiled Female Jurist, 13 October 2021

"Marzia Babakarkhil, an Afghan judge, spoke to RFE/RL's Radio Azadi from London about the dangers women judges face in Afghanistan. In a radio program on October 10, she talked about how the Taliban do not acknowledge women in the role of a judge and that her colleagues have faced threats and intimidation. Many have left the country or gone into hiding. Call-in programs focusing on women's rights, produced by Radio Azadi, are continuing to reach listeners in Afghanistan, despite the Taliban takeover of the country [...]"

Tagesschau, "Diese Männer versuchen sich zu rächen", 9 October 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"They pioneered women's rights in Afghanistan and were staunch defenders of the most discriminated group: women. Now almost 300 Afghan women judges have gone into hiding for fear of retaliation from the Taliban.

Afghan women judges charged thousands of men with rape, murder, torture and kidnapping. Among those convicted were terrorists from the so-called Islamic State. Upon coming to power, the Taliban immediately opened the prison doors. Shortly afterwards, they received death threats, reports one of the judges, who is meeting with the ARD studio in New Delhi at a secret location and does not want her name to be published.

"When the Taliban took power in Afghanistan on August 15, 2021, they released all prisoners unconditionally. I have convicted many criminals for crimes against women and put them in prison. Now these men are trying to take revenge and track us down," she says. "They came to my house and brought a letter from the police. They asked for court files to be handed over. They were criminals whom I had sentenced to several years in prison." The judge has been hiding since then. Her children stay with her husband. [...]

But the judge reports that she is not the only one who is terrified of death in her hiding place: "Every day judges, lawyers and lawyers are killed out of revenge. At the beginning of the week it was a judge, yesterday a lawyer." Since they came to power, the Taliban have apparently also used many of their released prisoners as security forces in their newly created units." [Translated using Google Translate and checked over by German native speaker]

ORIGINAL:

"Sie waren die Wegbereiterinnen für Frauenrechte in Afghanistan und standhafte Verteidigerinnen der am stärksten diskriminierten Gruppe: der Frauen. Jetzt sind fast 300 afghanische Richterinnen aus Angst vor Vergeltung durch die Taliban untergetaucht.

Afghanische Richterinnen klagten Tausende Männer wegen Vergewaltigung, Mord, Folter, Entführung an. Unter den Verurteilten waren auch Terroristen des sogenannten Islamischen Staates. Mit der Machtübernahme öffneten die Taliban sofort die Türen der Gefängnisse. Kurz darauf habe sie Morddrohungen erhalten, berichtet eine der Richterinnen, die sich mit dem ARD-Studio Neu-Delhi an einem geheimen Ort trifft und ihren Namen nicht veröffentlicht sehen will.

"Als die Taliban am 15. August 2021 die Macht in Afghanistan übernahmen, ließen sie alle Gefangenen ohne jegliche Auflagen frei. Ich habe viele Kriminelle wegen Verbrechen an Frauen verurteilt und sie ins Gefängnis gebracht. Jetzt versuchen sich diese Männer zu rächen und uns ausfindig zu machen", sagt sie.

"Sie kamen zu mir nach Hause und brachten ein Schreiben der Polizei mit. In dem wurde die Herausgabe von Gerichtsakten verlangt. Es waren Kriminelle, die ich zu mehreren Jahren Gefängnis verurteilt hatte." Seitdem versteckt sich die Richterin. Ihre Kinder bleiben bei ihrem Mann.

[...] Die Richterin aber berichtet, wie nicht nur sie Todesangst in ihrem Versteck hat: "Jeden Tag werden Richter, Anwälte und Juristen aus Rache getötet. Anfang der Woche war es ein Richter, gestern ein Anwalt." Seit der Machtübernahme setzen die Taliban offenbar auch viele von ihnen freigelassene Gefangene als Sicherheitskräfte in ihren neu geschaffenen Einheiten ein."

BBC News, [Female Afghan judges hunted by the murderers they convicted](#), 28 September 2021

[Names have been changed for this article by the source]

"For more than three decades, Judge Sanaa investigated cases of violence against women and children. She says the majority of her cases involved convicting members of the Taliban as well as militant group Isis.

"I have received more than 20 threatening phone calls from former inmates who have now been

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

released."

She is currently in hiding with more than a dozen family members.

Only once has one of her male relatives returned to their former family home. But as he was packing some clothes, the Taliban arrived at the house in several cars full of armed men, led by a commander.

"I opened the door. They asked me whether this was the judge's house," he says. "When I said I didn't know where she was, they threw me on the stairs. One of them hit me with the butt of his gun and started beating me. My nose and mouth were covered in blood."

After the armed men left, Sanaa's relative took himself to hospital.

"I told another relative we must keep changing the house where my sister is staying. There is no other way out now. We can't escape to any other country, even Pakistan.""

The Times of India, [Afghanistan: Former female prosecutors in hiding to escape retaliation](#), 22 September 2021

"Afghanistan's former female prosecutors are in hiding, fearing retaliation from those who were once jailed after their judgments and have now been released.

Many prisoners in Afghanistan have been freed by the Taliban after they took over the country last month. The female prosecutors claim that ex-prisoners are searching for them to take revenge. One female judge said that she has been repeatedly called by unknown numbers after the Taliban took over the country, The Khaama Press News Agency reported.

Many female judges who could manage to flee from Afghanistan are now abroad, but hundreds of female judges are still hiding in the country.

The female prosecutors usually handled the cases of women's rights violation, women's torture, rapes, murder, and family harassment.

Along with other female employees in Afghanistan, female prosecutors have also been at their homes and have been told not to go to their jobs, The Khaama Press News Agency reported."

(Former) journalists

Committee to Protect Journalists, [Taliban intelligence agents detain American filmmaker Ivor Shearer](#), Afghan producer Faizullah Faizbakhsh in Kabul, 19 August 2022

"On August 17, Shearer and Faizbakhsh were filming in the Sherpur area of District 10 in Kabul—where a U.S. drone strike killed Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri earlier in August—when several security guards stopped them, according to a report by U.S. Congress-funded broadcaster Voice of America-Dari and two journalists familiar with the case, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of the Taliban's reprisal. The guards questioned them about their activities and checked their work permits, ID cards, and passports; they then confiscated the journalists' cellphones, detained them for a couple of hours, and repeatedly called them "American spies," according to the journalists familiar with the case... "The Taliban's increasing pressure and escalating numbers of detentions of journalists and media workers, including the detention of American filmmaker Ivor Shearer and his Afghan colleague Faizullah Faizbakhsh, show the group's utter lack of commitment to the principle of freedom of the press in Afghanistan," said CPJ Program Director Carlos Martinez de la Serna."

Committee to Protect Journalists, [Taliban members beat, threaten, Afghan journalist Saboor Raufi](#), 18 August 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“On Monday, August 15, two armed Taliban members beat Raufi, an anchor and reporter with Afghanistan’s independent Ariana News TV station, while he was recording the aftermath of an explosion in front of Ariana’s headquarters in the Bayat Media Center in the capital of Kabul, according to media reports and the journalist, who spoke to CPJ by phone... “The brutal attack on Afghan journalist Saboor Raufi, and the threats against him for talking about the attack, highlight the dangers faced by Afghan journalists in the year since the Taliban took back control of the country,” said CPJ Program Director Carlos Martinez de la Serna.”

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), North journalists' satisfaction with security and cooperation of government institutions, 16 August 2022

“[...] journalists in the north and northeast of the country say that the problems of accessing information, the fear of high-ranking government officials from the media and their unwillingness to provide information, lack of information Enough, economic problems and government supervision of their work have been the challenges of the media in the past year. But on the other hand, better security than in the past for journalists, unprecedented cooperation of the departments of information and culture of the provinces, and the fact that no journalist was killed, injured or kidnapped in the north in one year, are good achievements of the government of the Islamic Emirate.”

Deutsche Welle, Fact check: Have the Taliban kept their promises?, 11 August 2022

“[...] the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has recorded at least 160 extrajudicial killings, 178 arbitrary arrests, 23 incommunicado arrests and 56 cases of torture of former government and security officials committed by the Taliban authorities between August 15, 2021 and June 15, 2022... These figures do not include dozens of extrajudicial killings, ill treatment and arbitrary arrests of alleged members of the "Islamic State - Khorasan Province" and the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF).” “Rights organizations say they have no concrete evidence that journalists have been killed by the Taliban. However, there is little doubt that press freedom has deteriorated ever since the Taliban conquered Kabul. Of the over 10,000 people working in Afghan newsrooms in July 2021, only 4,360 were still working in December, according to a report by RSF published at the end of last year. Moreover, it said 231 media outlets out of 543 operating in the summer of 2021 disappeared during the first three months of the Taliban's rule. A survey conducted by the Afghan journalists' union and the IJF found that 318 national media outlets have been shut down since the Taliban took over. In January, a Taliban spokesman told DW that the regime had not shut down any media stations in the country. Yet, some had stopped working after running out of funding, he said. In the same interview, he admitted that media coverage in Afghanistan had to follow rules that might be perceived as very restrictive in Western countries. In March, the Taliban blocked several international media from broadcasting in Afghanistan, including the BBC, Voice of America and DW. A month later, at least a dozen journalists were arrested in Afghanistan, prompting the UN to call on the Taliban to stop arbitrary detentions of journalists. According to the survey by the journalists' union, lack of access to information, self-censorship, fear of reprisals and the economic crisis were the main drivers of what the report calls an "unprecedented collapse of the Afghan media.”

CPJ, ‘I thought about the efforts and struggles over two decades... and cried’, 11 August 2022

“In Afghanistan, particularly in remote areas, many teenage girls are unaware of menstruation before it happens to them, and when suddenly experiencing it, they feel stressed and sometimes go into nervous

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

shock. Menstruation was like a taboo, and we wanted to help normalize it.

We also interviewed girls and women who had been raped, including the particularly upsetting case of a nine-year-old child. Other media reported that the rape had occurred in March last year, but we searched out the family and reported the details of what happened. The child lost a lot of blood in the assault and had to be taken to a hospital to undergo surgery. An aunt of the young girl, who was raising her at the request of the child's father, told us that after the assault, neighbors and others looked on her family with contempt. The aunt said they did not know where to "take refuge."

[...]

For almost a year now, other Afghan women have been waking up each morning to the bitter reality that they live under a gender apartheid regime. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has been eliminated, and the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has taken over its offices.

Millions of teenage girls have been hoping to return to their schools, but the Taliban keep prevaricating and delaying. Rukhshana has reported that violence against women at home and in public is on the rise, with bodies turning up on the streets like discarded waste. Afghan women who enjoyed certain political, social, and career freedoms a year ago now must often stifle their ambitions.

"Women and girls in particular have been subjected to severe restrictions on their human rights," says a recent United Nations report, "resulting in their exclusion from most aspects of everyday and public life."

Female journalists face particular challenges, including intimidation, lack of access to information, and severe discrimination. Surveys vary, but those that have been conducted during the past year show that most women journalists have lost their jobs since the Taliban takeover. In some provinces of Afghanistan, women are not allowed to work at all.

According to our reporting, the Taliban have banned the broadcast of women's voices in some areas, as well as the broadcast of movies with female actors. Media outlets have been instructed to separate the offices of men and women, to prevent them from working together directly. In March this year, the Taliban banned private news channels in Afghanistan from rebroadcasting programs of the BBC, VOA, and Deutsche Welle, reportedly because of the way their news presenters dressed. In May, the Taliban ordered all female TV presenters to cover their faces. In some places, it has also banned female journalists from attending its press conferences.

[...]

Journalists also face financial stress. I started Rukhshana with the hope that when other media outlets realized the importance of our work, they might support us financially. But we did not receive that sort of backing, at least initially. Now that so many Afghan media organizations are shrinking or collapsing, such support is more important than ever, and even harder to get."

Reporters Sans Frontières, Afghanistan has lost almost 60% of its journalists since the fall of Kabul, 10 August 2022

"According to the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) survey, in the year since the Taliban took power on 15 August 2021, Afghanistan has lost 39.59% of its media outlets and 59.86% of its journalists, especially women journalists, three quarters of whom are now unemployed and no longer exist in 11 provinces. All this has happened amid a deep economic crisis and crackdown on press freedom."

Committee to Protect Journalists, Crew with Indian broadcaster WION News beaten, detained by Taliban in Kabul, 9 August 2022

"Taliban authorities should cease their attacks on the press and ensure that those who harass and assault

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

journalists are held to account, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Tuesday.

On August 4, armed Taliban members attacked and detained a team with the independent Indian broadcaster WION News, including reporter Anas Mallick, producer Zakaria (who uses one name), and driver Mayel Kharoti, according to WION News and Mallick, who spoke to CPJ by phone.

The team was filming the aftermath of a U.S. drone strike that killed Al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahri, in Kabul, from inside their vehicle when Taliban members stopped them, confiscated Mallick's phones, and pulled the team out of their vehicle, where they punched them in the head and back, according to those sources.

The men took the team to a nearby Taliban post in the Wazir Akbar Khan area of Kabul, where they were questioned about their work and religion; the three were later transferred to the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence, according to Mallick and that report.

Authorities accused Mallick, who is a Pakistani national, of being a spy, and held him overnight before releasing him without charge, he said, adding that his colleagues were released, also without charge, on August 7.

"The Taliban's harassment of a team with the Indian broadcaster WION News, including Pakistani reporter Anas Mallick and his Afghan colleagues Zakaria and Mayel Kharoti, demonstrates yet again that they have no respect for the profession of journalism," said CPJ President Jodie Ginsberg. "Taliban members and the General Directorate of Intelligence must permit local and international journalists to work freely."

While in custody at the Taliban facility in Wazir Akbar Khan, officers examined Mallick's phone and asked why he filmed the scene of the drone strike, he said. The officers also accused him of being a Christian or a Hindu, and when he said he was a Muslim, they called him a spy, the journalist told CPJ.

Mallick said he insisted he was a journalist, and when he told the Taliban members to check that he had recently interviewed Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, they replied that they did not know who Muttaqi was.

After about 90 minutes in custody, General Directorate of Intelligence officers blindfolded and handcuffed Mallick, Zakaria, and Kharoti, and brought them separately to a GDI office in Kabul, Mallick told CPJ.

There, a GDI officer questioned Mallick about his personal and professional life, the contents of his cellphone, and his travel history in Afghanistan, he said.

GDI agents variously interrogated Mallick in Pashto and English, Mallick told CPJ. He said agents first accused him of being a member of Pakistan's ISI intelligence agency; when they learned he worked for an Indian broadcaster, they accused him of being a member of India's RAW intelligence agency; and when they saw a picture on Mallick's phone showing him in front of the U.S. Capitol, they accused him of working for the CIA.

At one point during his detention, two Taliban agents came into Mallick's interrogation room and attached a battery with wires to his left ear, the journalist told CPJ; he said they were laughing, and set up the battery to pretend as if they would electrocute him.

Mallick said the GDI officers later brought him to a cell that had one Afghan prisoner and several surveillance cameras. He was held in that room for about eight hours, and then on the morning of August 5 he was released without any explanation or charge filed against him, he told CPJ. He said he had spent a total of about 21 hours in detention, during which his family and employer had no information about his status. He added that he did not know exactly where he was held while in GDI custody.

He said that Zakaria and Kharoti were both released on August 7.

Mallick told CPJ that he experienced medical issues after the August 4 beating, saying that he had a fluid imbalance where he was hit in the ribs, and had bruises on his neck, back, and ear. Zakaria sustained bruising on his left side and across his back, and Kharoti also had back injuries, as seen in images of their

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

wounds shared with CPJ.”

The Guardian, Photographer Fatimah Hossaini: ‘In Kabul, there was so much hope and desire’, 7 August 2022

“The Afghan-Iranian artist narrowly escaped from Kabul to Paris last August, as the Taliban took over. She talks about the terror of that time, why she still longs for home, and her work photographing Afghan women in exile in France. [...]“In Tehran, people are a little depressed with the situation. But in Kabul there was so much hope and desire. A new generation was burning with it. I could see women in every sector: musicians, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians. I could teach my classes at the university without a hijab. I could show my students any image I liked. These things would never happen in Iran.” But life really was about to change. When a newly elected Joe Biden confirmed in April 2021 that American troops would be withdrawn by 11 September, Taliban insurgents began to intensify their attacks on the Afghan state; in May, for instance, a car bomb outside a Kabul school killed more than 60 people, most of them schoolgirls. “Even I could see that the security situation was different,” Hossaini says. “I lost two journalist friends [to Taliban attacks] during those months. [...] But her mind was clear now: it was, she finally conceded, time to go. Like thousands upon thousands of other desperate Afghans, she pitched up at Kabul airport. She would spend the next four days there. “It was crazy,” she says. “Mothers abandoning their children; lovers abandoning each other. People were so desperate, they would do anything to leave”.”

BBC News: Afghanistan: How one TV presenter became a refugee, 1 August 2022

“On 14 August 2021, the night before the Taliban took control of Kabul, Shabnam Dawran was preparing to present the news bulletin on Radio Television Afghanistan. [...] At their first official news conference, a Taliban spokesman told a room filled with journalists that women could work “shoulder to shoulder with men”. The next day, a nervous but excited Shabnam put on her work clothes and made her way to the office. But as soon as she arrived, she was confronted by Taliban soldiers, who she says were guarding the building and only allowing male workers to enter. [...] When she told them she had every right to work, Shabnam says one of the soldiers pointed his rifle at her, placed his finger on the trigger and said: “One bullet will be enough for you - will you leave or should I shoot you here?” She then left, but posted a video describing the encounter on social media. It went viral, putting her and her family's life in danger. She packed a small bag and fled the country a few days later, taking her two younger siblings - Meena and Hemat - with her.”

Khaama Press, Taliban Intelligence Arrests a Salam Watandar Radio Correspondent in Northern Afghanistan, 25 July 2022

“According to Salam Watandar, Talha, the Taliban’s deputy intelligence officer in Faryab province, arrested Alauddin Erkin, one of the local journalists for this outlet.

Salam Watandar reported that the intelligence forces made no mention of the cause or intent behind the detention of Alauddin Erkin.

Selagi Ehsaas, a female host of Dost Radio in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar, was beaten almost days ago until she passed out at the time.

In reaction to this, the AFJC voiced concern and condemned the intensification of violence and pressure on journalists.

On July 20, as Ehsaas was returning from work in Moi Mubarak village of Surkh Rod district, Nangarhar province, unidentified gunmen stopped her and pistol-whipped her.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Almost 6,000 journalists have lost their jobs and 287 media outlets closed since the Taliban seized power, according to a recent report from the Association of Free Journalists of Afghanistan that was published at the beginning of May.”

Khaama Press, Female Radio Personality Pistol-Whipped in Eastern Afghanistan; AFJC Calls It Pressure Intensification on Journalists, 24 July 2022

“[...] It is alleged that the female broadcaster (Selagi Ehsaas) was beaten by the Taliban; however, the Information and Culture Department of the Taliban in Nangarhar province has denied the claim and has stated that it is investigating the nature of the situation and its causes.

Previously, on June 6, the manager of Dost Radio, Sahaar Sirat Safi, was detained by Taliban intelligence in Kabul and released after 28 days.

According to UNAMA, there have been significant changes in the country’s media landscape, including the closure of more than half of the free media, the evacuation of hundreds of journalists, and rising work restrictions, violence, and threats against journalists.”

Human Rights Watch, UN Reports on Taliban Repression, Abuse in Afghanistan, 20 July 2022

“A new report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) makes for very grim reading, confirming many of the concerns Afghan human rights advocates have raised since last August, when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. UNAMA catalogues serious human rights abuses that Taliban forces have committed, including summary executions and enforced disappearances of former members of the Afghan National Security Forces, which have continued months after the Taliban takeover. It chronicles the series of Taliban decrees on the rights of women and girls that have given rise to “severe restrictions on their human rights, resulting in their exclusion from most aspects of everyday and public life.” And UNAMA describes how “arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists, human rights defenders, [and] protesters have had a chilling effect on freedom of the media and civic activism.” The response from the Taliban authorities was predictable. They ignored the many cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances UNAMA documented, and they denied the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice had “ever beaten anyone, harmed or forced anyone to do anything ... or said anything to women about dress code.” Much of their response was limited to the situation of prisoners, including the peculiar and false assertion that inmates “are satisfied” with prison food. As UNAMA describes, prisoners have been routinely denied food and water as punishment. Taliban officials, who for years denounced torture by the former government and US forces, did not respond to allegations that they have also tortured prisoners, including by using electric shock. UNAMA also notes that while civilian casualties have declined as the armed conflict has largely ended (with at least 118,443 civilians dead and wounded since UNAMA started counting in December 2008), attacks by Islamic State-linked armed groups continue to take a terrible toll, killing more than 700 civilians and wounding more than 1400 since August. Eleven months after Afghanistan’s abrupt transition to Taliban rule, the UNAMA report demonstrates the crucial importance of continued monitoring and documentation of the steady erosion of rights in Afghanistan, and acts as an important reminder of the heavy price Afghans are paying.”

Afghan Voice Agency, Afghan Journalists Express Concerns Over Their Uncertain Future, 28 June 2022

“[...] journalists said that they have been forced to leave the country because of threats, raising their deep concerns that they are in a dire mental state and have been forgotten by the institutions supporting journalists and human rights defenders.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"The chapter on freedom of expression and a democratic and free media in Afghanistan has been closed and the media has fallen into the trap of extremism," they said in a statement."

Afghan Voice Agency, Herat: Media monitoring and support committee launched, 23 June 2022

"Herat's department of information and culture has emphasized that no security department is allowed to arbitrarily detain a journalist or a media worker, and that all cases relating to journalists violating the law will be investigated jointly by the new committee and the provincial culture and information department [...]"

Naeem-ul-Haq Haqqani, Herat's director of information and culture, said: "Instead of being questioned by a government security department, the case will be directly investigated by this committee and the result will be shared to the information and culture department."

In the meantime, a number of journalists are optimistic about the establishment of this committee and called on the government to facilitate the process of accessing information and to formulate an outline on how journalists need to work within the framework of this committee.

"In the current situation, having such a committee that supports the media and journalists can be very effective," said Marjan Wafa, a journalist."

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Land info, Country info response Afghanistan: the situation for Afghan women after Taliban takeover, 22 June 2022

"Figures from Reporters Without Borders (as reproduced in Kumar & Noori 2022) show that only 100 of the country's 700 female journalists were still working at the end of 2021. According to an international journalist (conversation in Islamabad) that follows developments in Afghanistan closely, in March 2022 there were still female journalists which was determined to continue reporting from the country. Women were newscasters on TV, they reported and interviewed people in the street. The females the journalists were at that time covered with a simple scarf.

On March 27, 2022, BBC News, Voice of America and Deutsche, among others Welle closed to viewers in Afghanistan (BBC 2022). According to the international the journalist (conversation in Islamabad, March 2022) this was about broadcasts on dari and pashto. He believed that the reason for this should have been that women who participated in the broadcasts did not follow acceptable dress code and that they were not covered properly. So it was not what was reported, but how women appeared in the broadcasts that was the reason why the broadcasts were taken off air, according to the journalist.

In May 2022, a directive came with a requirement that all female news anchors should cover the faces while on the air. Several female presenters took part countermeasures and male presenters showed solidarity with their female colleagues by wearing black face masks when they read the news. One was started social media campaign - #FreeHerFace. The Taliban, for its part, stressed that the decision was final and not subject to negotiation (Al Jazeera 2022c; Barr & Fetrat 2022; Strømme, Wolasmal & Fjeld 2022) [...]"

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan: Five UK citizens released by Taliban, 20 June 2022

"Friends and family of Peter Jouvenal, a journalist and businessman, said he was among those released. [...] The Taliban have released several British citizens who were detained in Afghanistan after an agreement was reached between the two countries, Taliban and UK officials have said. The detainees were released on Sunday following a series of meetings between Afghan and British officials, said Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Taliban government, in a statement on Monday."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

HRW, Afghanistan's Taliban Crack Down on Vloggers, 14 June 2022

"On June 7, Afghan vlogger Ajmal Haqiqi – well known for his YouTube channel and modeling shows – appeared in a very different kind of broadcast. Taliban officials arrested Haqiqi and his three colleagues and released a video showing the men, with bruised faces and clearly under duress, apologizing for encouraging "prostitution" and "insulting verses of the Quran." On May 28, the four had posted a YouTube video in which they recited Quranic verses in Arabic in a comical tone. Within a week, the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) had detained them. "We have been promoting Western culture and values, and for this I apologize," Haqiqi said in his evidently scripted "confession." As of mid-June, the men remained in custody. No charges have been filed against them, and no lawyers or family members have been able to see them. These arrests are among the latest in the Taliban's crackdown on free expression. On May 24, Taliban authorities detained Mirza Hassani, director of Radio Sedai Aftab, at a checkpoint in Herat city, accusing him of supporting opposition groups. On May 10, GDI officials detained Khan Mohamad Sayal, a TV journalist, in Urzgan, without explanation. By mid-June, neither man had been released. A Kandahar journalist who had been detained for four days in April for broadcasting music told me he had been accused of working with foreigners. His "confession" was also forced: "They were beating and telling me that I had to admit it," he said. The Taliban have used various measures to silence media in Afghanistan, ranging from establishing restrictive guidelines to sending intelligence officials to meet with media staff. Forcing media workers to confess to dubious crimes sends a message to others to adhere to the Taliban's rules – a tactic also used against women protesters who were detained and compelled to confess. A media worker in Herat recently told me, "Freedom of speech has died in Afghanistan." For journalists, social media activists, and others publicly resisting the Taliban's onerous restrictions, his words seem all too true."

CPJ, Taliban forces beat journalist Reza Shahir, charge 3 others over corruption reporting, 9 June 2022

"The Taliban must investigate the beating of journalist Reza Shahir, and immediately drop all charges against journalists Firoz Ghafari, Basira Mosamem, and Olugh Beig Ghafari, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Thursday. At about midnight on June 3, Taliban forces stopped Shahir while he was on his way to his home in Kabul's District 18, searched him, and then punched him in the head and beat him on the shoulder with an AK-47, knocking him unconscious, according to media reports and the journalist, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview."

Gandhara, Video 'Confession' Of Popular Afghan YouTuber Prompts Outrage, 9 June 2022

"Afghan social media influencer Ajmal Haqiqi gained popularity for his entertaining videos on YouTube. On June 7, the fashion model appeared on another widely viewed video. But this time, he was handcuffed, wearing a prison uniform, and sporting bruises on his face as he addressed the camera. In the 2-minute video issued by the Taliban, Haqiqi apologized to Afghanistan's new rulers for "insulting" the Koran, Islam's holy book, in one of his recent YouTube clips. "We are ready to accept any punishment," said Haqiqi, standing next to three of his colleagues. He added that his popular YouTube channel promotes "moral corruption" and is supported by the ousted Western-backed Afghan government. The video uploaded by the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence was accompanied by a tweet saying: "No one is allowed to insult Koranic verses or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The Taliban must immediately release YouTuber Ajmal Haqiqi and his colleagues, 8 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Responding to the arbitrary arrest of YouTuber Ajmal Haqiqi and his colleagues yesterday on charges of “insulting Islamic sacred values” after they posted a video in which they allegedly used Quranic verses in a humorous manner, Samira Hamidi, Amnesty International’s South Asia Campaigner, said: “Arbitrarily detaining YouTuber Haqiqi and his colleagues and coercing them into apologizing because the Taliban de-facto authorities were offended by the video is a blatant attack on the right to freedom of expression. The Taliban must immediately and unconditionally release the YouTubers and end their continued censorship of those who wish to freely express their ideas.” “Restrictions to the right to freedom of expression must be clearly provided by law and be strictly necessary and proportionate to a legitimate aim. International human rights law does not permit restrictions of freedom of expression simply on the grounds it has the potential to offend or insult nor for the protection of religious beliefs or the religious sensibilities of their adherents. This incident is a classic example of how the Taliban is creating a climate of fear in Afghanistan by using arbitrary arrests and coercion to force people into silence.” “Since assuming power, the Taliban have been using intimidation, harassment, and violence on anyone who has expressed support for human rights or modern values, especially human rights defenders, women activists, journalists, and members of academia among others. As the de facto authority, the Taliban must abide by international human rights law and respect everyone’s right to freedom of expression without discrimination.” Background Ajmal Haqiqi is a model and social media influencer based in Kabul, Afghanistan. Last week, a video was posted on Haqiqi’s YouTube channel in which he along with three other colleagues allegedly used Quranic verses in a humorous manner. On 5 June 2022, Haqiqi posted another video apologizing for the previous video. On 7 June 2022, the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence arrested Ajmal Haqiqi and three of his colleagues on charges of “insulting Islamic sacred values”. Later in the day, a video ‘confession’ of Haqiqi was released where he again apologized.”

The Guardian, Revealed: Afghan journalists facing death threats and beatings, despite UK pledge to save them, 28 May 2022

“A group of Afghan journalists who worked closely with the UK media for years have revealed how they face beatings, death threats and months in hiding, and accuse the government of reneging on a pledge to bring them to Britain. Having fought in vain for clearance to come to the UK since the return of Taliban rule last summer, the eight journalists are now taking legal action against the government. They have applied for a judicial review after waiting months for their applications to relocate to the UK to be processed. They report only receiving standard response emails from the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (Arap) programme. Members of the group told the Observer they had worked with British media, reporting on operations against the Taliban, programmes to rebuild Afghanistan’s infrastructure, the rights of women and the fight against the drugs trade. They said that since the Taliban’s takeover, they had received warnings that they were being targeted.”

Committee to Project Journalists, Afghan journalist Ali Akbar Khairkhah disappears in Kabul, Taliban cracks down on women reporters, 27 May 2022

“On Tuesday, May 24, Khairkhah, a photojournalist and reporter with the local Subhe Kabul newspaper, disappeared from the Kote Sangi area of District 5 in the capital of Kabul, according to his nephew Mohammad Abbasi, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview, and media reports. Khairkhah told his family that he was going to the area to report and would attend his evening university classes, his nephew said, adding that his uncle did not attend the classes and they could not find any information about him in the hospitals, police districts, or the Kabul police command.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

In a separate incident, on May 19, Naimulhaq Haqqani, the Taliban's director of information and culture in western Herat province, told his personal assistant to expel Marjan Wafa, a reporter with the independent local Radio Killid station, from his press conference, according to a journalist with knowledge of the incident who talked to CPJ on condition of anonymity, fearing the Taliban's reprisal, and media reports. Wafa, the only female journalist at the press conference, reportedly was complying with the Taliban's dress code by wearing a face covering that exposed only her eyes. Haqqani's personal assistant did not give her any reason for the order to leave.

Wafa's expulsion came amid a broader crackdown on women reporters, with Taliban ministries ordering female TV journalists to wear masks while on air. [...] Khairkhah works as a journalist and is also an undergraduate journalism student in Kabul. He has recently conducted interviews with Afghan politicians for Subhe Kabul, which covers Afghan news and current affairs. CPJ contacted Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesperson, for comment via messaging app but did not receive any response. CPJ was unable to find contact information for Herat province's director of information and culture. CPJ has documented the increasingly prominent role of the General Directorate of Intelligence in controlling news media and intimidating journalists in Afghanistan."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The press is grappling with censorship and threats, dramatically reducing citizens' access to information. In international media freedom ratings, Afghanistan has plunged since August 2021. Access to information has become very challenging, impacting negatively on the dissemination of information including at the provincial level. The expert noted "The enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly are essential ingredients for a healthy and functioning society. Further, the de facto authorities should introduce strict and clear safeguards to prevent interference in public freedoms, especially the freedoms of opinion, expression, and assembly". For individual journalists, the impact has been worse for women media professionals with 80% of them having lost their jobs and increasing restrictions on their activities including by being required to wear a face-covering on screen."

UNOCHR, Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul, 26 May 2022

"The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] The high number of reports of intimidation, harassment, attacks, arrests, and in some cases killing or disappearance, of journalists, prosecutors, and judges for undertaking their duties, as well as of civil society for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association is of serious concern, Bennett said. Civil society space and media freedom is critical for a peaceful society in which rights are respected, he said."

UNAMA, PRESS STATEMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council further expressed deep concern regarding the announcements by the Taliban that all women must cover their faces in public spaces and in media broadcasts, only leave home in cases of necessity, and that violations of this directive will lead to the punishment of their male relatives."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Al Jazeera, Afghan female journalists defiant as Taliban restrictions grow, 24 May 2022

“Mahira* has become a familiar face on Afghan television, as viewers tune in every night to watch her present the news. Even during the most turbulent recent events, the 27-year-old journalist remained calm and composed as she reported on the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan. On Saturday, Mahira appeared on screen, but her face was covered with a black mask following a Taliban decree ordering female news anchors to cover their faces while on air.”

Committee to Project Journalists, Taliban intelligence agents detain, pressure Afghan journalist Jebran Lawrand to stop critical reporting, 23 May 2022

“Taliban authorities must investigate the arbitrary detention, questioning, and intimidation of Afghan journalist Jebran Lawrand and allow local press members to work freely, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Monday. On April 25, Lawrand, a political programs manager and presenter at the independent Kabul News TV station, was summoned to the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), where he was detained, cursed at, and questioned for over two hours, according to the journalist, who posted about the incident on Facebook and talked to CPJ by phone, two activists with knowledge of the case who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity for fear of Taliban reprisal, news reports, and tweets by a former government official. The activists told CPJ that the Taliban intelligence agents warned Lawrand that his TV shows shouldn’t criticize the Taliban and that he must not invite critical analysts to appear. The agents also reportedly warned that no one should know about the journalist’s detention and questioning or he would face graver consequences and called him an infidel, evil, atheist, and pig before releasing him. “Taliban authorities must tell its General Directorate of Intelligence to stop detaining and using intimidation tactics against journalists like Jebran Lawrand,” said Steven Butler, CPJ’s Asia program coordinator, in Washington, D.C. “The Taliban needs to return to their original commitment to tolerate an independent media and must learn to accept criticism without taking retaliatory action.” Lawrand was summoned and detained a day after a Facebook post about his April 24, 2022 show, during which he disagreed with a Taliban supporter. The journalist and the activists told CPJ that on April 25, while Lawrand was on his way home, several Taliban intelligence operatives from the counter-terrorism directorate told him that he wouldn’t face any further detention because of the April 24 show but could face future arrest or imprisonment if he continued to report the way he did. On April 27, Lawrand resigned from his job after 15 years as a journalist and has been in hiding since his detention, according to the activists. The activists said he continues to receive anonymous threats from unknown telephone numbers. CPJ contacted Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesperson, for comment via messaging app but did not receive any response. CPJ has documented the increasingly prominent role of the GDI in controlling news media and intimidating journalists in Afghanistan. CPJ is also investigating the alleged expulsion of Marjan Wafa, the only female journalist in Herat city, from a press conference by local Taliban officials on May 20, 2022.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Afghan journalist Khalid Qaderi sentenced to 1 year in prison, 6 May 2022

“A Taliban military court in the western city of Herat sentenced Qaderi to one year in prison for allegedly spreading anti-regime propaganda and committing espionage for foreign media outlets, according to news reports, a tweet by the journalist’s sister Homaira Qaderi, and a local journalist familiar with the case, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of reprisal from the Taliban. Qaderi did not have access to a defense lawyer, and Taliban authorities forced him to sign a document agreeing not

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to appeal the verdict, that journalist said. His case is CPJ's first documented instance of a journalist being tried, convicted, and sentenced for their work since the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan in August 2021. The ruling was issued in mid-April and the journalist was notified 10 days after his appearance in court, according to those sources, which did not provide exact dates for the proceedings. Qaderi is a reporter and producer of cultural programs for Radio Nawruz, an independent broadcaster in Herat province, and also publishes poetry, according to those sources."

Khaama, AFJC Calls on Taliban to Revive Access to Information Laws, 4 May 2022

"Statistics from last 12 months by the AFJC show at least four journalists and media practitioners have lost their lives in Afghanistan: three as a result of two ISIS-affiliated explosions in Kabul and one person during coverage of the war between the Taliban and former government forces in Kandahar. The report also showed about 130 other incidents against journalists and media practitioners, where about 90 cases were short and long-term detention up to a month, including violence and threats."

Amnesty International, Bitter Memories and Unknown Future: What will happen to the Free Press in Afghanistan?, 4 May 2022

"The protests were held in different parts of Kabul. My colleague Nemat Naqdi and I went to PD-3 (Police District-3) of Kabul to cover the protest. We started filming when women gathered and started the protest, but the Taliban tried to stop us and simply told us not to film. We asked about their reason but received no answer. After that, one of them took me to the PD. Before entering the PD, I thought they had brought me to talk and negotiate but I soon realized what awaited me: I was tortured until I fainted. They kept me in one of the rooms of the PD for four hours."

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, Statement by friend of Afghan Women Ambassadors' Group on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2022

"We deplore the erosion of rights for journalists and media institutions under the Taliban. We particularly note the obstacles faced by female journalists working in Afghanistan. Media freedom is critical for all societies. Freedoms for journalists and the media helps ensure transparency and accountability. An inclusive society with free media is crucial for Afghanistan to achieve its full potential. It is vital that Afghan journalists and media organisations can do their jobs without intimidation, violence or the risk of arbitrary detention. We commend the brave Afghan journalists who continue to share news from within Afghanistan with the Afghan people and the rest of the world, despite the threats they face."

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, Afghan journalists join UN in marking World Press Freedom Day, 2 May 2022

"KABUL – Afghan journalists and media advocates joined UNAMA and UNESCO this week in marking World Press Freedom Day in Kabul, offering a platform to exchange views on the shrinking and restrictive media space in the country and the way forward. Noting that the Afghan media sector is going through precarious and, arguably, one of the most challenging times in more than two decades, UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and UNAMA deputy head, Mette Knudsen, paid tribute to hard-working journalists for their tenacity and resilience. "Free media is under attack. News outlets have been shut down. Journalists have lost jobs. Scores have left the country, but many remain, facing an uncertain future," said Ms. Knudsen. "Those still working with firm commitment and dedication are living under constant fear and intimidation. Women journalists are bearing the most severe burden." She assured the Afghan media sector that UNAMA is firmly on the side of free and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

independent media in Afghanistan. “Let me assure you that UNAMA and the broader UN family in Afghanistan stand firmly in solidarity with your clarion call for safety, professional independence and a free press,” she said. “I would like to call on the authorities in charge to ensure a conducive environment for journalists to operate and ensure their safety. Special attention and action are required to protect female media workers.” Ms. Knudsen also called on the international community to expand support to the independent Afghan media. In a statement read out on the occasion, UNESCO Afghanistan said it is concerned about detention of journalists and increasing restrictions on media freedom, urging all to uphold press freedom and the right of journalists to do their job without fear of arrest or intimidation. Speaking on behalf of Afghan media community, Tolo News Director Khpalwak Sapai called for urgent support of the UN and wider international community. He also called on the de facto authorities to initiate dialogue with the media community. “We are suggesting for a new media law because different regulations issued by the de facto authorities can't solve media issues,” he said. “We want the Ministry of Information and Culture to address these issues.” In a joint video message to the 30 April event, independent UN special rapporteurs Richard Bennett (on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan) and Irene Khan (on freedom of opinion and expression) called on the authorities to recognize and respect a free, pluralistic and independent media, and to comply with Afghan obligations under international human rights instruments relevant to freedom of opinion and expression. “While the press in general is grappling with the new challenges, the impact has been far worse for women media professionals,” said the UN special rapporteurs, while paying tribute to Afghan journalists for their “bravery, tenacity, and their determination” to continue reporting despite increasing challenges and risks including to their lives and livelihoods.”

Thomson Reuters Foundation News (Afghanistan), In Pakistan, Afghan refugees face hardship and a frosty reception, 19 April 2022

“From former soldiers to journalists, thousands of Afghans have fled to Pakistan since the Taliban seized power, but many are struggling in a country that has grown tired of hosting refugees from Afghanistan”

Khaama Press (Afghan News Agency), Afghan Journalists Face Ever-Increasing Restrictions, 18 April 2022

“In one of the latest’s, a TV host and presenter Moheb Jalili, has been abducted and tortured by the Taliban members in district 15 of the Kabul city at around 8 Saturday night, according to sources. In an interview with Hasht-e-Subh, Jalili confirmed his detention, saying he is not sure of the crime for which the Taliban government has detained and tortured him for. The current government, however, did not immediately comment.”

Al Jazeera (Afghanistan), I am now one of millions of Afghan refugees, 16 April 2022

“When the Taliban took over Kabul in August, like millions of other Afghans, it came as a shock to me. Within the first days of their rule, the office of Daily Outlook Afghanistan newspaper, where I worked as a journalist, was closed and a number of my colleagues decided to leave the country immediately. In the following months, I continued trying to find a job in the hope of remaining in my homeland. I did some reporting for foreign media but failed to find a permanent job. Working as a journalist was never safe in Afghanistan but under the Taliban, it became extremely difficult. Media outlets were shut down one after the other; journalists were beaten up and tortured; and the freedom we used to have to go out and report was clearly gone.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“In March, three women working for a television station in Jalalabad were killed in two incidents. Mursal Wahidi was killed as she walked home while Sadia Sadat and Shahnaz were killed in a separate incident on the same night, also while returning home from work. ISIS-K militants claimed responsibility for the attacks. [...] HRW reported that between August 15 and October 1, the Taliban arrested at least 32 journalists. Most were given warnings regarding their reporting and released, but some were beaten. In a September 10 statement, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated that on September 7 and 8, the Taliban beat and detained protesters, including women, and up to 20 journalists, two of whom were beaten severely.

Between August 15 and December 14, UNAMA documented nearly 60 apparently arbitrary detentions, beatings, and threats of activists, journalists, and staff of the AIHRC, attributed to the Taliban. [...] The Afghanistan Journalists Center reported that Taliban security forces searched the home of independent television network owner Aref Nouri without a warrant on December 26 and took Nouri to an undisclosed location for two days. A Taliban spokesperson said that the detention was unrelated to Nouri’s media activities. [...] Following August 15, the Taliban used force against protesters and journalists and suppressed political discussion and dissent. Journalists reported a chilling effect on free speech and press in the country as a result of the Taliban’s policies, particularly following media reports of torture of two local journalists covering women’s protests after the Taliban takeover. The Taliban announced restrictive media regulations in September and additional guidelines in November, in line with the Taliban’s strict interpretation of sharia. [...] On September 16, Reporters Without Borders said that 103 journalists signed a joint statement asking the international community to take urgent action to help protect press freedom in the country. The journalists pled for international action to guarantee the protection of female journalists who sought to continue their work, resources for local media outlets to remain open, and material assistance for those who have fled abroad. Reporters Without Borders and the Afghan Independent Journalists Association reported that approximately 200 media outlets have shut down, leaving almost 60 percent of journalists unemployed. Various factors, including financial constraints, fear, and departure of staff, also contributed to closures. [...] The Taliban insurgency continued to threaten, attack, and kill journalists and media organizations. The Taliban warned media would be targeted unless they stopped broadcasting what it called “anti-Taliban statements.” Increased levels of insecurity until August 15 created a dangerous environment for journalists, even when they were not the specific targets of violence. Media advocacy groups reported that many female journalists worked under pseudonyms in both print and social media to avoid recognition, harassment, and retaliation, especially after the Taliban takeover in August.

Many media workers fled to safe havens starting in January after the Taliban launched a campaign of violence against journalists in late 2020, as reported by UNAMA and independent media. Taliban violence continued to escalate against journalists throughout the year, and frequent reports of attacks continued after their occupation of the country in August. According to the UNESCO observatory of killed journalists, seven journalists were killed between January 1 and August 8, including four women. [...] In response to increased concern regarding the targeting of journalists following the Taliban’s takeover in August, the UN Human Rights Council held an emergency session, and a group of UN human rights experts convened to issue a statement through the OHCHR. On September 3, the statement called on all member states to provide urgent protection to Afghan journalists and media workers who fear for their lives and are seeking safety abroad. Many of those journalists who remained in the country ceased their work and reported

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

living in hiding to avoid targeted attacks. According to an al-Jazeera report in October, more than 30 instances of violence and threats of violence were reported by the Afghanistan National Journalists Union. Many journalists fled the provinces to Kabul and others departed the country. Journalists faced the threat of harassment and attack by ISIS-K, the Taliban, and pre-August 15 government-linked figures attempting to influence how they were covered in the news. With the Taliban takeover of the country, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) in September reported numerous instances of Taliban physical violence against and detention of journalists, warning that an entire generation of reporters was at risk in the country. On September 7, Taliban fighters detained a freelance photographer after he covered a protest in the western city of Herat, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. At the end of the year, he had not been released. On September 8, according to the CPJ, the Taliban detained and later released at least 14 journalists covering protests in Kabul. According to media sources, at least nine of the journalists were subjected to violence during their arrests or detention. On September 18, an unidentified man shot journalist Mohammad Ali Ahmadi after accusing him of working for an “American radio station.” Ahmadi, a reporter and editor with national radio broadcaster Salam Watandar in Kabul, was shot twice in the leg and hospitalized. CPJ reported in October that Taliban fighters assaulted at least three journalists covering a women’s protest in Kabul for demanding “work, bread, and education.” The fighters also attacked a photographer working with a French news agency, who captured some of the violence on camera. According to UNAMA, two journalists were killed after August 15 – one by the ISIS-K and another by unknown actors. [...] Throughout the year some reporters acknowledged they avoided criticizing the Taliban and some neighboring countries in their reporting because they feared Taliban retribution. [...] Historic Taliban practices and post-August 15 actions created a climate of uncertainty and fear, which curtailed the work of journalists, civic activists, and human rights defenders, many of whom left the country due to retaliation. Investigations and reports by journalists and human rights organizations, however, continued to bring to light human rights abuses and atrocities, including allegations of summary executions of persons associated with the previous government, as well as extrajudicial killings of journalists and activists. Taliban authorities often denied that those abuses were taking place.”

Arab News, RSF urges new UN special rapporteur to act quickly to protect Afghan journalists, 12 April 2022

“Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in mid-August last year, Afghan journalists and media reporters have lived in increasing fear amid regular reports of arbitrary detentions, arrests and raids of journalists’ homes. RSF’s letter warns Bennett that press freedom has dramatically worsened in Afghanistan, and that journalists are being arbitrarily arrested and placed under media restrictions. The new regulations in Afghanistan include a law banning privately owned TV channels from retransmitting news programs provided by international broadcasters, including BBC, Voice of America and Deutsche Welle, in local languages such as Dari, Pashto and Uzbek. Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in mid-August last year, Afghan journalists and media reporters have lived in increasing fear amid regular reports of arbitrary detentions, arrests and raids of journalists’ homes. At least 50 media workers have been arrested by the Afghan police and intelligence services since, and more than 300 media organizations have shut down,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

with many employees fleeing the country.

Reporters Without Borders ranked Afghanistan 122nd out of 180 countries in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index.”

Human Rights Watch, Taliban Intensify Attacks on Afghan Media, 30 March 2022

“On March 28, security officers from the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence raided the offices of four radio stations in the southern city of Kandahar for violating a ban on music and detained six journalists. All were released only after they promised they would never broadcast music again. “I want to leave this job,” one said. “Being a journalist has always been my dream job but not anymore.” On the same day, Taliban authorities banned outlets Afghanistan from broadcasting international news programs, including Voice of America and the BBC, in Dari, Pashto, and Uzbek languages. This new restriction is the latest Taliban measure to limit access to independent information. Journalists say Taliban intelligence officials hold regular meetings with the media to inform them of any new rules. In some cases, journalists have reported that they have been harassed, beaten, and arbitrarily detained without explanation.”

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Taliban detain and release at least 7 journalists and media workers; ban broadcasts from BBC, VOA, DW, 28 March 2022

“Since Saturday, March 26, Taliban forces have detained and then released at least seven journalists and media workers, and have ordered local outlets to stop airing content from three international broadcasters [...] On Saturday, Taliban forces in Kandahar detained the independent local broadcaster Zema Radio’s director, Mirwais Atal, after raiding his home, according to media reports and the Afghanistan Journalists Center press freedom group. Authorities held Atal for about 15 hours before bringing him back to his home to retrieve his phone; they then transferred him to an undisclosed location, according to those sources. At a meeting with local media executives the following day, the deputy director for media and public affairs at the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence, Jawad Sargar, said that Atal was detained due to his “feministic viewpoints,” according to two senior media executives who attended that meeting and spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity. [...] During the Sunday meeting with local media executives at the Kandahar General Directorate of Intelligence office, Sargar ordered all major local broadcasters to cease airing music and entertainment live shows, as well as any programming that he claimed was against national and Islamic values, according to the two executives who spoke to CPJ. Those executives said that Sargar gave them a two-hour deadline to comply, but the executives refused and demanded a written directive from the Taliban senior leaders or ministries. On Monday, Taliban intelligence agents raided the Kandahar-based independent radio station Millat Zhagh and detained news manager Farid Alizai, producer Rahimullah Noori, and technical chief Mahmood Mehraban, and shut down the outlet and sealed its office, according to the AJC and a senior executive with the outlet, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of retaliation by the Taliban [...] In additional raids on Monday to enforce Sargar’s order, Taliban intelligence agents in Kandahar also detained three other employees of independent local broadcasters: Sanga Radio manager Agha Sher Menar, Zema Radio administrative manager Waris Noori, and Radio Tabassum producer Samiullah Wahdat.”

Afghanistan Journalists Center (AJC), Taliban raid four radio stations in Kandahar, arrest six media workers, 28 March 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Taliban’s intelligence men raid offices of four local radio stations today and arrest six employees in southern Kandahar city over ‘breaking the music ban rule’. Afghanistan Journalists Center condemns the arrests and demands their immediate release.

The intelligence forces from the Taliban’s Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) in Kandahar raided the offices of Mellat Zagh, Zma, Tabassum, and Sanag radio stations on Monday early morning. The detainees included Farid Alizai, Rahimullah Noori and Mahmood Meraban of Mellat Zagh, Waris Noori of Zma radio, Samiullah Wahdat of Tabassum radio, and Aghashir Manar of Sanga radio were held and transferred to GDI detection’s center, a journalist in Kandahar told AFJC. “They were detained and being interrogated for breaking the Taliban music ban rule,” he said “This incident comes a day after GDI officials warned local media outlets on breaking the ban on music” Taliban have banned music and female voices on television and radio channels following the takeover of Afghanistan in August last year.”

DW, Taliban hits DW, BBC with broadcast bans in Afghanistan, 27 March 2022

“Afghanistan’s Taliban government is targeting international media with broadcasting bans, as the militant group continues to crack down on civil liberties in the country.

On Monday, DW’s Afghan service said some DW programming will no longer be rebroadcast by Afghan partners.

The BBC said Sunday that news bulletins in Pashto, Persian and Uzbek are to be taken off air, according to the UK’s national broadcaster.

The Taliban broadcasting crackdown targets DW’s political talk show “Aashti” in Dari and in Pashto on local partner ToloNews. Science programs broadcast on Ariana TV and Shamshad were also affected.

“The increasing restrictions on freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Afghanistan are very worrying,” said DW Director-General Peter Limbourg.

“The fact that the Taliban are now criminalizing the distribution of DW programs by our media partners is hindering positive developments in Afghanistan. Free media is essential for this and we will do everything we can to continue to provide the people of Afghanistan with independent information via the internet and social media,” he added.

“Since the Taliban took power, the people of Afghanistan have been waiting in vain for their living conditions to improve, or at least for some degree of normality,” Limbourg said.”

TOLO News, Family Says Journalist in Kandahar Arrested, 27 March 2022

“The family of Mirwais Atal, a local journalist and director of Zema Radio in Kandahar, claim that he was detained by the Islamic Emirate forces on Saturday for unknown reasons and is still being held [...] Meanwhile, media outlets have expressed concern over the recent arrests of journalists, saying that 16 media workers have been arrested in the past month. “Over the past month, about sixteen media officials and journalists have been detained by the Islamic Emirate for interrogations or briefings,” said Jamil Weqar, head of the investigation committee of journalists.

“We call on the officials of the Islamic Emirate, if they have any kind of problem with the Afghan media, to solve it through legal channels, the Ministry of Information and Culture, and the Media Violations Commission, which is to be formed, to conduct media affairs through that channel...,” said Hujjatullah Mujaddidi, a leading member of the Federation of Journalists and Media of Afghanistan. But the Islamic Emirate rejects the detention of journalists.

“If any action is taken toward a journalist or activity of a media outlet, there is no journalistic agenda behind it, there are other issues behind it,” said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate. “If any journalist or media outlet says something in his or her work which does not have a news or journalistic

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

aspect, there are other issues behind it,” said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate.”

Ariana News, Violence against journalists increases in Afghanistan: report, 16 March 2022

“Violence against journalists has increased slightly in Afghanistan in the past year, and almost 6,000 media workers have lost their jobs in this time, according to a report released on Wednesday. As many 117 cases of violence against journalists and media workers were registered in Afghanistan within one year since March 2021, according to the joint report by Afghanistan Journalists Center and Afghan Independent Journalists Association. Four journalists were killed during the period, the report said. In the preceding year period, Afghan Journalists Center had registered 11 deaths and 103 other cases of violence against media workers in the country. Farhad Behroz, deputy head of Afghan Independent Journalists Association, said that 5,928 people who were working in the media sector had lost their jobs during the past year.”

International Federation of Journalists, Afghanistan: 87% of women journalists have suffered discrimination under Taliban rule, 9 March 2022

“The survey, “Working conditions of women journalists under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan” addresses women journalists’ psychological, physical, and digital safety situation and the growing crisis of freedom of expression in the country. The survey found that:

- 87% of women journalists have experienced gender discrimination during the Taliban regime
 - 60% of women journalists have lost their jobs and careers.
 - 79% of women journalists said they have been insulted and threatened under the Taliban regime, including physical threats, abuse by Taliban officials, written and verbal threats.
 - 91% of working women journalists were the sole economic support of their families
 - 87% of women journalists are not motivated to work in the current situation due to fear and panic
- Respondents also shared deep concerns over Taliban policies affecting security, the restriction of media funding and the lack of a media law.

The survey also shows that women journalists need more training in safety and capacity building. Over 500 respondents from 34 provinces took part in the survey.”

AAN, Regime Change, Economic Decline and No Legal Protection: What has happened to the Afghan media?, 7 March 2022

“On 1 February 2022, Radio Nasim, a local radio station in Daikundi, said they had been summoned to a meeting with the province’s intelligence officials where they were given an order issued by the Istekhbarat headquarters in Kabul obliging media outlets to refrain from – among other things – broadcasting people’s complaints, airing negative content, reporting news that had not been confirmed [by the Taleban] and speaking against the Taleban administration. The order also required media outlets to obtain approval from provincial authorities in advance of publication or broadcast.”

HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Threatening Provincial Media, 7 March 2022

“Many of the journalists said that Taliban intelligence officials regularly meet with media organizations to tell them what to publish and to warn them not to contradict Taliban policies or to report on acts of violence by Taliban officials. [...]

Many journalists said they or their colleagues had been beaten for trying to report on anti-Taliban protests, arbitrary detention, rising food prices, and other subjects that cast Taliban officials in a bad light. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Many of the journalists interviewed said that Taliban officials had harassed, beaten, and arbitrarily detained them or their colleagues, in some cases holding them for hours or days. Some had been beaten for reporting on unauthorized anti-Taliban protests, which the Taliban have banned, as well as any news coverage of unauthorized protests. [...]

A journalist in Badakhshan said that, after he wrote a report about a commander who had beaten a resident, a Taliban official ordered him not to publish it and said that “this should be the last time that [he] even dares to think of reporting on such issues.” A journalist in Kandahar said that he witnessed Taliban members beating another journalist but that, “when we went to the police station, they told us to never come there for these issues.” [...]

Since the Taliban takeover, ministry officials have prohibited the media from broadcasting many programs, including almost all entertainment programs. The media are also unable to report on a range of subjects, including anything to do with opium production, military and police actions, protests, and anything else the Taliban authorities deem too critical. Even reports that had been published before the Taliban takeover are subject to scrutiny. [...]

One of the most sensitive issues for the Taliban is their ongoing conflict with the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), an affiliate of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS). A reporter from Kandahar said that, after his outlet filed a report on an ISKP attack, they “received phone calls from the Taliban spokesperson telling us to stop working on these reports – we are not allowed to broadcast such news.” [...]

A journalist in Kapisa said, “there are no longer any political shows or live programs; these have been replaced with more Islamic programs.” He also said that entertainment programs had completely stopped broadcasting.”

The Guardian, [Afghanistan six months after the Taliban takeover- photo essay](#), 4 March 2022

“The Taliban have been accommodating to foreign journalists, a privilege that has not been granted to all Afghan reporters. Several have been tortured, beaten, detained and intimidated and have since either left the country or are trying to get out.”

International Federation for Human Rights, [Afghanistan: Six months after takeover, no accountability for Taliban abuses](#), 15 February 2022

“Despite Taliban pledges to respect basic human rights, the situation in the country has worsened over the past six months, particularly impacting women, journalists, and human rights defenders (HRDs). [...] Amid an all-out assault on human rights—including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture—HRDs, women’s rights activists, and other civil society actors have been particularly vulnerable to such violations. Despite the risks and a climate of fear on the ground, information concerning human rights violations continues to be collected and reported by HRDs and journalists. Although it is almost impossible to have a comprehensive picture of the human rights situation in the country and to systematically collect data, preliminary figures obtained by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) indicate that at least eight civil society activists and two journalists have been killed since 15 August 2021. In addition, 44 journalists and 10 civil society activists have been arbitrarily detained.”

The Guardian, [The Taliban forced Afghan TV workers into hiding. Now they’re asking Hollywood for help](#), 14 February 2022

“Now, nearly six months after the Taliban seized control, many Afghan television and film workers are jobless and in hiding. Some feel abandoned by TV and entertainment industry workers in other countries.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Rahima, a screenwriter, said she was in the middle of teaching a university class when she learned that the Taliban had entered Kabul. She and a female colleague ran out to buy burkas, only to find the shops already closed. She went home and locked herself inside. She has stayed in hiding for the past five and a half months, she said.

"In our neighborhood, everyone recognizes me as a woman activist, the university teacher and TV employee," Rahima said through a translator. Other former media workers described rushing to scrub their Facebook profiles and concealing or throwing out anything in their house that would link them to the entertainment industry.

Abdul, who worked for a decade as an assistant director and producer, now runs a small food stand to support his family, including his 10-month-old baby. Based in a city full of Taliban checkpoints, he is still afraid that someone will recognize him from his work in TV. Fearful of the risk, he sometimes sends his younger brother to run the food stall instead. [...] "We are looking for help but there's nobody to help us," he said. [...] In the first 100 days of Taliban rule, more than 70% of journalists lost their jobs, and at least 250 news outlets closed their doors, according to a report from an Afghan press watchdog this fall. By September, fewer than 100 of Kabul's 700 female journalists were still working, according to a report from Reporters Without Borders. [...] While larger TV stations are still reporting the news, and a few women still appear as correspondents on larger networks, many of the faces are new, as older reporters have fled or gone into hiding, former TV workers said. Violence against journalists, including the vicious beating of two journalists covering a women's rights protest, has undermined the Taliban's pledge that it would allow independent media outlets to continue operating. At least 50 journalists and media workers have been detained or arrested over the past six months, according to Reporters Without Borders."

Deutsche Welle (Afghanistan), Afghanistan: Taliban free detained journalists held in Kabul while working for UNHCR, 12 February 2022

"Two foreign journalists and Afghans working with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) have been released after news broke about their detentions on Friday.

The Taliban-appointed deputy minister of culture and communications, Zabihullah Mujahid, wrote on Twitter that they were detained because they did not have documents that properly identified them as UNHCR. He said they were freed after their identities were confirmed.

The UNHCR said they were "grateful to all who expressed concern and offered help."

One of the journalists kidnapped was Andrew North, a former BBC correspondent who has covered Afghanistan for about two decades.

He has regularly traveled to the war-ravaged country to report on its deteriorating humanitarian crisis.

Taliban crackdown on journalists

Earlier the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) called for the immediate release of the journalists.

"The Taliban's detention of two journalists on assignment with the UN refugee agency is a sad reflection of the overall decline of press freedom and increasing attacks on journalists under Taliban rule," Steven Butler, CPJ's Asia program coordinator, said.

The Taliban defeated NATO-backed Afghan forces in August last year and has forcefully cracked down on journalists.

Earlier this month, Reporters Without Borders reported that at least 50 Afghan media workers have been arrested or detained by the police or the Taliban intelligence agency.

It said that the arrests, often accompanied by violence, have lasted from several hours to nearly a week."

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban arrests 2 journalists on assignment with United Nations, 11 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The Taliban’s detention of two journalists on assignment with the UN refugee agency is a sad reflection of the overall decline of press freedom and increasing attacks on journalists under Taliban rule,” said Steven Butler, CPJ’s Asia program coordinator, in Washington, D.C. “Andrew North and the other, unidentified journalist should be freed immediately and allowed to continue their work, and the Taliban must halt its repeated attacks on and harassment of journalists.”

Daily Mail, Former BBC Journalist Andrew North is Kidnapped by the Taliban, 11 February 2022

“A British journalist who was kidnapped by the Taliban in Afghanistan has been released, according to reports, along with another journalist and Afghan citizens. Former Afghan vice president Amrullah Saleh had tweeted earlier that Mr North had been 'kidnapped' along with eight others from Western countries. His tweet said: 'Due to no media, no reporting by citizens & a suffocating atmosphere, corruption, crime & atrocities aren't well exposed. 'As an example nine citizens of western countries have been kidnapped amongst them Andrew North of BBC & Peter Juvenal owner of Gandamak Restaurant. Talibs are liars.'”

Gandhara, Taliban Reportedly Releases Two Kabul Journalists Held For Unknown Reasons, 2 February 2022

“The Taliban reportedly has freed two local journalists from the private Ariana TV two days after they were detained for unknown reasons. Sharif Hassanyar, the head of Ariana Television, tweeted on February 2 that Waris Hasrat and Aslam Ejab had been freed. [...] The two were detained by armed Taliban guards at the front gate of their organization on January 31. No reason was given for the move, and no government agency or ministry confirmed the two had been taken into custody. [...] The detentions came a day after a guest criticized the Taliban regime during a live debate broadcast by Ariana. A segment of the debate was widely shared on social media. [...]”

ToloNews, EU, UNAMA, Amnesty Intl Raise Concerns Over Detained Reporters | TOLONews, 1 February 2022

“The Free Speech Hub, an organization supporting open media in Afghanistan, as well as Amnesty International and UNAMA have called on the Islamic Emirate to provide information about the case of two Ariana News reporters arrested on Monday. The Free Speech Hub in a statement said the two reporters--Aslam Hejab and Waris Hasrat--were arrested by Islamic Emirate forces on Monday and so far the reasons behind their arrest are not known. The statement also said that the whereabouts of the two reporters are unknown. [...]

Amnesty International on Tuesday said the arrest of the two journalists was "unjustifiable" and called on the Islamic Emirate to release them. “Such escalating attacks on media freedom are a grave threat to the right to freedom of expression. The Taliban must unconditionally and immediately release them,” Amnesty International said in a tweet.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also reacted to the arrest of the two reporters and called on the Islamic Emirate to make clear why it has arrested them and also make clear the whereabouts of women activists who went missing two weeks ago. “Mounting concern about restriction on media and free expression. UN urges Taliban to make public why they detained these Ariana News reporters and to respect Afghan’s rights,” UNAMA tweeted.”

Pajhwok Afghan News, Under Taliban, number of women journalists halves, 30 January 2022

“Data from 15 media outlets suggests the number of women journalists associated with them has declined by 50 percent since last August. Pajhwok Afghan News collected the data over the past 20 days from 15

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

print and electronic media outlets. The media outlets had not been pre-determined. The data was obtained from Aryana TV, Zwandon TV, Tamadon TV, Aryana News, Aina TV, Arzo TV, Noor TV, China Centre, Rahi Farda TV, Ghazal TV, Aryana Radio, Sar Ahang, Ghazal, Daily Anis and Paik-i-Aftab News Agency. Officials/workers of these news organisations provided this information over the telephone."

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban blocks press conference by Afghanistan Journalists Federation, 27 January 2022

"On Wednesday [26 January 2022], about 60 armed members of the Taliban-controlled Kabul police and the General Directorate of Intelligence, the Taliban's intelligence agency, blocked a planned press conference by the Afghanistan Journalists Federation in the capital's District 4, according to news reports, a report by the local press freedom group Free Speech Hub, and Sayed Ali Asghar Akbarzadeh, a member of the federation's leadership committee, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview. The Afghanistan Journalists Federation, a collective comprised of 13 press freedom and media groups, had scheduled a conference by 11 of its representatives at a home office in Kabul to discuss the media's status under the Taliban, according to Akbarzadeh. Before the conference could begin, dozens of armed men entered the home where the conference was to be held, identified themselves as members of the police and the GDI, and initially said they were there to ensure security for the conference. One of the armed men then questioned attendees on their motives for the press conference, and threatened retaliation if such events were held without Taliban permission, Akbarzadeh said. Another of the men, who did not give his name or position, then ordered the conference be cancelled, according to a journalist who was at the scene and spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of retaliation. The journalist said they believed the man was a member of the GDI. "Taliban authorities need to ensure that police and intelligence agents do not interfere with the operation of media and press freedom organizations," said Steven Butler, CPJ's Asia program coordinator, in Washington, D.C. "The shrinkage of Afghanistan's once thriving media industry is a tragedy for the country. The Taliban must take action immediately to reverse this trend." The police and intelligence agents briefly detained three journalists who planned to cover the conference, according to Free Speech Hub, which identified those reporters as Masoor Lutfi, Fardin Attai, and Zarif Karimi. CPJ was unable to immediately determine those journalists' affiliated outlets. The police and GDI agents briefly held the three journalists in GDI vehicles at the scene, and then released them without charge, according to Free Speech Hub. Ahmadullah Wasiq, a Taliban deputy spokesperson in Afghanistan, did not respond to CPJ's request for comment sent via messaging app."

Gandhara, Mysterious Attacks On Afghan Activists, Journalists Raise Fears Over Free Speech Under Taliban, 21 January 2022

"The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan had already left free speech and media freedoms out in the cold. A recent spate of mysterious attacks on activists and journalists has raised fears that the worst may be yet to come. The situation took an alarming turn last week with the brutal assault of a journalist at his home and widespread efforts to track down and detain participants in recent women's rights demonstrations. Zaki Qais, who was a journalist for 20 years before leaving the independent Khawar TV broadcaster shortly after the Taliban seized control of Kabul in mid-August, sustained cuts and bruises to his head and neck when he opened his front gate to answer a request for help on January 15. [...] Qais was struck in the head with an unidentified object and narrowly avoided being stabbed with a knife before he was able to close the gate, he said. Qais was unable to identify his attackers but has said he has been harassed and beaten repeatedly by the Taliban authorities and the group's supporters. The confrontation left Qais rattled enough to go into hiding with his family. The Taliban has not commented on the assault,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

which has led to demands for an investigation by media observers.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Afghan journalist Zaki Qais beaten at home in Kabul, 19 January 2022

“At about 11 p.m. on January 15, two unidentified men knocked on Qais’ home in Kabul, the capital, introduced themselves as members of the local police, and attacked him, according to the journalist, who spoke to CPJ in a phone interview, and posts on Twitter by the local outlet Payk Media and the independent Afghanistan Journalists Center press freedom group.

When Qais opened the door, one of the men grabbed him and hit him in the head with an unidentified object, and the other, whose face was covered, tried to stab him in the neck with a knife, he told CPJ. Qais said he resisted and was able to close the door after sustaining cuts to his head.

Qais is the former director of the independent Khawar TV broadcaster, and is a documentarian who has worked on films about human rights in Afghanistan, he told CPJ. [...]

Qais told CPJ that he did not know the identities of his attackers, but said he had been harassed repeatedly by authorities and Taliban supporters. He told CPJ that he had stopped working at Khawar TV shortly after the Taliban seized power in Kabul in mid-August 2021.

Shortly before the fall of Kabul, an unidentified person called Qais and told him to stop posting anti-Taliban news on his Facebook page, where he posted news and commentary on political issues to about 325,000 followers, he said.

On August 17, 2021, a group of armed men who introduced themselves as Taliban members arrived at Qais’ home and beat him for two hours, slapping his face and hitting him with a gun while saying that his work was “not journalism,” he said.

Separately, on September 26, Taliban members detained Qais while he filmed a women’s anti-Taliban protest in Kabul; he said authorities held him for about six hours and whipped him 20 times before releasing him.”

The Guardian, Gunmen were looking for my mum’: daughter of Afghan ex-radio boss, 18 January 2022

“Farkhunda’s* mother has run a feminist radio station in her conservative province for the best part of 20 years, in defiance of Taliban threats. She has three children with disabilities who were forced to abandon their wheelchairs when gunmen attacked their home about two months after the Taliban takeover. They are in hiding in a city safe house, but don’t know how they will survive longer term. (...) She had faced some discrimination, as an ethnic minority in our region, and also the Taliban used to ask her: “Why are you, a woman, running a radio station. You should stay home and look after your family.” When we left our home, we took nothing with us – my sister and brothers are disabled and they can’t walk. But eventually our relatives told us that even though the Taliban are in power, everything is normal and we can come back to our home.

So in October, we returned to the house after two months living with different uncles and aunts. That same evening, late at night when we were all sleeping, suddenly we heard gunshots all around the doors.

We all gathered in one room in the centre of the house that didn’t have windows, so we were able to survive. In the other rooms the windows were shot as well as the doors, there was glass all around, but they didn’t try to come in – perhaps they thought they hit us already.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Three Afghan journalists detained following coverage of anti-Taliban protests, 11 January 2022

“On January 6, armed Taliban authorities detained the three journalists [Faisal Modaris, Idris Rahimi, and

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Milad Azizi], all of whom work at the Kabul Lovers YouTube-based broadcaster, along with Azizi's brother Rashid Azizi, while they were at a restaurant in the Shari Naw area of Kabul's District Four, according to three people with knowledge of the situation who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity, citing fear of retaliation by the Taliban, as well as posts on Twitter by local journalists and activists. [...]

The three recently covered protests by residents of Panjshir province after Taliban militias killed a civilian there, and featured protesters harshly criticizing the Taliban; the report was viewed more than 100,000 times, and it was cited by international news outlets including the BBC. The people who spoke to CPJ said they believed that reporting, because it contained criticism of the Taliban and was so widely shared, was likely the reason for the journalists' arrests."

Khaama Press, Nearly 80% of Afghan journalists changed their profession to survive, 11 January 2022

"Journalists' Foundation of Afghanistan said that Afghan Journalists are going through the worst economic situation as 79% of them have lost their jobs and resorted to other professions to make money and survive. The foundation has assessed the lives of Afghan journalists in the past one and a half months and found that they are living the worst life due to the fragile economic situation."

Deutsche Welle, Afghanistan: How press freedom has crumbled since the Taliban takeover, 7 January 2022

"For most female journalists, leaving Afghanistan remains the only option.

"One of the few remaining in the country is Meena Habib. She has been a reporter for eight years and publishes Roidadha News, a local news website. She also does investigative work for various other news outlets, often focusing on women's issues. She told DW that the situation is dire but that she is continuing to do journalism because she believes in her profession.

"Journalists, especially female journalists, have faced an unclear fate over the last five months since Afghanistan fell to the Taliban," she told DW. She, too, has faced threats by the Taliban and was beaten when covering a women's protest.

"After two decades of being free to pursue an education and a career, women like Habib must now live in a new reality where they are no longer equal members of society. While Taliban officials claim women can continue to work, the reality is that in the field of journalism, this is not the case.

"According to the Reporters Without Borders report, 15 out of Afghanistan's 36 provinces no longer have a single female reporter. In Kabul, only about a quarter of the women who were working at the start of August are still on the job.

"The progress seen in the past 20 years was swept away in a matter of days by the Taliban takeover," said the report. Habib acknowledged that press freedom does not currently exist under the Taliban but that external pressure could help the remaining journalists.

"The international community should work to ensure that the rights of female journalists who want to continue reporting in their own country are protected," she said.

"Unfortunately for Selma, remaining in Afghanistan would mean continuing to live in fear of the Taliban."

Republicworld.com, Income is low, expenditure is high: Afghan media expresses concern over financial issues, curbs in accessing info from Taliban, 5 January 2022

"Expressing concerns over financial problems and restrictions in accessing information from the Taliban, dozens of Afghan media officials gathered in Kabul on Monday, TOLO News reported. Since the Taliban government ousted former President Ashraf Ghani and took charge of the country, the conditions of the media personnel have become grave. They have said that the economic problems, the restrictions in

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

accessing information, and restrictions against women reporters are the main challenges they are facing currently.

[...]

“The Taliban officials, on the other hand, have stated that they will address the media challenges. However, they have also emphasised that the media should consider national and Islamic values while reporting. Abdul Wahid, head of the strategic relations department of the Interior Ministry, said that the media should reflect the voice of the people in a way that positive gains of the government and the people should be preserved.”

Reporters Without Borders, Afghanistan: radio station owners discuss economic problems, self-censorship, 5 January 2022

“Reporters Without Borders (RSF) backs the calls voiced by representatives of 85 provincial radio stations in Afghanistan in response to the problems they have encountered since the Taliban took power last August. Above all, they are asking the country’s new authorities to give them better access to information and to allow women journalists to work freely.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Afghan TV station owner Aref Noori detained by Taliban-affiliated militia, 27 December 2021

“Yesterday, dozens of armed men who identified themselves as members of a militia affiliated with the Taliban-controlled Police District 4 in Kabul stormed and searched Noori’s house in the Karte Parwan area of the capital and detained him, according to news reports and his son Kashef Noori, who was present at the scene and spoke to CPJ in a phone interview.

Noori, owner of the independent broadcaster Noorin Television, has not been seen by his family or a lawyer following his detention, according to his son, who said his whereabouts are unknown.

“The detention of media owner Aref Noori by a Taliban-affiliated militia marks a serious attack on the independent media in Afghanistan,” said CPJ Asia Coordinator Steven Butler. “Taliban authorities should immediately release Noori and stop intimidating independent voices in Afghanistan.”

Reporters without Borders, Number of journalists in arbitrary detention surges 20% to 488, including 60 women, 14 December 2021

“According to Reporter Without Borders’ (RSF) annual round-up published today, a record number of journalists – 488, including 60 women – are currently detained worldwide, while another 65 are being held hostage. Meanwhile, the number of journalists killed in 2021 – 46 – is at its lowest in 20 years.”

Pressenza, 2021, Afghanistan followed by Mexico, Pakistan, India emerge dangerous for journalists, 10 December 2021

“Afghanistan and Mexico are the most dangerous countries for media work this year, the Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) said in its annual report in Geneva on Thursday in view of Human Rights Day. Since 1 January, 76 media workers have been killed in 28 countries around the world. Afghanistan leads with 12 assassinations”

Gandhara, Judge, Jury, And Executioner: Taliban Brings Afghanistan’s Justice System Under Its Thumb, 1 December 2021

“Dozens of Taliban gunmen stormed the offices of Afghanistan’s Independent Bar Association (AIBA) in Kabul last week and ordered its staff to stop their work.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The AIBA president who was ousted by the Taliban, Rohullah Qarizada, said in a November 23 tweet that “50 armed Taliban came in AIBA and forcibly took over” the organization.

Qarizada noted that the AIBA had always operated as an “independent, non-governmental, and non-political” association that never received funding from the Afghan government.

He appealed for international assistance, saying the rights of Afghan lawyers should not be ignored.”

The Independent, Afghan journalists ‘facing death threats’ and harsh rules, with female reporters hit hardest, 23 November 2021

“Journalists in Afghanistan are facing death threats and harsh new rules, which are particularly impacting women, according to campaigners.

Human Rights Watch warned the Taliban’s clampdown on the press is escalating, with Taliban intelligence officials forcing all journalists to enter all of their articles to be authorised before they can be published.

New rules unveiled by the Taliban’s Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice on Sunday have blocked soap operas and dramas from including women actors. (...)

“I used to produce reports on virginity testing and violence against women, which no one can cover anymore,” a woman, who worked as a journalist in Herat in north-western Afghanistan, said. “No program covers women’s issues, especially on TV channels. The educational and entertainment programs have all stopped.

Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said: “The Taliban’s new media regulations and threats against journalists reflect broader efforts to silence all criticism of Taliban rule. The disappearance of any space for dissent and worsening restrictions for women in the media and arts is devastating.

“Despite the Taliban’s promises to allow media that ‘respected Islamic values’ to function, the reality for Afghanistan is that journalists live in fear of a knock on the door or a summons from the authorities. This is contributing to an information blackout in which Taliban abuses increasingly happen in secret and without accountability.””

Kabul Now, TV presenter among civilians killed in Kabul blast, 24 November 2021

“Hamid Saighani, a television presenter who was working with the Ariana News, was killed in a blast targeted a passenger minivan in west Kabul on Saturday, November 13, his wife, Fawzia Wahdat, who is also a journalist with the same TV network, confirmed.

The incident took place yesterday, around 05:00 PM, in Dasht-e-Barchi, a predominantly Shi’ite ethnic Hazara populated area which has come under deadliest bombings by the Islamic State Khurasan Province in recent years.

Confirming the presenter’s death, Afghanistan Journalist Center (AFJC) added that he was the 9th journalist to be killed in Afghanistan in 2021. [...]

The exact death toll has yet to be confirmed but the Reuters, citing an unnamed Taliban officials, reported that six people were killed and seven others injured in the incident.”

The Guardian, Afghan journalists decry Taliban rules restricting role of women on TV, 23 November 2021

“Afghan journalists and rights activists have condemned “religious guidelines” issued by the Taliban that restrict the role of women in television, as the Islamists move to muzzle the media.

The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice on Sunday called on broadcasters to stop showing dramas and soap operas featuring female actors.

It also told broadcasters not to screen films or programmes that are “against Islamic or Afghan values”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

and asked female television journalists to wear a hijab at work.”

AVA Press, 12 Journalists killed last year in Afghanistan, 3 November 2021

“Afghanistan’s Journalists Safety Committee in its latest report indicated that 12 journalists have been killed and 230 more have been conducted violence against during the past year in Afghanistan.” [...]

“As per the report, one journalist has been killed and 67 more have been committed violence against only after the Taliban takeover on August 15.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Journalists shot, beaten and detained in Afghanistan, 2 November 2021

“Washington, D.C., November 2, 2021 - The Taliban must thoroughly and swiftly investigate the attacks on Afghan journalists Abdul Khaliq Hussaini and Alireza Sharifi and the beating and detention of Zahidullah Husainkhil, and do everything in its power to ensure the safety of members of the press, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

On October 28 and 29, unidentified gunmen injured Hussaini and Sharifi in separate attacks in Kabul, according to news reports, a statement by the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee, a local press freedom group, and Sharifi, who spoke to CPJ via messaging app.

Also on October 29, Taliban members beat and detained Husainkhil, according to a statement by the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee and a person familiar with the incident, who spoke to CPJ on the condition of anonymity due to fear of reprisal by the Taliban. [...]

At about 10:30am on October 28, two unidentified gunmen attacked Hussaini, a reporter for the privately owned online news service Khaama Press, while he was driving to the office of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in Kabul, according to a report by his employer and a statement by the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee.

The attackers opened Hussaini’s car, and one punched him in the head and face, while the other hit his head and back with the butt of a rifle, Ahmadi told his employer, saying that the attackers tried to take his car, but he threw the keys away from the vehicle and fled the scene.

Hussaini sustained injuries to his head and shoulder due to a gunshot wound, according to his employer, which did not specify the nature of that wound. He spent one night in a local hospital and then was released, according to that report, which said that the Taliban had detained two suspects in the attack. [...]

Separately, at about 8 p.m. on October 29, two unidentified men riding a motorcycle fired several gunshots at Sharifi, a camera operator and editor for the IRIB, the Iranian state-owned news agency, while he was driving home in Kabul with his wife and son, according to that statement by the safety committee, a report by his employer, and Sharifi.

Sharifi was treated at a local hospital after shards of window glass injured his left eye and a bullet grazed his lip, he said, adding that his wife and son were not injured. Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesperson of the Taliban in Afghanistan, told The Associated Press that the Taliban was investigating that attack. That report said no one has claimed responsibility for the shooting.

Also on October 28, at about 4:30 p.m., Taliban members pulled Husainkhil, director of the privately owned station Radio Mahaal, out of his car when he arrived at his home in Logar, according to the safety committee’s statement and the person who spoke to CPJ.

The Taliban members beat Husainkhil with assault rifles on his face and back, and continued beating him while they brought him to a local police station, where they held him for about three hours, according to those sources. [...] Previously, on October 25, a Taliban fighter beat freelance journalist Sadaqat Ghorzang while he was reporting at an Afghanistan-Pakistan border crossing, and on October 21 Taliban members

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

beat at least three journalists covering a women's protest, as CPJ documented at the time [...]"

Al Jazeera, Watchdog: 30 recent cases of violence against Afghan journalists, 28 October 2021

"More than 30 instances of violence and threats of violence against Afghan journalists were recorded in the last two months, with nearly 90 percent committed by the Taliban, says a media watchdog. More than 40 percent of the cases recorded by the Afghanistan National Journalists Union (ANJU) were physical beatings and another 40 percent were verbal threats of violence, Masorro Lutfi, the group's head, said on Wednesday. The remainder involved cases in which journalists were imprisoned for a day. One journalist was killed."

TOLO News, 30 Cases of Violence Against Afghan Reporters Cited: ANJU, 27 October 2021, 27 October 2021

"More than 30 cases of violence against journalists were recorded since the Islamic Emirate swept into power, the Afghanistan National Journalists Union said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a news conference in Kabul, the head of the union, Masroor Lufti, said that 90 percent of the violence was committed by forces related to the Islamic Emirate. The rest of the cases were committed by unidentified individuals. "The Afghanistan's National Journalists' Union conducted a general assessment over the journalists' status for Afghanistan across the country and it shows that over 30 cases of violence against journalists happened," he added. "Nearly 90 percent of these cases belong to the Taliban."

The journalists expressed their deepest concern over the ongoing situation of the media in Afghanistan and called on the Islamic Emirate officials to form a way for journalists to deal with the safety issues as well as to provide access to information.

"One of the main problems that we have is that we don't have proper access to information. When we go to cover a news event, we face problems," said Mohammad Sahibzada.

"My wish is that if we (women) are capable of working, why are women not allowed to work in the government media? They should be allowed," said Farahnaz, a journalist.

The spokesman for the Ministry of Interior, Sayed Khosti, said that efforts were underway to provide security for the journalists.

"The Islamic Emirate in some cases arrested the perpetrators," he said. "Those who humiliated the journalists have been advised."

The union earlier said that based on findings, over 70 percent of media organizations in the country have halted their activities after the collapse of the former government due to restrictions to access to information and economic challenges."

TOLO News, Reporter Beaten by Soldiers in Torkham, 24 October 2021

"A TOLONews freelance reporter for the eastern region, Sadaqat Ghorzang, was beaten by border forces near Torkham gate on Sunday while making a report about the situation at the crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ghorzang said although he had coordinated with Torkham crossing officials, the border forces beat him up and threw his camera and other equipment into the river and also broke his mobile phone.

"After having a talk with the Torkham crossing commissioner, I along with a bodyguard of the commissioner went to near the Torkham gate to make a report. There we were warned and beaten up by the border forces without any reason. They threw my camera and other equipment into the river. They kept me for a few minutes at the commissariat and broke my mobile. So far, I do not know what has happened to my camera," Ghorzang said. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Meanwhile, reporters in the eastern region of Afghanistan in reaction to the incident said the future situation will be difficult if this continues. [...]

So far, no government department has reacted to this incident.

This follows several similar incidents that have been recorded in Kabul and in a number of provinces.”

Al Jazeera, Afghan journalists lament ‘bleak’ future for media under Taliban, 22 October 2021

“In a recent report, the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) described the killing of a journalist by unknown gunmen and seizures of two media outlets in the east and the north as examples of the Islamic Emirate failing to ensure safety of the media.

Like CPJ, the AJSC also says the Taliban has failed to provide details of promised investigations into abuses against journalists.

“I don’t know any journalist who is willing to work with the Taliban, but I do know a lot of journalists who left the country and many others who want to leave the country. Journalists don’t feel safe in Afghanistan,” said Ahmad.”

Committee to Protect Journalists, Taliban fighters assault at least 3 journalists covering women’s protest in Afghanistan, 21 October 2021

“Today, Taliban fighters assaulted at least three journalists covering a women’s protest opposing the group and demanding “work, bread, and education” in Kabul, the capital, according to multiple news reports and Bülent Kılıç, a photographer with the French news agency Agence France-Presse, who was among those attacked and spoke to CPJ in a phone interview.”

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Briefing Notes Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration, 4 October 2021

“On 02.10.21 it was reported that two civilians (including a well-known journalist) and two Taliban had been killed in an attack by unknown armed assailants in Jalalabad/Nangarhar. On 01.10.21 it was reported that the Taliban were forcing interpreters who had worked for the Netherlands to appear in court by threatening their relatives.”

AVA Press, Former Afghan journalist, journalism lecturer killed in eastern Nangarhar province, 3 October 2021

“Unknown gunmen killed four people in Police District three of Jalalabad City of eastern Nangarhar province among them a well-known journalist and journalism lecturer, Sayed Maroof Sadat.

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA)_The incident happened on Saturday, October 2 and local residents say that the two others killed were the Taliban fighters. [...]

Sayed Maroof Sadat was a journalism graduate from and was working as a journalist in radio “Sub Bakhair and Sham”.

He was recently assigned as media in charge of the directorate of urban development in province and was also working for a number of foreign media in the province.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Restrict Media, 1 October 2021

“Taliban security forces have also arbitrarily detained journalists and beaten several. The head of a journalists’ advocacy group told Human Rights Watch that the Taliban have taken at least 32 journalists into custody since they took power in Kabul on August 15. Most were released after warnings about their reporting, but some were beaten. One who was badly beaten was released with the warning not to tell

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

anyone what happened to him. As of October 1, at least one remained in custody without access to his family.

In the city of Herat on September 6, the Taliban detained Murtaza Samadi, 21, a freelance photojournalist, while he was covering a protest. Family members said that after hearing of his arrest, they asked officials at the governor's office and police station where he had been taken. They were told that the case had been referred to the intelligence department and that Samadi was accused of organizing the protest and having "connections with foreigners." He remained in custody without access to his family until he was released on September 30.

Beyond the arrests, the Taliban's intelligence office has summoned journalists and warned them that their reporting constituted "propaganda" and needed to stop. [...]

Many Afghan journalists have fled the country or have gone into hiding, and scores of media outlets, especially outside major cities, have closed altogether. Taliban commanders and fighters have long engaged in a pattern of threats, intimidation, and violence against members of the media, and have been responsible for targeted killings of journalists."

AVA Press, Herat Family Asks Emirate to Release Photojournalist, 30 September 2021

"The family of Murteza Samadi, a photojournalist who was detained in Herat province, called on the Taliban to release him from detention.

Afghan Voice Agency(AVA)_Freelance photojournalist Murteza Samadi was detained by the Taliban about three weeks ago in western Herat province while covering a women's protest held in front of the governor's office. [...]

At the same time, officials of the Islamic Emirate in province said that he will be released in the coming days.

"Murtaza is an ordinary person who was taking photos with his private camera. His documents were sent to the directorate of security, and he will be released after some days," said Deputy Governor of Herat Shir Ahmad Amar."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The fate of thousands hanging in the balance, 21 September 2021

"In this report, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) have documented incidents of human rights violations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August".

TOLO News, 153 Afghan Media Outlets Cease Operating in Less Than 1 Month, 13 September 2021

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

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

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

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, Taliban response to Afghan protests increasingly violent, UN says, 10 September 2021

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

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

BBC News, Afghanistan: Journalists tell of beatings by Taliban, 10 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

UNOCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (August 2021), 9 September 2021

"Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities

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

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

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

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

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

The private news outlet TOLO News, have been allowed to continue their reporting with female anchors,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

while the Taliban has barred female anchors at Radio Television Afghanistan from returning to work. [...] SER advised that Taliban perceive human rights defenders as an extension of the American presence in the country because they find that the idea of human rights undermine the principles of Islam.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Beat Journalists, 8 September 2021

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

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

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

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

TOLO News, Well-Known Journalist Fahim Dashti Killed in Panjshir, 6 September 2021

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

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

This claim was denied by the Taliban.

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

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

OCHCHR, Afghanistan: Journalists at risk of persecution need urgent protection – UN experts, 3 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

Human rights defenders, activists, NGO representatives

Afghan Voice Agency, IOM: We will continue our assistance to Afghanistan, 30 August 2022

"[...] 'no Afghan was forced to migrate due to 'political reasons' with the IEA's coming to power and no family was forced into leaving the country for opposing the government. 'The year-long journey proves that there has been no unnecessary interference by government officials in the affairs of any international charitable foundation and institution, but instead they were extended cooperation.'" [quotes by Amir Khan Muttaqi]"

Frontline Defenders, Joint Statement - Afghanistan: One year after Taliban takeover, human rights defenders at greater risk than ever, 12 August 2022

"Human rights defenders have faced near-daily attacks and violent reprisals including arrest, torture, threats and killings since the Taliban takeover. Escalating violence in the provinces has forced a large number of defenders to leave their homes and relocate and/or resettle. Human rights defenders, in particular women human rights defenders have been facing multiple risks and threats by the Taliban, including: kidnapping; arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; torture; physical and psychological harm; house searches; death and physical threats; intimidation and harassment; and violence against their family members. Women human rights defenders have also faced systematic oppression and segregation from public life. They have been stripped of their rights to work, freedom of movement, access to education, and to participate in public affairs. For those seeking to leave Afghanistan due to severe risk, safe and dignified pathways out of the country remain extremely difficult and challenging."

"There has also been serious curtailment of freedom of expression and assembly. These freedoms are no longer legally and institutionally protected, and any form of dissent is met with arbitrary arrests and detention and enforced disappearance. Enforced disappearances of women, and arbitrary arrest of journalists and civil society activists are tactics adopted by the Taliban to silence voices that speak out. Women who have organized and participated in peaceful protests have faced violent crackdowns, including arrests and torture, underlying the unlawful escalation of efforts to suppress peaceful protests and free speech in Afghanistan. Additionally, the Taliban have continuously repressed media freedom. In the first three months of the Taliban seizing power, 43% of Afghan media outlets ceased to exist. Journalists are being detained and beaten, particularly when covering protests. Media workers, particularly women, have been intimidated, threatened, and harassed, forcing many to go into hiding or leave the country. House-to-house searches for journalists have been conducted, particularly those working or perceived to be working for western media outlets."

"Religious and ethnic minorities have been particularly targeted. The Taliban have organized military assaults on civilians and have been targeting minority groups in Kunduz, Daikundy, Ghazni, Nangarhar, Faryab, Badakhshan, Panjshir, and Baghlan Provinces. They have also conducted attacks on Hazaras, Hindu and Sikh with credible allegations of war crimes, genocide, and ethnic cleansing against these

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

communities. Human rights defenders from these communities, especially women, are at specific risk.”

“Since the Taliban takeover, the country’s independent institutions, such as the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) have been dissolved and its staff in the country threatened. The dissolution of the AIHRC emphasizes the disregard of human rights principles by the Taliban, which has further narrowed the access for Afghan citizens and human rights defenders to an independent and effective human rights mechanism in the country.”

“The human rights crisis in Afghanistan includes the suffering of those displaced due the violence. The Taliban takeover has exacerbated one of the longest refugee situations in the world. To date, over six million Afghans have been driven out of their homes and/or their country by conflict, violence, and poverty. Of those, 3.5 million are displaced within Afghanistan, with 2.6 million Afghan refugees living in other countries...Safe pathways for defenders to leave and escape violence are highly limited. Those in neighboring countries suffer from lack of access to facilities, threat of arrest and forced repatriation, and uncertainty about their future.”

The New Humanitarian, One year on, few options for Afghans escaping hunger and Taliban persecution, 10 August 2022

“Hundreds of thousands of Afghans attempting to escape Taliban persecution and the country’s economic collapse are largely being met with closed borders, hardening attitudes, and deportation. Meanwhile, Western governments have been slow to fulfil promises to relocate tens of thousands of Afghan allies left behind in last year’s chaotic withdrawal of foreign troops. Those most at risk of Taliban reprisal are former members of law enforcement and civil servants from the Western-backed government that disintegrated when the Taliban returned to power in Kabul on 15 August last year. Journalists, civil-society activists, women rights activists, and women who have seen their access to education and employment curtailed by the Taliban are also seeking exits from the country. So are members of minority ethnic groups, such as Hazaras, who face persecution from the Taliban and other jihadist organisations. [...]Pakistan and Iran have long hosted the vast majority of people displaced over successive decades of conflict in Afghanistan. Currently, Iran hosts about 3.5 million displaced Afghans and Pakistan hosts about 3.1 million. Only about a third of Afghans in each country are registered with the UN’s refugee agency, UNHCR. The rest are undocumented, due to challenges in obtaining legal status, and risk deportation. [...] Hundreds of thousands of others pay still-high, but less exorbitant costs to smugglers who ferry people without documents across the border into Pakistan, according to Samuel Hall. However, the Pakistani army and paramilitary groups frequently push people back across the border, despite UNHCR advising countries not to forcibly return people to Afghanistan. Between January and July of this year, the UN’s emergency aid coordination body, OCHA, found that 46,300 Afghans were expelled or deported from Pakistan, which is 40,000 more than in the same period in 2021. In Iran, violent pushbacks and deportations were occurring long before the Taliban returned to power. This year, however, about 462,000 people have been returned to Afghanistan – an uptick of 42,000 from last year, according to OCHA. Those who have been forcibly returned include Afghans who recently crossed the border as well as those living in Iran, sometimes for years without being able to obtain residency documents. “Under the current circumstances, nobody should deport Afghans. The risk on the ground [for many] is imminent,” said Sultani, from Amnesty International.”

Khaama Press, Unidentified Men Kill Charity Organization Head in Western Afghanistan, 21 July 2022

“Since the Taliban seized power, reports of people being mysteriously killed by armed persons and groups have significantly increased. On the other hand, the Taliban contend that since they came to power,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghanistan's security has been strengthened and deny that there has been an increase in unrest in Afghanistan."

Human Rights Watch, UN Reports on Taliban Repression, Abuse in Afghanistan, 20 July 2022

"A new report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) makes for very grim reading, confirming many of the concerns Afghan human rights advocates have raised since last August, when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. UNAMA catalogues serious human rights abuses that Taliban forces have committed, including summary executions and enforced disappearances of former members of the Afghan National Security Forces, which have continued months after the Taliban takeover. It chronicles the series of Taliban decrees on the rights of women and girls that have given rise to "severe restrictions on their human rights, resulting in their exclusion from most aspects of everyday and public life." And UNAMA describes how "arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists, human rights defenders, [and] protesters have had a chilling effect on freedom of the media and civic activism." The response from the Taliban authorities was predictable. They ignored the many cases of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances UNAMA documented, and they denied the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice had "ever beaten anyone, harmed or forced anyone to do anything ... or said anything to women about dress code." Much of their response was limited to the situation of prisoners, including the peculiar and false assertion that inmates "are satisfied" with prison food. As UNAMA describes, prisoners have been routinely denied food and water as punishment. Taliban officials, who for years denounced torture by the former government and US forces, did not respond to allegations that they have also tortured prisoners, including by using electric shock. UNAMA also notes that while civilian casualties have declined as the armed conflict has largely ended (with at least 118,443 civilians dead and wounded since UNAMA started counting in December 2008), attacks by Islamic State-linked armed groups continue to take a terrible toll, killing more than 700 civilians and wounding more than 1400 since August. Eleven months after Afghanistan's abrupt transition to Taliban rule, the UNAMA report demonstrates the crucial importance of continued monitoring and documentation of the steady erosion of rights in Afghanistan, and acts as an important reminder of the heavy price Afghans are paying."

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"The enforcement of a strict hijab rule continues; barriers are in place for women's access to employment, including for female NGO workers performing their duties; there are no opportunities for women to participate in public and political life; and their freedom of movement has been severely restricted. [...] Civil society actors, including women's rights activists and human rights defenders have been subjected to killings, enforced disappearances, incommunicado detention, attacks, harassment, threats and arrests. While some have been released, others remain deprived of their liberty, separated from their loved ones and deprived of their right to speak out. [...] I am deeply troubled by the recent dissolution by the de facto authorities of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the key national mechanism providing support for Afghans facing violations of their human rights. I urge the establishment of an independent human rights mechanism that can receive complaints from the public, and which can bring problems and solutions to the attention of the de facto authorities. UNAMA will continue to work with the de facto authorities to promote and protect human rights for all the Afghan people. I saw first-hand my colleagues' crucial work – each day, they are documenting human rights violations and abuses, outlining human rights trends, raising individual cases and advocating for those responsible to be held to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

account. They are working to develop engagement and to promote solutions to the significant human rights challenges that the country faces with the de facto authorities. I also welcome the appointment of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan. I look forward to his first report to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly later this year, following his recent visit to the country."

Ariana News, OIC, EU envoys for Afghanistan meet, agree to reinforce mutual cooperation, 15 June 2022
[Note this source is not specifically on targeting HRDs or NGOs]

"The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Tarig Ali Bakheet, held a meeting with the Special Envoy of the European Union for Afghanistan, Thomas Nicholson, on Tuesday and discussed the unfolding developments in Afghanistan. In a series of tweets the OIC said discussions at the meeting focused on the sustained and multi-pronged engagement of the OIC with Afghanistan. "Unfolding developments in the country, too, were at the center of the exchange," the OIC said."

The Guardian, Afghans with western links among rising number trying to cross Channel, 3 June 2022

"Kafayat (who, like the other asylum seekers interviewed, asked for his full name not to be printed), a 31-year-old civil engineer from Jalalabad, was working on a European-funded project to build a leisure centre and park for women and children in Laghman province when the Taliban took control of the area 11 months ago. He said he was held for three days by a group of Taliban militia and told he would be killed if he continued to work on the project. On his release, he decided to flee the country immediately, leaving his wife and four-year-old son behind."

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

"The Special Rapporteur highlights the high number of reports since August 2021 of intimidation, harassment, attacks, arrests, and in some cases killing or disappearance of journalists, prosecutors, and judges for exercising their duties, as well as of civil society for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association. "I have received credible information about physical ill-treatment and mental harm inflicted on a range of actors, including human rights defenders, that previously made up a core part of the Afghan vibrant civil society", observed the Special Rapporteur. [...] The abolition of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) during the expert's mission is a major setback for the country. Abolishing AIHRC appears to have left victims of human rights violations and abuses with few avenues for recourse. It would be helpful for the de facto authorities to explain what are the domestic mechanisms in place to monitor, document, and bring human rights concerns from the citizens to the attention of the authorities. The Special Rapporteur is troubled by the challenging environment in which NGOs, INGOs, and especially human rights NGOs continue to operate in Afghanistan, with continuing reports of threats, intimidation, and unannounced visits of armed men to their premises. Civil society space is critical for a peaceful society in which rights are respected."

Tolo News, Rights group AIHRC to continue activities outside Afghanistan, 25 May 2022

"The Islamic Emirate has dissolved five governmental organizations, including the Human Rights Commission."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

UNAMA, PRESS STATEMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, 24 May 2022

"The members of the Security Council further [...] expressed concern regarding the decision by the Taliban to dissolve several key national institutions."

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, AFGHANISTAN: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (April 2022), 19 May 2022

"The HAG logged 27 incidents of Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities in April. ACG authored the highest number (18), followed by DFA (9). ACG also authored a series of robberies of humanitarian personnel in Kabul, Hirat, and Jalalabad cities, that resulted in injuries to two humanitarian staff. DFA continued to use violence mostly by detaining humanitarian workers. On 26 April, four humanitarian staff including a female were temporarily detained by GDI in Kandahar while they were conducting a monitoring visit."

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Comment by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the dissolution of Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission, 19 May 2022

"I am dismayed at the reported decision of the Taliban to dissolve the country's Independent Human Rights Commission. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission performed extraordinary work in extremely difficult conditions over many years, shining a spotlight on the human rights of all Afghans, including victims on all sides of the conflict. It has however, been unable to operate on the ground since August 2021.

The AIHRC has been a powerful voice for human rights and a trusted partner of UN Human Rights, and its loss will be a deeply retrograde step for all Afghans and Afghan civil society.

During my visit to Kabul in March this year, I discussed with the de facto authorities the importance of re-establishing an independent human rights mechanism that can receive complaints from the public and bring concerns to the attention of the de facto authorities."

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Message from the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan to the dear people of the country, 19 May 2022

"For the past nine months, our country has witnessed unfortunate political, economic and cultural events. These incidents caused the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, like other official governmental and non-governmental institutions, to face a deep crisis in the following areas: 1- Security crisis: On August 15, 2021, Afghanistan fell into a vacuum of government and supply structures. This horrific event endangered the physical, psychological, political and economic security of the staff and the structure of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, as well as other structures. Our offices were virtually closed, our staff wandered, and our schedules were suspended. 2- Management crisis: The security crisis has led to a management crisis in the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. During this time, the leadership and a large number of our colleagues were forced to leave their homes, places of residence and even our beloved country. The displacement of staff led to the closure of the implementation of the strategy, programs and policies of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. 3- Identity crisis: The change of political regime and the new government had a profound effect on the identity of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. Dear compatriots, The national legitimacy of the Commission, from the institution of government and the Constitution, and our

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

international legitimacy, derives from the "Paris Principles". Political change in Afghanistan has damaged the relationship between national legitimacy and international legitimacy, slowed our work across the country, and weakened our standing among national human rights institutions. 4- There was no harmony: The security, management and identity crisis of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has led to widespread inconsistencies between our national and international partners and severely damaged the implementation of the Commission's plans. Because the activities of the commission were organized in coordination with the active structures inside and outside the country. Unfortunately, our work process was disrupted and our work dynamism was severely damaged. 5- Lack of resources: Unfortunately, at this difficult stage, we have lost our sources of support; Because the majority of the Commission's supporting governments blocked the vestibule of their support for Afghanistan. The difficulties of this decision affected all structures of the country, including the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan. During this time, the commission's offices were occupied by the Taliban, and some of our offices were looted by Taliban forces, and we were unable to renew the employment contracts of our employees. 6- Leadership vacuum: We have to admit that Ms. Shahzad Akbar, who was the leader and chair of the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan, unfortunately left the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan due to personal request and busyness in other areas, and the departure of this famous and influential figure in such circumstances. Sensitive was not unaffected by the continuity of our programs. At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, Ms. Akbar nominated Mr. Mohammad Naeem Nazari, who is the Deputy Chairman of the AIHRC, as the Chair of the AIHRC, which was approved by the members of the Board of the AIHRC. it placed. Now the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), in coordination with national and international institutions and activists, is working to further its mission with new staff, completely independent of any political approach, away from any political approach. The leadership of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) liaises with international human rights bodies, including the United Nations Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, National Human Rights Coordination Centers, similar national human rights organizations, and human rights activists and advocates. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) has plans to monitor the human rights situation of its citizens, file human rights grievances, advocate for human rights and promote human rights values, which will soon be shared with our dear compatriots. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) will have a clear, unequivocal stance and response to incidents, unrest and approaches that affect and violate the human rights of its citizens, and will continue to work responsibly to influence the human rights situation of its citizens. Finally, we reaffirm that the responsibility for our actions and positions lies with the leadership and new employees. The commission will return and the previous personalities and personnel will have no responsibility for the positions and functions of the commission. With respect! Board of Directors of the Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan [...]"

Jurist, [Taliban authorities dissolve Afghanistan human rights agency](#), 18 May 2022

"Taliban authorities in Afghanistan announced Monday that the country's Human Rights Commission will be dissolved, calling it "unnecessary." The commission was backed by the US government and sought to ensure that human rights were protected in Afghanistan. Along with the Commission, four other departments were dissolved. The Taliban faces a \$500 million budget deficit, and the dissolution of these agencies was deemed necessary to avert a financial disaster. In addition to the Human Rights Commission, key agencies such as the National Security Council and the High Council for National Reconciliation have been dissolved."

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Tolo News, Islamic Emirate Dissolves 5 'Inactive' Institutions, 18 May 2022

"According to the deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, these institutions have not been active in the last eight months. "Departments that are not carrying out their activities currently are inactive. At any time, if it is needed, they will be reactivated. " said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of the Islamic Emirate. The Human Rights Commission, the National Security Council, the Commission for the Supervision of the Implementation of the Constitution, the Secretariat of the Senate, and the Housw of Representatives of the High Council for Reconciliation are among the institutions that have been dissolved.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch responded by saying that the disbanding of such institutions is a setback in the human rights sector in Afghanistan.

"Yesterday was particularly dark day for human rights in Afghanistan, the Taliban's announcement that they formally abolished the Afghanistan independent human rights commission represents a very serious backward move for Afghanistan in terms of its respect for human rights and the respect that will enjoy as a country globally. The human rights commission is what is known as a national human rights institution and every country in the world should have one of these institutions....," said Heather Barr, associate women's rights director at Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Analysts believe that with the dissolution of a number of institutions, not only will these departments be systematically abolished, but they will also increase the level of unemployment and poverty in the country."

The Guardian, Taliban dissolves Afghanistan's human rights commission as 'unnecessary', 17 May 2022

"Taliban authorities in Afghanistan dissolved five key departments of the former US-backed government, including the country's human rights commission, deeming them unnecessary in the face of a financial crunch, an official said.

Afghanistan faced a budget deficit of 44bn Afghanis (\$501m) this financial year, Taliban authorities said as they announced their first annual national budget since taking over last August.

"Because these departments were not deemed necessary and were not included in the budget, they have been dissolved," said Innamullah Samangani, the Taliban government's deputy spokesperson."

Khaama Press, The Taliban Dissolves the Human Rights Commission and Five Other Key Departments, Declaring them "Unnecessary", 17 May 2022

"In the midst of a financial crisis, Taliban authorities in Afghanistan disbanded five major departments of the former US-backed administration, including the Human Rights Commission.

The dissolved departments, in addition to the Human Rights Commission, are the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), National Security Council, Independent Commission for Overseeing the Implementation of the Constitution (ICOIC), and the General Secretariats of the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) and Mishrano Jirga (Upper House).

The Taliban government's Deputy Spokesperson, Innamullah Samangani, told Reuters, "Because these departments were not deemed necessary and were not included in the budget, they have been dissolved,".

The national budget, according to Samangani, is "based on objective facts" and is solely for departments that have been active and productive. "If needed," he said, the bodies could be reactivated in the future."

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, UNAMA statement on deadly attack in Kabul, 29 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Today’s attack on the Khalifa Sahib Mosque is the latest in a series of indiscriminate assaults on civilian targets in the capital and provinces, and directly affected at least two UN staff members and their families who were inside the mosque at the time of the attack.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“On September 18, the AIHRC [Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission] stated their facilities and assets had been commandeered by Taliban forces, thereby rendering the commission unable to fulfill its duties to protect and monitor human rights in the country’s prisons. [...] On November 3, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders and 11 other thematic UN special rapporteurs stated that Afghan human rights defenders were under direct threat by the Taliban, including gender-specific threats against women, beatings, arrests, enforced disappearances, and killings. The report noted that defenders described living in a climate of constant fear, with the most at-risk groups being defenders documenting alleged war crimes; women defenders, in particular criminal lawyers; cultural rights defenders; and defenders from minority groups. The Taliban raided the offices of human rights and civil society organizations, searching for the names, addresses, and contacts of employees, according to the report. According to the UN secretary-general’s report on the situation in the country, eight civil society activists were killed (three by the Taliban, three by ISIS-K, and two by unknown actors between August and December 31. [...])

The period immediately following the Taliban takeover in mid-August was marked by general insecurity and uncertainty for humanitarian partners as Taliban operations included searches of NGO office premises, some confiscation of assets and investigation of activities. According to UNAMA, challenges to humanitarian access increased from 1,104 incidents in 2020 to 2,050 incidents during the year, the majority occurring in the pre-August 15 period at the height of fighting between the Taliban and government forces. The cessation of fighting was associated with a decrease in humanitarian access challenges with only 376 incidents reported between September 17 and December 17, according to UNAMA. The initial absence of a clear Taliban policy on humanitarian assistance; lack of awareness of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence; sweeping albeit varied restrictions on women in the workplace; access problems; and banking challenges were also significant impediments to aid groups’ ability to scale up response operations.

After mid-August, geographic access by humanitarian implementing partners improved significantly, allowing access to some rural areas for the first time in years. [...]

In October a Taliban official reportedly declared a prominent U.S.-based humanitarian aid organization an “enemy of the state.” Taliban forces occupied the organization’s Kabul offices, seized their vehicles, and warned that NDS officials were determined to “punish” the organization on alleged charges of Christian proselytization. Faced with mounting hostility and threats to arrest staff, the organization suspended its operations. The organization’s Kabul offices remained occupied by the Taliban. [...]

Human rights groups encouraged human rights defenders to delete or modify their online presence to minimize the risk that the Taliban would link them to the former regime or NATO forces. [...]

Since their takeover in August, the Taliban has intervened in the operations of international and nongovernmental organizations. Staff from several organizations reported the Taliban asked that staff obtain a security clearance from them and pay a 30 percent tax on salaries received by employees.

On September 15, Taliban falsely claiming to be acting under the authority of the Ministry of Interior conducted a search of the country office premises of an international NGO dedicated to the promotion of rule of law in Kabul, seizing assets and stating an intent to return to conduct further searches.

International NGOs reported in August and September that the Taliban conducted house-to-house

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

searches for pre-August 15 government officials and others who worked for international and human rights organizations.

The Taliban takeover and the ensuing turmoil created an immediately nonpermissive environment for many international and nongovernmental entities, including human rights organizations. Historic Taliban practices and post-August 15 actions created a climate of uncertainty and fear, which curtailed the work of journalists, civic activists, and human rights defenders, many of whom left the country due to retaliation. Investigations and reports by journalists and human rights organizations, however, continued to bring to light human rights abuses and atrocities, including allegations of summary executions of persons associated with the previous government, as well as extrajudicial killings of journalists and activists. Taliban authorities often denied that those abuses were taking place.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

“Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? 1 / 4

Many NGOs suspended operations, closed offices, and sought to evacuate staff when the elected government collapsed. However, NGOs and agencies have since continued to operate in Afghanistan, especially those providing economic and humanitarian support.

While Taliban have attacked and killed NGO workers in the past, they have broadly tolerated a continued NGO presence since taking power, instructing groups to continue the established practice of registering with the Economy Ministry. However, there are no effective protections for NGO staff, who face harassment and arbitrary arrest by Taliban who typically seek to interfere in the distribution of aid.”

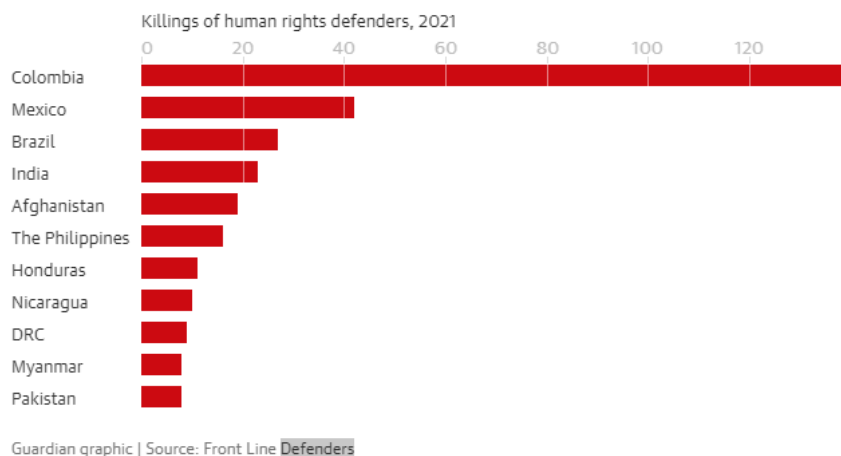
The Guardian, More rights defenders murdered in 2021, with 138 activists killed just in Colombia, 2 March 2022

“The environmentalist Gonzalo Cardona Molina, 55; Frozan Safi, a 29-year-old Afghan economics lecturer; and K Za Win and Khet Thi, two of several poets to be killed, were among those targeted because of their “peaceful and powerful” work, according to a global analysis of threats and attacks faced by human rights activists compiled by Front Line Defenders (FLD) and the Human Rights Defenders Memorial.

Many of the killings could have been prevented, as they were preceded by threats and calls for protection, according to FLD, which tries to protect activists at risk.”

This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Latin American countries recorded the highest number of killings of human rights defenders



International Federation for Human Rights, [Afghanistan: Six months after takeover, no accountability for Taliban abuses](#), 15 February 2022

“Despite Taliban pledges to respect basic human rights, the situation in the country has worsened over the past six months, particularly impacting women, journalists, and human rights defenders (HRDs). [...] Amid an all-out assault on human rights—including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture—HRDs, women’s rights activists, and other civil society actors have been particularly vulnerable to such violations. Despite the risks and a climate of fear on the ground, information concerning human rights violations continues to be collected and reported by HRDs and journalists. Although it is almost impossible to have a comprehensive picture of the human rights situation in the country and to systematically collect data, preliminary figures obtained by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) indicate that at least eight civil society activists and two journalists have been killed since 15 August 2021. In addition, 44 journalists and 10 civil society activists have been arbitrarily detained.”

AVA Press, [4 missing women activists freed: UNAMA](#), 14 February 2022

“After weeks of disappearance, four women activists have been set free by the Taliban, says the UN mission in Afghanistan. After a long period of uncertainty about their whereabouts and safety, the four ‘disappeared’ , as well as their relatives who also went missing, have been released by the de facto authorities. Ibrahimkhel was reportedly released on Friday. She had disappeared along with on January 19 after attending a protest in. AFP reported Mohammadi and Ayar went missing weeks later. Several relatives of the women activists had also disappeared.”

Human Rights Watch, [Afghan Women’s Rights Activists Forcibly Disappeared](#), 24 January 2022

“The Taliban’s response to the apparent enforced disappearance of Tamana Paryani, Parwana Ibrahimkhel, and other women activists in Afghanistan has laid bare their intent to eradicate critical women’s voices through unlawful use of force. Taliban leaders have denied arresting the women, heightening concerns for their safety and prompt release. On January 16, Paryani and Ibrahimkhel

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

participated in a protest in Kabul against recent Taliban abuses of women protesters and other restrictions on women. Witnesses said that on the night of January 19, armed men claiming to be Taliban intelligence broke through the door of Paryani's home and took her away, along with three of her sisters. Paryani posted a video on social media of the moment before the men broke into her house. Ibrahimkhel was similarly abducted from her home and her whereabouts remain unknown."

The Guardian, We are struggling': two former officials at Afghan women's affairs ministry, 16 January 2022

"Gul Bano* and Karima* are activists who ran provincial branches of the ministry of women's affairs in two different parts of Afghanistan. Their former offices have been taken over by the Taliban's feared enforcers, the ministry for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice. They are now in hiding, afraid of the men they helped put in prison for domestic violence and other abuses, many of them in the Taliban or with family links to the militants.

Gul Bano:

I've been living in fear and shock since the fall of Kabul. We held a women's protest and they tried to attack and stop us. So now I'm in hiding and always under direct threat due to my job as a women's rights activist and a [former] government employee.

I've been receiving threatening calls on a daily basis, not only from the Taliban but also from relatives and family members of those women I tried to defend. They tell me: "We are following you, we see you but you don't see us."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The Taliban must immediately release Professor Faizullah Jalal, 10 January 2022

"Responding to the arrest of Professor Faizullah Jalal, a Kabul University lecturer detained for exercising his right to freedom of expression while criticizing the Taliban on a news channel, Samira Hamidi, Amnesty International's South Asia campaigner, said:

"This arrest marks just the latest effort by the Taliban to stifle dissent. Since the takeover, Afghanistan's leaders have intimidated, harassed and violently attacked individuals who criticize them, with human rights defenders, women activists, journalists and members of academia suffering the greatest number of reprisals.

"Professor Faizullah Jalal, a renowned intellectual with decades of experience working in Afghanistan, was simply exercising his right to freedom of expression by pointing out the Taliban's failure to address the humanitarian catastrophe currently devastating Afghanistan during a televised debate. Instead of respecting his views and heeding his comments, the Taliban arrested him for allegedly provoking people on a fake Twitter account.

"Despite the fact that Faizullah Jalal's family have confirmed that the Twitter account set up in his name is fake, he remains detained in custody. The Taliban authorities must immediately and unconditionally release him."

Faizullah Jalal was arrested on Saturday by the Islamic Emirate's security agents for allegedly posting critical comments on social media against the Taliban. His family has been denied the right to visit since his arrest and received no updates about his wellbeing or any other information beyond confirmation of his arrest and detention."

ABC News, "In Afghanistan, women's rights activists feared for their lives, now they are disappearing", 21 November 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Some activists have reported receiving phone calls, messages and emails from suspicious people who claimed they could help those wanting to leave Afghanistan. They are reportedly asked to share personal details and are invited to come to certain locations. Two suspects have confessed to luring Ms Safi and the three other women to the house where their bodies were found."

Times of India, Taliban continue crack down on Human Rights defenders, 12 November 2021

"Nazir, another human rights defender who spoke with Amnesty International, said that he faced the risk of reprisals from the Taliban because of his work in human rights, his previous work as a journalist, and because of his ethnic and religious identity as a Shia-Hazara.

He emphasized that "journalists, activists and anti-Taliban intellectuals, writers/artists, female journalists, former police, army, and intelligence officers, as well as female athletes, judges, advocates and singers, are all at immediate risk". In another instance, a prominent civil society activist, Abdul Rahmad Mawin was gunned down in Jalalabad city in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province bordering Pakistan in October amid an ongoing targeted assassination spree.

In these months, the Taliban is reportedly on a wild run to hunt down several leading Human Rights activists and eliminate them, reported IFFRAS."

UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation Update, 8 November 2021

"The situation for women in Afghanistan remains worrying. On 6 November, the bodies of four women, including one of a women's rights activist, were discovered in Balkh province in northern Afghanistan; the three other bodies have not yet been identified, the Balkh Information Department Director, Mawlawi Zabihullah Noorani, stated. Since mid-August, women have held regular, nationwide protests against the Taliban, demanding that their rights be restored and protected, and since September, several female activists have been reportedly detained and tortured by Taliban members. On 4 November, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Taliban rules were prohibiting most women from operating as aid workers in the country."

France 24, Four Women Slain in Afghanistan after phone call 'to join evacuation flight', 6 November 2021

"Two suspects have been arrested after the four bodies were found at a house in the city, interior ministry spokesman Qari Sayed Khosti said.

The arrested people have admitted in initial interrogation that the women were invited to the house by them. Further investigations are under way and the case has been referred to court," he said.

Khosti did not identify the victims, but sources in Mazar-i-Sharif told AFP that one of the dead was a women's rights activist and university lecturer, Frozan Safi.

Three sources in Mazar-i-Sharif told AFP that they had heard the women received a call that they thought was an invitation to join an evacuation flight and were picked up by a car, only to be found dead later. [...] The source said that three weeks ago she had herself received a call from someone pretending to offer assistance in her efforts to get to safety abroad.

"He knew all information about me, asked me to send my documents, wanted me to fill a questionnaire, pretending to be an official of my office in charge of giving info to the US for my evacuation," she said."

Kabul Now, Female civil activists murdered in Balkh; Taliban arrest two suspects, 6 November 2021

"The Taliban security forces have arrested two suspects in Mazar-e-Sharif, capital city of the northern Balkh province, in connection to the murder of four women whose dead bodies were found last Thursday,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

November 04, inside a residence."

The Guardian, Women's rights activist shot dead in northern Afghanistan, 5 November 2021

"A 29-year-old activist and economics lecturer, Frozan Safi, has been shot and killed in northern Afghanistan, in what appears to be the first known death of a women's rights defender since the Taliban swept to power almost three months ago.

Frozan Safi's body was identified in a morgue in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif after she went missing on 20 October. "We recognised her by her clothes. Bullets had destroyed her face," said Safi's sister, Rita, who is a doctor.

"There were bullet wounds all over, too many to count, on her head, heart, chest, kidneys and legs." Her engagement ring and her bag had both been taken, Rita added.

On Thursday, Taliban security forces brought the bodies of two unidentified women who had been shot dead to the Balkh provincial hospital, said Meraj Faruqi, a doctor there. They had been found alongside the bodies of two men in a house in Mazar-i-Sharif, said Zabihullah Noorani, the Taliban's director for information and cultural affairs in Balkh province, who suggested that they could have been victims of a "personal feud". Police were investigating the case, he said."

UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO), Foreign Travel Advice: Afghanistan - Coronavirus, Last updated: 5 November 2021

"There have been a number of serious attacks on both western and Afghan NGOs and vehicles belonging to them, in which people have been killed or injured. NGO workers have been kidnapped near their places of work. Most attacks continue to occur in the east and south of Afghanistan with a recent increase in activity in the central areas. The International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) issues regular security updates for NGOs."

UNHCR, Afghanistan: Human rights defenders living under "climate of fear" - UN expert, 3 November 2021

"Human rights defenders in Afghanistan describe living under a climate of fear, threats, intense insecurity and growing desperation, a UN expert said today, calling for an urgent coordinated response from the international community.

"Among those most at risk are defenders documenting alleged war crimes, women defenders, in particular criminal lawyers, cultural rights defenders, especially those working in banned sectors such as music, and defenders from minority groups. Defenders tell me that some have erased their online data history to evade identification, and that the Taliban are resorting to other ways of finding them - for example that one HRD was identified by an injury to his leg."

"Many defenders are well known in their local communities, in particular in rural areas, and have left for the anonymity of the cities, but even there they are forced to constantly change locations," the UN expert said. "Most have also lost their source of income, further limiting their options to find safety."

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Statement on the status of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 18 September 2021

"Since August 15 the AIHRC continues in office but has been unable to fulfil its duties to the Afghan people. All AIHRC buildings have been occupied by Taliban forces, who have also made appointments and used AIHRC assets such as cars and computers."

TOLO News, Woman Activist in Kandahar Says Family Members Beaten, 12 September 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hazara Shi'a

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Atrocity Alert No. 314: Afghanistan, Ukraine and China, 24 August 2022

"On 17 August an explosion during evening prayers at a mosque in northern Kabul, Afghanistan, killed 21 civilians and injured 33, including several children. According to eyewitness accounts, the explosion was carried out by a suicide bomber. The attack was the latest in a series of mass casualty events, including blasts and mass shootings, that have killed and injured more than 250 Afghans in August, the highest monthly number of civilian casualties over the past year. The so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) has been responsible for some of the recent attacks.

Since the Taliban took over the country in August 2021, deadly attacks like these have become a regular occurrence. According to a recent report from the Human Rights Service of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), from 15 August 2021 to 15 June 2022 there were 2,106 civilian casualties, including 700 killed. Most of these casualties resulted from targeted attacks with improvised explosive devices perpetrated by ISIL-K against ethnic and religious minority communities in places of worship, education and other civilian areas. Hazara Shi'as, Shi'a Muslims and Sufi Muslims have been primarily targeted.

UNAMA's report revealed that since August 2021 the Taliban de facto authorities have also been

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

responsible for a wide range of human rights violations, perpetrated on what appears to be a widespread and systematic basis. The violations include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, incommunicado detention and torture and ill-treatment. The Taliban have perpetrated these violations and abuses against former government officials and military personnel, persons accused of affiliation with armed groups, such as ISIL-K and the National Resistance Front, as well as against media workers and human rights defenders.”

Deutsche Welle, What's happening to the Hazaras in northern Afghanistan?, 16 August 2022

“Tens of thousands of Hazaras were displaced last month after fighting erupted between the Taliban and breakaway commander Maulawi Mehdi. The humanitarian crisis is ongoing for the long-persecuted ethnic group.”

Gandhara, EU Slams Taliban Over Failure to create ‘inclusive political system’ in eve of takeover anniversary, 14 August 2022

“The Taliban has “failed to establish an inclusive political system,” the European Union has charged on the eve of the first anniversary of the hard-line Islamist movement's rule.

"The population, including ethnic and religious groups and in particular Hazaras and the Shi'a population, are experiencing institutionalized and systemic abuse of their economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights," said Nabila Massrali, an EU foreign affairs spokeswoman, in a statement on August 14. "More concretely, they have severely violated and abused the rights of Afghan women and girls, who remain deprived of secondary education, while new restrictions on dress codes and movement have further excluded them from most aspects of economic and public life," Massrali said. "Mechanisms to protect women and girls from violence and forced marriages have been dismantled, and domestic violence is on the rise."

[...]

The EU rebuke comes a day after a demonstration by women in Kabul was violently dispersed by Taliban fighters who fired guns in the air and beat protesters who had demanded "bread, work, and freedom."

About 40 women marched in front of the Education Ministry building on August 13 before the fighters dispersed them.

Photos and videos of the protest posted on social media show Taliban forces firing warning shots and physically assaulting the women. Some women were chased by Taliban fighters, who beat them with their rifle butts.

The Taliban also detained three foreign journalists and one Afghan worker for covering the protest, while another two local journalists were slightly wounded, according to the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) [...]"

The New Humanitarian, One year on, few options for Afghans escaping hunger and Taliban persecution, 10 August 2022

“Hundreds of thousands of Afghans attempting to escape Taliban persecution and the country’s economic collapse are largely being met with closed borders, hardening attitudes, and deportation. Meanwhile, Western governments have been slow to fulfil promises to relocate tens of thousands of Afghan allies left behind in last year’s chaotic withdrawal of foreign troops. Those most at risk of Taliban reprisal are former members of law enforcement and civil servants from the Western-backed government that disintegrated when the Taliban returned to power in Kabul on 15 August last year. Journalists, civil-society activists, women rights activists, and women who have seen their access to education and employment curtailed

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

by the Taliban are also seeking exits from the country. So are members of minority ethnic groups, such as Hazaras, who face persecution from the Taliban and other jihadist organisations. [...] Pakistan and Iran have long hosted the vast majority of people displaced over successive decades of conflict in Afghanistan. Currently, Iran hosts about 3.5 million displaced Afghans and Pakistan hosts about 3.1 million. Only about a third of Afghans in each country are registered with the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR. The rest are undocumented, due to challenges in obtaining legal status, and risk deportation. [...] Hundreds of thousands of others pay still-high, but less exorbitant costs to smugglers who ferry people without documents across the border into Pakistan, according to Samuel Hall. However, the Pakistani army and paramilitary groups frequently push people back across the border, despite UNHCR advising countries not to forcibly return people to Afghanistan. Between January and July of this year, the UN's emergency aid coordination body, OCHA, found that 46,300 Afghans were expelled or deported from Pakistan, which is 40,000 more than in the same period in 2021. In Iran, violent pushbacks and deportations were occurring long before the Taliban returned to power. This year, however, about 462,000 people have been returned to Afghanistan – an uptick of 42,000 from last year, according to OCHA. Those who have been forcibly returned include Afghans who recently crossed the border as well as those living in Iran, sometimes for years without being able to obtain residency documents. “Under the current circumstances, nobody should deport Afghans. The risk on the ground [for many] is imminent,” said Sultani, from Amnesty International.”

Amnesty International, [Afghanistan: Taliban must immediately step-up measures to protect the Hazara Shiite communities](#), 8 August 2022

“On Friday, 5th August, at least eight people were killed and 18 injured in a blast in Kabul. The next day, on Saturday, 6th August a bomb exploded in a busy shopping street in Kabul killed eight people and injured at least 22 as reported in media. On Sunday, 7th August the UN reported at least 120 people were killed and wounded resulting from the attacks to which responsibility was claimed by the Islamic State of Khurasan Province claimed. After the Taliban takeover, such minority communities have no effective representation within the Taliban's security or governance structure.”

UNOCHR, [Facing critical human rights challenges, Afghanistan at a crossroads, says UN expert in Kabul](#), 26 May 2022

“The newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett [...] called for investigations into a series of attacks on places of worship and schools in Kabul, Kunduz, and Balkh provinces, instances of which have been claimed by the ISIS-K group. He said that such attacks specifically targeting members of the Hazara, Shia, and Sufi communities are becoming increasingly systematic in nature and reflect elements of an organizational policy, thus bearing hallmarks of crimes against humanity.”

OHCHR, [Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 \(reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis\)](#), 26 May 2022

“The Special Rapporteur calls for investigation of and accountability for the series of attacks on places of worship and schools in Kabul, Kunduz, and Balkh provinces, instances of which have been claimed by the ISIS-K group. These appear to have specifically targeted members of the Hazara, Shia, and Sufi communities and to be part of a pattern of attacks and other discriminatory measures going back many

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

years, especially against members of the Shia community. The killings and other violations that have been committed during these and other attacks, appear to be systematic in nature and reflect elements of an organizational policy, thus bearing hallmarks of crimes against humanity. I urge the Afghan and international community to work with me and other human rights mechanisms to address this issue utilising a victim-centered approach. I also remind the de facto authorities that they bear the primary responsibility for the protection of all Afghans, and especially of children, against real threats to life and security posed by any actors."

UNAMA, STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL - ON AFGHANISTAN, 26 May 2022

"The Secretary-General condemns the recent attacks in Afghanistan, including on passenger vehicles in Mazar-e-Sharif City and the Masjid Sharif Hazrat Zakaria mosque in Kabul City, which have claimed the lives of numerous civilians, among them members of the Hazara Shia community and at least 16 children. The Secretary-General extends his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a swift recovery to those injured. Attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including mosques, are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law. The Secretary-General reiterates his call on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, as well as their right to freely practice their religion."

BBC News, Afghanistan pupils in fear after spate of Islamic State attacks, 13 May 2022

"Milad, and most of the residents in his neighbourhood, Dashte-e-Barchi, are members of the Shia Hazara minority. The area has been repeatedly attacked by the local branch of the Islamic State group, who are suspected of being behind the bombing at Milad's school.

In recent weeks Shia and Sufi Muslim communities have been devastated by a series of bombings by IS, with around 100 people killed in attacks on mosques and minibuses as well as at Milad's school.

IS attacks have been taking place since long before the Taliban takeover last year, but they've now spread to new parts of the country, notably the north with blasts in Mazar-e Sharif and Kunduz."

ACLED, REGIONAL OVERVIEW: SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN 23 APRIL-6 MAY 2022, 12 May 2022

"Meanwhile, armed groups continued to carry out attacks against civilians over the past two weeks, especially targeting minority Muslim communities ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid Al Fitr on 30 April. IS militants carried out deadly explosive attacks targeting Shiite Muslims in Balkh province and Kabul, killing at least 11 people in Mazar-i Sharif city on 28 April. Meanwhile, in the deadliest attack thus far in 2022, unidentified militants detonated an explosive during Friday prayers at a mosque in Kabul city on 29 April, killing 50 Sufi Muslims. Further explosive attacks targeted power pylons in Kabul and Parwan provinces, causing power outages across 11 provinces during Eid Al Fitr (Al Arabiya News, 30 April 2022). While some of the explosions were claimed by IS, the attackers of the other attacks remain unknown."

Al Jazeera, Afghan students run underground book club to keep dreams alive, 9 May 2022

"A series of blasts in recent weeks, particularly targeting Shia Hazaras, has increased the vulnerability of ethnic minorities."

Germany - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), Briefing on the Situation of the Hazaras in Afghanistan, May 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, UNAMA statement on deadly attack in Kabul, 29 April 2022

“KABUL – The United Nations in Afghanistan condemns in the strongest terms today’s deadly attack in a Sufi Mosque in the Darulaman area of Kabul, which reportedly resulted in scores dead and wounded. “Recent attacks against civilians, targeting ethnic and religious minorities, represent a disturbing trend in Afghanistan. These violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws must end immediately.” The latest attack in Kabul follows a spate of attacks in recent weeks in mosques and schools in the major cities of Kabul, Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif, which appear to have specifically targeted members of the Hazara, Shia and Sufi minorities, including yesterday’s attack in Mazar-e-Sharif which also resulted in several killed and injured.”

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), A Bleak Future with Education Under Attack in Afghanistan, 20 April 2022

“Afghanistan’s children are bleeding again. Multiple bomb blasts on April 19 outside a high school and an education center in Kabul’s Dasht-e Barchi neighborhood left at least six people dead and twenty wounded, including children, and casualties could be much higher. This is just the latest assault on education in Afghanistan, which have traumatized families and dimmed hopes for their children’s future. [...] Dasht-e Barchi is home to Afghanistan’s Hazara community, an ethnic group that has faced discrimination and abuse by both the Taliban and successive Afghan governments. In recent years, the Islamic State of Khorasan Province, the Afghan branch of the Islamic State armed group, has carried out many attacks on schools and mosques in the area.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“On May 8, a car bomb attack outside the Sayed ul-Shuhuda school in Kabul resulted in 300 casualties – mostly schoolgirls – including 95 killed. No group claimed responsibility. The attack occurred in a western district of the capital where many residents are of the mostly Hazara ethnic community. [...]

On May 8, an elaborate coordinated attack on Sayed ul-Shuhuda girls’ school in Kabul deliberately targeted its female students in a mostly Hazara neighborhood, killing at least 90 persons, mostly women and girls. The Taliban denied responsibility, but the pre-August 15 government blamed the killings on the Taliban, calling the action “a crime against humanity.” [...] In June, according to NGO HALO Trust, gunmen attacked a compound in Baghlan Province killing 10 de-miners. ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the attack in which there were indications the gunmen may have sought to target Hazaras specifically. Taliban fighters killed nine ethnic Hazara men from July 4 to 6 after taking control of Ghazni Province, according to Amnesty International. [...]

Taliban fighters allegedly engaged in killings of Hazaras in Daykundi Province on August 30; the Taliban denied the allegations. [...] ISIS-K launched several attacks on mosques in October. The attacks targeted the Shia community, killing dozens of worshipers in Kunduz, Kandahar. No group claimed responsibility for two attacks on December 10 in western Kabul targeting predominantly Shia Hazara neighborhoods. [...]

In September the Taliban announced a “caretaker government,” dominated by ethnic Pashtun members with no women and only a few members of minority groups, none at the cabinet level. In late December the Taliban announced that a second member of the Hazara minority had been appointed to the government, this time as deputy minister for economic affairs. [...] Ethnic tensions continued to result in conflict and killings. Societal discrimination against Hazaras continued in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention. According to

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

NGOs, the pre-August 15 government frequently assigned Hazara police officers to symbolic positions with little authority within the Ministry of Interior.

ISIS-K continued attacks against Shia, predominately Hazara, communities. On October 8, an ISIS-K suicide bomber killed at least 50 members of the minority Shia community at a mosque in Kunduz. On October 15, a suicide bomber attack targeting a Shia community mosque in Kandahar killed more than 30 worshippers. Following attacks and threats, Taliban security forces augmented protective operations at Shia mosques. [...] According to HRW, Taliban representatives in early October forcibly displaced hundreds of Hazara families from southern Helmand Province to the northern Balkh Province, in part to distribute land to their own supporters. The Taliban carried out the evictions at gunpoint and with little notice, preventing families from taking their belongings or finishing harvesting their crops. An HRW report stated that the largest displacements took place in 15 villages in Daikundi and Uruzgan Provinces where the Taliban evicted at least 2,800 Hazara residents in September. UNHCR reported that approximately 40 percent of Afghan arrivals to Iran were Hazaras.

In December senior Taliban representatives held a series of engagements with Shia Hazara leaders. On December 26, “interim Deputy Prime Minister” Maulavi Mohammed Abdul Kabir hosted a meeting of Shia leaders from around the country, and “interim Deputy Foreign Minister” Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai spoke at a December 29 meeting of the Shia Ulema Council in Kabul. In these meetings the Taliban officials expressed their commitment to provide security for all citizens and a desire to avoid sectarian division. [...] Ethnic Hazaras, Sikhs, and Hindus faced discrimination in hiring and work assignments, in addition to broader social discrimination...”

ACLED, Regional Overview: South Asia and Afghanistan 26th February - 1 April 2022, 6 April 2022

“Civilians in Herat have faced violence from unidentified armed groups and by Taliban forces since the fall of Kabul in August 2021; the deadliest attack has been the IS attack in January, which killed eight Hazaras. Violence in Herat is both common and highly volatile; it is considered an area of ‘extreme risk’ by ACLED’s Volatility and Predictability Index.”

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

“Hazaras, most of whom practice Shia Islam, have been targeted by the IS-K. The IS-K claimed responsibility for attacking a mosque in Kunduz in October 2021, killing at least 72 people. It also assumed responsibility for an attack on a Kandahar mosque that month, killing at least 63 people. Hazaras have also been targeted by the Taliban; in late August, Taliban fighters reportedly killed 13 Hazaras, many of them former government soldiers, in Daykundi Province. In September, reports surfaced of Taliban forcibly evicting Hazara families from their homes.”

The New York Times, On Patrol: 12 Days With a Taliban Police Unit in Kabul, 28 January 2022

“[...] Journalists from The New York Times spent 12 days with the small Taliban unit this fall, going on several patrols with them in their zone, Police District 3, and traveling to their homes in Wardak Province, a neighboring mountainous area. [...] In Afghanistan, many Shiites belong to the Hazara ethnic minority; the Taliban, a Sunni Pashtun movement, severely persecuted Hazaras the last time they ruled the country. But the seeming implausibility of a Talib unit actually guarding such an emblematic Shiite site is belied by how seriously the men appeared to take their assignment. “We do not care which ethnic group we serve, our goal is to serve and provide security for Afghans,” said Habib Rahman Inqayad, 25, the unit leader and most experienced of them. “We never think that these people are Pashtun or Hazara.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The New York Times, [‘Why Was I Born a Girl?’ An Afghan Poem Inspires U.S. Students](#), 22 January 2022

“Most of Mawoud’s [a tutoring center Fariba now attends in Kabul] 300 students are Hazara, a predominately Shiite Muslim minority ruthlessly attacked by the Islamic State in Afghanistan, ISIS-K. Hazara schools, protests, mosques, a New Year’s celebration and even a wrestling club have been bombed by ISIS-K since 2016, killing hundreds. Two Shiite Muslim mosques attended by Hazaras were bombed a week apart in October, killing more than 90 people. ISIS considers Hazaras apostates. [...] Since the Taliban takeover, several commuter minibuses used by Hazaras have been bombed in the Hazara district of west Kabul known as Dasht-e-Barchi. At least 11 people have been killed and up to 18 wounded, most of them Hazaras, the Afghan Analysts Network reported. [...] The Taliban, who persecuted Hazaras in the past, are now responsible for their security. The analysts’ independent research agency described the Taliban government response as tepid, saying it downplayed the strength of ISIS-K, which claimed responsibility for most of the attacks. On Jan. 14, Afghan media reported that a young Hazara woman, Zainab Abdullahi, was shot and killed at a Taliban checkpoint just five minutes from the Mawoud center. [...] Mawoud prepares students for Afghanistan’s rigorous university entrance exams. But there is no guarantee that girls will be permitted to take the annual exams — or to return to high school, attend a university, or pursue a career in a country where the Taliban have begun erasing most women from public life. The Taliban have said they hope older girls will return to schools and universities, under Islamic guidelines, by late March. Except for some schools in northern Afghanistan, most Afghan girls above the sixth grade have not attended school since August. [...] Mr. Yousefi said that Taliban officials who have visited the tutoring center have not laid down specific rules, as they had at some public schools. He said they have merely stressed adherence to “Islamic values,” interpreted as separating boys and girls and requiring girls to cover their hair and faces. [...] Before suicide bombs killed students at Mawoud in 2018 and at a nearby tutoring center attended by Hazaras in 2020, Mawoud had 3,000 students. Since the bombings and the Taliban takeover, the size of Mawoud’s student body has dropped by about 90 percent, the principal said. [...]”

Al Jazeera, [Taliban arrests fighter who shot dead Hazara woman at checkpoint](#), 19 January 2022

“A Taliban fighter has been arrested for shooting dead a Hazara woman at a checkpoint in the Afghan capital as she returned from a wedding, a spokesman for the group says.

The killing of Zainab Abdullahi, 25, has horrified women, who face increasing restrictions since the Taliban returned to power in August.

The shooting took place in a Kabul neighbourhood inhabited mostly by members of the minority Shia Hazara community, which has been the target of deadly attacks by sectarian armed groups such as ISIL (ISIS).

Abdullahi was “killed by mistake”, Taliban spokesman Mohammad Naeem said on Twitter, adding that the arrested fighter will be punished. [...]

Some women’s rights activists have staged protests in Kabul since Abdullahi’s killing, demanding justice.”

Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Taliban Deprive Women of Livelihoods, Identity](#), 18 January 2022

“Some women felt heightened risk because of both gender and ethnicity or religion. “It’s difficult for us because we are the Hazara minority,” a healthcare worker said, referring to her ethnic group, which has long been persecuted in Afghanistan. “When we talk to [Taliban members], they don’t even look at us, they don’t consider us at all,” she said, referring to Hazara staff members at her health facility. [...]

The Taliban’s return to power has made members of some ethnic and religious minorities feel more vulnerable to threats even from those not affiliated with the Taliban. The healthcare worker said a colleague who is Shia, a religious minority, was threatened by a patient’s family she believed might be

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

connected to the Taliban.”

Afghanistan Analysts Network, A Community Under Attack: How successive governments failed west Kabul and the Hazaras who live there, 17 January 2022

“After a brief respite from explosions following the Taleban takeover, attacks against west Kabul’s Hazara-dominated areas resumed a little over a month after the Republic’s fall. Since then, there have been several explosions in Dasht-e Barchi and three attacks against Hazaras and Shias elsewhere in the country, two of them targeting Shia/Hazara mosques in Kunduz and Kandahar.

The Taleban’s desire to establish credibility as the provider of security could be the reason for their tepid response to the attacks, most of which have been claimed by ISKP. However, instead of acknowledging and taking steps to address security concerns seriously, the Taleban have been downplaying the strength of ISKP and therefore the incidents claimed by or attributed to it.”

Khaama Press, Shi’ite people ask Taliban to formalize their sect, 28 December 2021

“Shi’ite people in Afghanistan in a statement asked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to formalize their sect and protect their citizenship rights in the framework of an inclusive government.

“In the statement that was titled “Demands and ideas of Shi’ite people in Afghanistan,” the people asked that for protection of their all political, economic, societal, cultural, freedom of speech, and political participation.

“Writers of the statement welcomed the green signal of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan for the establishment of an inclusive government and added that the Afghan government will not be inclusive without their participation as they form 25 percent of the Afghan population.

“The Shi’ite people also asked for the creation of exclusive courts of Shi’ite people where they can implement their own law.

“It comes as a number of Shi’ite leaders met with the political deputy of PM Abdul Kabir on Sunday, December 26 and they were given assurance of their security in Afghanistan.

“Earlier, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan had said that they will be making a mechanism based on which the Shi’ite people will be implementing their own sect to solve their conflicts.”

La Prensa Latina, Afghanistan’s Hazaras live in the shadow of fear as attacks increase, 11 December 2021

“The fear of terror attacks has become a daily reality for Afghanistan’s Shia Hazara minority, and as they go about their daily lives, death can strike at the most unexpected times: while coming out of school, praying at the mosque or in an urban transport vehicle.

“In order to protect themselves, the Hazaras live together in closely-knit neighborhoods, such as Kabul’s well-known western area of Dashte Barchi, but this has made them easy targets for attacks often claimed by the Islamic State terror group, which considers the community apostates.

“On Friday, a sacred day when streets are full of people and the Taliban were keeping watch, twin bombings targeted two passenger vans within a span of 30 minutes.

“Two people were killed and three injured in the first blast, while a woman was injured in the second.”

Gandhara, Taliban Accused Of Forcibly Evicting Ethnic Uzbeks, Turkmen In Northern Afghanistan, 9 December 2021

“Taliban fighters have been accused of helping to forcibly evict more than 1,000 people in northern Afghanistan, with the evictions targeting members of the ethnic Uzbek and Turkmen communities. Ethnic Uzbeks and Turkmen allege that Pashtuns seized their homes and land in the northern province

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of Jowzjan with the help of the Taliban, a predominately Pashtun group.

The evictions came as Taliban fighters have expelled hundreds of Shi'ite Hazara families from their homes and farms in five provinces since the militants seized power in Afghanistan in August. [...] In October, the Taliban forcibly evicted hundreds of Hazara families from southern Helmand Province and the northern province of Balkh. In late September, some 700 Hazara were forcibly evicted by the Taliban in the central province of Daikundi.

The Taliban claimed that they were implementing a Taliban court order that required the land to be returned to what it said were its original owners."

Hazara Protest Worldwide (Kabul Press), An Appeal to the World Concerning the Dire Situation of the Hazara Ethnic Group in Afghanistan, 23 November 2021

"Our bloody history goes back to the 1890s when more than 60% of our people were massacred in a genocidal fashion by a Pashtun Amir and his tribe, our land was confiscated and given to the Pashtuns brought in from across the border. Our women and girls were sold to slavery and the surviving individuals were dispersed in the region. The successive governments and regimes continued the discriminatory policies towards us and we were marginalized and kept out of the system.

More recently during the Taliban onslaught in Mazar-e-Sharif in 1998, more than 10,000 Hazaras were massacred and in some cases, people were not allowed to bury their dead and they were left on the street to rot or be eaten by the dogs. We suffered more killings and massacres in other parts of Hazaristan, the central part of the country.

Despite the presence of international military forces in Afghanistan for the past 20 years, Hazaras continued to be the victims of extremist violence by Islamic insurgents and systematic discrimination by the Afghan state. In the past six years, Hazaras have been regularly targeted and murdered in the capital city, Kabul, and across Afghanistan. Our places of worship, schools, universities, hospitals, sports clubs, and public gatherings were targeted by suicide bombers. (...)

Currently, no single place in Afghanistan is safe for Hazaras and given their capture of the country, we feel that the first casualty of the Taliban's ascendance to power will be the Hazaras in general and the intellectuals and elites in particular. During the recent international evacuation, most of our people who are very vulnerable were left behind. Of more than 120,000 people that evacuated, less than %1 of them were from our people."

Daily Sabah, Desperate Hazara leaders in Afghanistan show support for Taliban, 25 November 2021

"Over 1,000 Hazaras have pledged their support for the interim Taliban government, saying that the "dark period" of previous Western-backed governments has ended.

Afghanistan's Hazaras and Shiite Muslims have been persecuted by the Taliban, but on Thursday, community elders gathered in Kabul alongside Taliban leaders in a show of support.

Senior Hazara leader and former lawmaker Jafar Mahdawi, who organized the gathering, said the former President Ashraf Ghani was the "darkest point" in the history of Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan had no independence and (foreign) embassies ruled every aspect of the government," he said. "Thank God, we have now passed this dark period."

Since the Taliban seized power in August, the new rulers have put an end to the war, ended corruption and increased security, Mahdawi said.

He, however, called for a more inclusive government from the Taliban and urged the new rulers to reopen schools for girls.

"In the coming weeks or months, we hope to witness an inclusive government that has representatives

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

of all people," Mahdawi said.

The interim Taliban government is made up almost entirely of the group's Pashtun stalwarts and includes no women.

Taliban leader and spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid told the gathering that rebuilding the country was a priority. He said their struggle against the "foreign invaders" has ended and that the intention is to rebuild the country.

The Hazaras, roughly 10% to 20% of Afghanistan's around 38 million population, have been persecuted for centuries in the country.

In the last two decades, they have been targeted in particular by the Taliban and Daesh terrorists, who consider them heretics.

The Taliban has carried out several mass killings of Hazaras, including in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif in 1998, where Human Rights Watch says at least 2,000 mainly Hazara civilians were executed.

Several bomb attacks in recent years have also killed and wounded several Hazaras in Kabul and other cities.

Just days after the Taliban took over, a statue of a prominent Hazara political leader was decapitated in Bamiyan, a city inhabited mainly by the Shiite community.

Nobody claimed responsibility for the act, but the Taliban earned notoriety in 2001 for destroying two giant Buddha statues in Bamiyan after deeming them anti-Islamic."

DW, Deadly bomb blast in Shiite neighbourhood in Kabul, 17 November 2021

"A bomb blast killed at least one person in a neighborhood of Kabul populated largely by people from the Hazara Shiite minority on Wednesday, the Taliban confirmed.

The explosion happened in the Dast-e-Barchi district. One civilian was killed and six were injured, Interior Ministry spokesperson Qari Sayeed Khosty said on Twitter. Other witnesses reported more casualties. [...]

The so-called Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) militant group claimed responsibility for the attack.

A second explosion in another part of the city was also reported, but Taliban officials said they were still gathering information.

Kabul has been rocked by a series of blasts in recent days, with the city's Shiite minority frequently the target of the attacks.

Last week, a bomb destroyed another minibus in the same area, killing a journalist and injuring several others. IS-K claimed responsibility for the attack and boasted of killing "20 Shiite apostates."

Kabul Now, Taliban orders school teachers to specify their religious identity, 16 November 2021

"Taliban orders school teachers to specify their religious identity

The Taliban intelligence directorate has asked school teachers in the western Herat province to specify their religious identity whether they are "Sunni" or "Shia" Muslim in a detailed form, according to a copy of the form shared with Kabul Now.

School teachers are asked to fill in the form indicating their personal information, duty station, home address, contact number, residence, and their religious identity. Talking to Kabul Now, some teachers strongly opposed the Taliban move for religious identification of school teachers.

[...]

"We were never asked under the former government that which Madhhab (school of Islam) – Sunni or Shia – we followed. We don't know why they ask for specification of our religious identity," said a teacher on condition of anonymity.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Calling on the Taliban to stop it, the school teachers stressed that such move will harm the unity between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Naeem ul-Haq Haqqani, Taliban's chief of cultural affairs, rejected to provide more clarifications regarding the form. Sher Ahmad Ammar, special representative of Herat's Taliban governor, however, told Kabul Now that they will further investigate on how the forms have been distributed in schools. This comes as the Taliban's minister for propagation of virtue and prevention of vice, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, has said in a recent meeting with a group of Iranian scholars that the "enemy" are attempting to disunite Afghans under the Sunni and Shia classifications. He has stressed on further unity among Sunni and Shia Muslims in Afghanistan."

Times of India, Taliban continue crack down on Human Rights defenders, 12 November 2021

"Nazir, another human rights defender who spoke with Amnesty International, said that he faced the risk of reprisals from the Taliban because of his work in human rights, his previous work as a journalist, and because of his ethnic and religious identity as a Shia-Hazara.

[...] In these months, the Taliban is reportedly on a wild run to hunt down several leading Human Rights activists and eliminate them, reported IFFRAS. The Taliban have also been indulging in forcefully displacing the members of the Hazara community. Human Rights Watch (HRW) have accused the Taliban of such inhuman displacement of many families across Afghanistan, which the Taliban describes as a form of "collective punishment".

It has ordered Hazaras and other residents in four provinces across Afghanistan to leave their homes and farms, in many cases with only a few days' notice.

Hazaras are a Shia ethnic minority community, who make up about 9 per cent - 10 per cent of the Afghan population. They are basically of Mongolian and Central Asian descent and reside mostly in the mountainous area of central Afghanistan, reported IFFRAS.

Taliban's hatred for the Hazaras is primarily due to their difference in sectarian identity and distinct ethnic origins, and therefore considers them to be 'infidels'.

Videos of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing of Hazaras continues in the Giza and Patu districts of Daykundi by the Taliban. The brutal torture meted to the Hazaras, including children are beyond condemnation. Several have been killed by the Taliban in Qarabagh district of Ghazni. They have been tortured inhumanly and then shot in their faces. A picture of a Hazara child drenched in clothes wet with blood was tweeted recently, reported IFFRAS""

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Factsheet Afghanistan, 28 October 2021
"Hazara Shi'a Persecution

[...] The Hazara Shi'a have faced attacks by both the Taliban and the ISIS-K over the last 30 years and now face the prospect of more violence with the Taliban back in power.

There has been a recent resurgence of attacks targeting the Hazara community. In the first half of 2021, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented 20 attacks targeting Hazaras, which left a total of 143 dead and 357 injured. In early July, after the Taliban took control of Ghazni province in their advance toward Kabul, villagers from Mundarakht left for shelter in the mountains during fighting between the Taliban and government forces. As some of the villagers returned to gather food and supplies, Taliban forces massacred nine Hazara Shi'a men over the course of three days; six were shot and three were tortured to death. In September 2021, Hazara activists claimed that at least 1,200 Hazara Shi'a were evicted from their homes in Daykundi province as the Taliban fighters seized their properties. Shortly after, in October 2021, there were confirmed reports

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

that the Taliban killed 13 Hazaras in Daykundi province.

On October 8, 2021, ISIS-K attacked a Shi'a mosque in Kunduz province that killed at least 46 worshipers and wounded dozens more.

In August 2021, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum issued a press release stating its grave concern about the Shi'a minority, warning that Hazaras face "a risk of crimes against humanity or even genocide." For more information on the threat to the Hazara community, please refer to USCIRF's Spotlight September 2021 episode "Hazara Community Threatened in Afghanistan."

Al Jazeera, [Why the Hazara people fear genocide in Afghanistan](#), 27 October 2021

"In the aftermath of the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan, violence against the Hazara population has escalated. With a long history of persecution, including by the Taliban, the Hazaras are right to fear a genocide.

While the Taliban and other armed groups are targeting and committing human rights violations against the people of Afghanistan, the Hazara ethnic and religious population is especially at high risk. The international community must pressure the Taliban to guarantee the protection of the rights of the Hazara people, to ensure a genocide against them does not take place. [...] The return of the Taliban to power in Kabul has meant not only a rollback of the limited social gains the Hazaras had achieved, but also new atrocities against the community.

In August, Amnesty International reported that at least nine Hazara men were massacred by the Taliban when its fighters took over Ghazni province in July. Then earlier this month, the organisation released evidence of another massacre in which 13 Hazaras, including a 17-year-old girl, were killed in late August in Daykundi province.

In late September and early October, reports in Western media emerged of mass "evictions" of Hazara people from their ancestral homes and lands in Daykundi province. Taliban fighters forced over 4,000 Hazaras from their homes, claiming they had no ownership over their land, leaving them stranded without food or shelter as harsh winter approaches. In Mazar-e-Sharif, a local Taliban court decided to expel some 2,000 families, again based on false claims that they do not own their homes.

By now there is a clear pattern of Taliban atrocities being committed across Afghanistan, which could mean that the Hazaras may be facing imminent ethnic cleansing.

The Taliban leadership may have moderated its rhetoric to please the international community, claiming that it will protect all ethnic groups, but it has done nothing to stem the growing number of crimes being committed by its fighters. What is more, the group has also clearly declared that it will only accept Hanafi jurisprudence, which would effectively preclude any accommodation of the Shia Islamic law and values followed by Hazaras. Expectedly, no Hazara representative was included in the Taliban government announced in September.

It is also not surprising that, despite the insistence by the Taliban that it can provide security and peace in Afghanistan, ISKP has continued its deadly attacks against the Hazaras. In October, the bombing of a Hazara mosque in Kunduz resulted in the death of more than 100 people. Another bombing of a Hazara mosque in Kandahar killed at least 47 people and wounded scores of others."

Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Surge in Islamic State Attacks on Shia](#), 25 October 2021

"The Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), an armed group affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS), is carrying out bombings and other targeted attacks against Afghanistan's Shia religious minority that amount to crimes against humanity, Human Rights Watch said today. The group has also carried out other mass casualty attacks, including the August 29, 2021 suicide bombing at Kabul's airport that killed 170

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Afghans, mostly civilians.

The ISKP has claimed responsibility for many recent unlawful attacks on the Hazara Shia community, including suicide bombings that killed at least 72 people at the Sayed Abad mosque in Kunduz on October 8, and a bombing that killed at least 63 people at the Bibi Fatima mosque in Kandahar on October 15. After the Kandahar attack, ISIS issued a statement saying it would target Shia in their homes and centers “in every way, from slaughtering their necks to scattering their limbs... and the news of [ISIS’s] attacks...in the temples of the [Shia] and their gatherings is not hidden from anyone, from Baghdad to Khorasan.

The ISKP armed group has repeatedly carried out devastating attacks that appear designed to spread terror and inflict maximum suffering particularly on Afghanistan’s Hazara community,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “The numerous attacks targeting Hazaras amount to crimes against humanity, and those responsible should be brought to justice.

The ISKP has posed a serious threat to Hazaras and other Afghan civilians since at least 2015, when the Islamist armed group began attacks on mosques, hospitals, schools, and other civilian facilities, especially in predominantly Shia neighborhoods. These attacks have killed at least 1,500 civilians and injured thousands more, mostly religious minorities. [...]

Taliban authorities, who took over Kabul and most of the country in August, have said they would provide more protection for Shia mosques and other facilities. However, the Taliban also have a history of committing serious abuses against Hazaras, including large-scale killings during fighting in Mazar-e Sharif and Bamiyan in 1998-99. Recently, Taliban officials have singled out Hazara journalists for arbitrary detention and beatings, and Hazara communities for forced evictions. [...]

The ISKP attacks are widespread. The group has killed more than 1,500 civilians and wounded over 3,500, primarily by bombing civilian facilities such as Shia mosques and Shia educational institutions, as well as hospitals, sports centers, and other gathering places in Shia neighborhoods and at Shia or Hazara events in Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat, and other cities. The consistent nature of the attacks over a six-year-period indicates a pattern, if not a methodical plan, and supports the conclusion that these attacks are systematic.

Statements from ISKP leaders since 2015 and as recently as October 2021 indicate that the deadly targeting of Shia civilians has been deliberate. In July 2016, for instance, following an attack on Hazara protesters in Kabul, the ISKP stated that Shias “were undisputed infidels and... whoever doubts this or the right to kill them are, in turn, apostates.””

The Guardian, Taliban ‘forcibly evicting’ Hazaras and opponents in Afghanistan, 23 October 2021

“Thousands of people have been forced from their homes and land by Taliban officials in the north and south of Afghanistan, in what amounted to collective punishment, illegal under international law, Human Rights Watch has warned.

Many of the evictions targeted members of the Shia Hazara community, while others were of people connected to the former Afghan government. Land and homes seized this way have often been redistributed to Taliban supporters, HRW said.

Forced evictions logged by Human Rights Watch took place across five provinces, including Kandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan in the south, Daikundi in the centre, and the northern province of Balkh.

Many of the people were ordered to leave homes and farms with just a few days’ notice, and without any opportunity to prove their legal ownership. Some were reportedly told that if they did not comply with orders to leave, they “had no right to complain about the consequences”, the report said.

“The Taliban are forcibly evicting Hazaras and others on the basis of ethnicity or political opinion to reward Taliban supporters,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “These

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

evictions, carried out with threats of force and without any legal process, are serious abuses that amount to collective punishment.”

The Taliban promised an inclusive government, but chose an all-male cabinet dominated largely by Sunni clerics from the Pashtun ethnic group, from which the group has historically drawn its core support.”

Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Forcibly Evict Minority Shia, 22 October 2021

“Taliban officials in several provinces across Afghanistan have forcibly displaced residents partly to distribute land to their own supporters, Human Rights Watch said today. Many of these evictions have targeted Hazara Shia communities, as well as people associated with the former government, as a form of collective punishment.

In early October 2021, the Taliban and associated militias forcibly evicted hundreds of Hazara families from the southern Helmand province and the northern Balkh province. These followed earlier evictions from Daikundi, Uruzgan, and Kandahar provinces. Since the Taliban came to power in August, the Taliban have told many Hazaras and other residents in these five provinces to leave their homes and farms, in many cases with only a few days’ notice and without any opportunity to present their legal claims to the land. A former United Nations political analyst said that he saw eviction notices telling residents that if they did not comply, they “had no right to complain about the consequences.”

“The Taliban are forcibly evicting Hazaras and others on the basis of ethnicity or political opinion to reward Taliban supporters,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “These evictions, carried out with threats of force and without any legal process, are serious abuses that amount to collective punishment.””

Reuters, For Afghan Hazaras, where to pray can be life and death choice, 21 October 2021

“The last two Fridays have seen suicide bombings, both attacks claimed by Islamic State (ISIS) and both targeting the minority Shi’ite sect. More than 100 people were killed in total.

In the wake of the violence, some Hazaras are not going to the mosque at all.

Hazaras have long been discriminated against in Afghanistan from a mix of factors, of which religion is just one.

But while thousands died under the last Taliban government from 1996-2001, it was the appearance of Islamic State in Afghanistan from around the start of 2015 that made them and the wider Shi’ite community a systematic target.

Many hundreds were killed in suicide attacks on mosques and community centres by hardline Sunni militants who do not see them as true Muslims, bringing a form of the sectarian violence that devastated countries like Iraq to Afghanistan.

No up-to-date census data exists, but estimates put the size of the overall Shi’ite community at between 10-20 percent of the population, including Persian-speaking Tajiks and Pashtuns as well as Hazaras.

In addition, Hazaras have often also been victim of the ethnic and economic rivalries endemic to Afghan politics. [...] Although the Taliban have promised that all of Afghanistan’s ethnic groups will be protected, the killing has gone on since they seized power in August.”

UNHCR, UNHCR Iran: Afghanistan Situation Update, 18 October 2021

“For the Shiite minority and many of the Hazaras in Afghanistan, ISKP’s regained strength has ushered in yet another era of uncertainty. Earlier this month, Amnesty International said that the Taliban unlawfully killed 13 Hazaras, including a 17-year-old girl, amplifying fears for ethnic and religious minorities. On 16 October, it was reported that large populations of the Hazara ethnic group have been ordered to evict

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

their homes by the Taliban. Most evictions are taking place in remote and rural areas of the country. It is estimated that between 400 to 2,000 families have been displaced from 15 villages in Daikundi province in central Afghanistan. Among the new arrivals in Iran, 40% are Hazaras; UNHCR suspects the number of Hazaras crossing to Iran will likely increase, in light of these recent attacks.”

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), Suicide attack on Shia mosque in Kandahar after Friday prayers, 18 October 2021

“A suicide bombing at a Shia Mosque in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar killed over 50 people and injured more than 80 on 15 October. A series of three explosions took place at the mosque, with one bomb detonated at the door of the mosque, and two more inside the building.

The attack took place during Friday prayers, which is the busiest congregation of the week, and the building was full of worshippers at the time.

Kandahar is the Taliban’s heartland, and while this is the first time in recent years that its minority Shia residents have been directly targeted in a terror attack, the incident marks the second attack on Shia worshippers in Afghanistan in a week. On 8 October a suicide attack on a Shia Mosque in the northern city of Kunduz killed at least 50 people and injured over 100, again during Friday prayers.

According to CSW sources, Islamic State – Khorasan Province (IS-K), a local branch of the Islamic State group who claimed responsibility for the attack on 8 October, is also expected to claim responsibility for this attack.”

Khaama Press, Shi’ite Muslims to be targeted everywhere: warns ISIS, 17 October 2021

“Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh in a statement said that Shi’ite Muslims are perilous and they will be targeted by them everywhere.”

The Guardian, Shia mosque bombing in Afghanistan that killed at least 47 claimed by ISKP, 15 October 2021

“A suicide bombing at a mosque in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar has killed at least 47 people and injured more than 80, in the second major attack on Shia worshippers in Afghanistan in a week.

The Imam Bargah mosque was particularly crowded when the attackers struck, because the community had been holding memorial prayers for the victims of the previous bombing, in northern Kunduz province. Friday’s attack, like the previous bombing, was claimed by the Islamic State’s local affiliate, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), which has a long history of attacking Afghanistan’s Shia minority.

Four men arrived around 1.00pm local time (0930 BST) detonating at least one bomb at the mosque gate and two more among two more among worshippers inside, witnesses said.”

Al Jazeera, Taliban says ‘ready for inclusivity, but not selectivity’, 9 October 2021

“The Taliban’s “Islamic emirate” is “ready for inclusivity but not selectivity”, the group’s senior leader has told Al Jazeera, in response to the Western pressure for an inclusive Afghan government. The Taliban says members of ethnic minorities have been represented in its Cabinet announced last month and that women would be added later. The Taliban has been cold to US suggestion to include “old guard” in the “inclusive” government, sources told Al Jazeera.

“The international community must respect the wishes of the Afghan people,” Suhail Shaheen, ambassador-designate to the UN, told Al Jazeera in an exclusive interview.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The New York Times, ISIS Bomber Kills Dozens at Shiite Mosque in Northern Afghanistan, 8 October 2021
“An Islamic State suicide bomber devastated a Shiite mosque in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz on Friday, killing dozens of worshipers in a deadly continuation of the terrorist group’s campaign against the Hazara minority.

The massacre, while the mosque was crowded for Friday Prayer, was the group’s second attack against a mosque in just a few days. And it was the realization of Afghan Hazaras’ fears that the Islamic State’s predation would go unchecked under the rule of the Taliban, which itself preyed on the Hazara in the past.

Witness accounts described a powerful explosion with many casualties. Matullah Rohani, a Taliban official in Kunduz, told local media that at least 43 people were killed by the attack and more than 140 were injured.

A local Shiite community leader put the death toll much higher. Sayed Ahmad Shah Hashemi, who represents Kunduz Province’s Shiite population, told The New York Times that more than 70 people were killed in the attack.”

“Hours after the bombing, it was claimed by the Islamic State Khorasan, also known as ISIS-K. It was the group’s deadliest strike since the suicide bombing at the international airport in Kabul on Aug. 26 that killed about 170 civilians and 13 U.S. troops.”

“The Taliban’s chief spokesman
, Zabihullah Mujahid, condemned the attack on Friday, and vowed retribution.”

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: 13 Hazara killed by Taliban fighters in Daykundi province – new investigation, 5 October 2021

“Taliban forces unlawfully killed 13 ethnic Hazaras, including a 17-year-old girl, in Afghanistan’s Daykundi province after members of the security forces of the former government surrendered, a new investigation by Amnesty International has revealed.

The killings happened in Kahor village of Khidir district on 30 August. Eleven of the victims were former members of the Afghan National Defence Security Forces (ANDSF), and two were civilians.

According to eyewitness testimony gathered by Amnesty International, the Taliban extrajudicially executed nine of the ANDSF members after they had surrendered, killings that appear to be war crimes. Two civilians were killed as they attempted to flee, including a 17-year-old girl shot when the Taliban opened fire on a crowd of people.”

Itv News, Brits in Afghanistan fear for families' lives as Taliban threaten to 'cut off children's heads', 5 October 2021

“One British national told ITV News he is still stuck in Kabul.

The man, who grew up in the UK, is at risk, not just as a former British interpreter but also as a Panjshiri, a minority targeted by Taliban.

Trapped in a small space with his wife and seven small children, they live in constant fear having been threatened by Taliban. Three of his relatives, including his 23-year-old cousin who was studying economics at Kabul University, have been killed since the extremists took power. He thinks he will be next.

"Being a British national has its down sides right now in Afghanistan, but being a British national with a Panjshiri heritage and family background has an even better appeal for the Taliban to either kill or kidnap me," he says.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

He continues: "As the situation worsens with the failure of the western world to keep a grip on Afghanistan, more and more every day the Taliban are coming and sniffing out whatever they feel is rightfully theirs, or reprisals from their previous encounter twenty years ago."

Shortly before ITV News spoke to him, his brother-in-law had been taken away by Taliban in front of his kids and wife.

The extremists threatened his wife as they left. "They said, 'if you say anything to anybody, make sure that your family knows that we've taken your brother. If you speak about this, we will come back, cut off your kids' heads and then your head off'."

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Briefing Notes Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration, 4 October 2021

"On 24.09.21 Hazara politician Mohammad Mohaqeq reported on his Facebook page that the Taliban were forcibly evacuating Hazaras from their homes in Daikundi province and handing over these homes to Pashtuns. He said some 800 families were affected in Zayn, Kandir, Naleh, Tagabdar and Shaguljeh within Kato District, Suf, Kariz, Lakhtoghi and Sulaimanabad Kajran District and Ghamqul in Khadir District."

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

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

Qantara.de, Shia minority in a Sunni state: Afghanistan's repressed Hazaras face a hostile Taliban, 7 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

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

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

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

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

BBC News, Life in Kabul under Taliban: Where is your male escort?, 4 September 2021

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

Other ethnic minorities

Byline Times, 'They Can't Survive Inside Afghanistan': The Vulnerable People Still Stuck Under Taliban Rule One Year On, 15 August 2022

"[C]ampaigners warn that, 365 days since the US and UK were forced to evacuate from the troubled country, vulnerable women, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBTIQ people – as well as those who worked with British forces since 2001 – remain in Afghanistan and at risk of serious harm from Taliban reprisals. "There are almost no safe routes out of Afghanistan for vulnerable people," Rosie Shaw, co-founder of the Azadi charity that assists at-risk Afghans to evacuate and resettle, said. "The Government announced last August that it would launch the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, under significant pressure and media attention, and a year on the pathway to resettlement for vulnerable people is not open and it's not clear when it is going to open." "After the first year, pathway three will open to wider categories of vulnerable people to apply – such as women and LGBTIQ people. The FCDO guidance is clear that "if you are not a British Council contractor, GardaWorld contractor or Chevening alumnus, you will not be eligible for pathway three in year one". "Right now, the Azadi charity is in contact with an all-female family – a widow and her adult daughters. Under Taliban rule, it is difficult for the women to leave their house to access even the most basic essentials. Women are expected to have a male guardian with them. "They're a classic case of a family who would be eligible to come to the UK under the ACRS," Rosie Shaw said. "All of them were involved in women's rights activism, they are all well-known in their community. But, 12 months later, they are not even in line for processing, they don't know when they will be able to apply to come to the UK, or how they can be referred to the scheme. It's hopeless. While there has been some attention on high-profile vulnerable women – such as former MPs, judges and lawyers – both Shaw and Zehra Zehadi, co-founder of Action for Afghanistan, are keen to emphasise that 'ordinary' women are also struggling. "Of course there is one category of risk," Shaw told Byline Times. "People who are military

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

targets, for example. But you've also got incredibly vulnerable, widowed women, single women, women who don't have male family members, who can't go outside safely. They can't travel anywhere. They can't get jobs, they've been told that they can't go back to work. And so they have no way they can exist. They can't survive inside Afghanistan."

Amnesty International, The Rule of Taliban: A Year of Violence, Impunity and False Promises, 15 August 2022

"Within weeks of the Taliban taking power, reports began emerging of non-Pashtun Afghans being forcibly evicted from their homes and farms, so that the victorious Taliban could reward their followers with land taken from other groups, particularly Hazaras, Turkmen and Uzbeks. Evictions were reported across the country, including in Balkh, Helmand, Daikundi, Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces. Some Pashtuns were also targeted with land confiscation."

Chatham House, Afghanistan: One year of Taliban rule, 15 August 2022

"Since seizing power, the Taliban claim they have achieved full territorial control, established security and removed 'islands of illegitimate power'. However, while physical security has improved by some measures – aid agencies report enhanced access to some provinces – a significant rise in attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-KP) targeting Shia and other minorities is one of many reminders that Afghanistan is far from secure. In addition, targeted killings of high-profile Taliban supporters and members, some claimed by the IS-KP in suicide attacks mimicking Taliban tactics, underline the vicious nature of the ongoing conflict."

Gandhara, EU Slams Taliban Over Failure to create 'inclusive political system' in eve of takeover anniversary, 14 August 2022

"The Taliban has "failed to establish an inclusive political system," the European Union has charged on the eve of the first anniversary of the hard-line Islamist movement's rule.

"The population, including ethnic and religious groups and in particular Hazaras and the Shi'a population, are experiencing institutionalized and systemic abuse of their economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights," said Nabila Massrali, an EU foreign affairs spokeswoman, in a statement on August 14.

"More concretely, they have severely violated and abused the rights of Afghan women and girls, who remain deprived of secondary education, while new restrictions on dress codes and movement have further excluded them from most aspects of economic and public life," Massrali said. "Mechanisms to protect women and girls from violence and forced marriages have been dismantled, and domestic violence is on the rise."

[...]

The EU rebuke comes a day after a demonstration by women in Kabul was violently dispersed by Taliban fighters who fired guns in the air and beat protesters who had demanded "bread, work, and freedom." About 40 women marched in front of the Education Ministry building on August 13 before the fighters dispersed them.

Photos and videos of the protest posted on social media show Taliban forces firing warning shots and physically assaulting the women. Some women were chased by Taliban fighters, who beat them with their rifle butts.

The Taliban also detained three foreign journalists and one Afghan worker for covering the protest,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

while another two local journalists were slightly wounded, according to the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA) [...]"

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"In April alone, a spate of improvised explosive devices attacks resulted in civilians being killed and injured at schools, places of worship, markets and while on public transportation. Ethnic and religious minorities have also been directly attacked."

Pajhwok Afghan News, Religious freedom worsens in Afghanistan, claims US panel, 26 April 2022

"The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has called for designating Afghanistan as a "country of particular concern" [...]"

Afghan Voice Agency (AVA), Shia and Sunnis are the victims of terrorists, 24 April 2022

"The bloody incidents in Kabul, Mazar and Kunduz all together showed that the perpetrators of these killings came from one source and although the number of victims of these incidents was very different; But there is a common goal behind these horrific killings and that is to provoke a religious war among Shia-Sunni."

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?"

1 / 4

Religious freedom, which was hampered by violence and discrimination under the republic, has been heavily curtailed by the Taliban. In September 2021, the Taliban reconstituted the MVV, which had previously been used to enforce their interpretation of Sharia. The current ministry is reportedly less strict in its enforcement than under the regime that was deposed in 2001, however.

Members of religious minority groups have faced restrictions and violence from the Taliban and armed groups. Salafists have accused the Taliban of closing houses of worship and detaining and killing members. Afghan Christians sought to leave the country after the Taliban's takeover, with Taliban reportedly killing Afghans believed to adhere to Christianity."

France 24, Fear stalks city in Islamic State's Afghan heartland, 21 January 2022

"Macabre discoveries feed the suspicion -- such as the bodies found last month along a canal in the suburbs of Jalalabad. A little way from the village of Bakhtan, a rickshaw washer told AFP he had seen "four or five" corpses recovered. A local entrepreneur says three were found. Several sources across the province say up to 150 bodies have been found in rivers and streams. Nangarhar has a strong Salafist bent -- an austere branch of Sunni Islam introduced to the area by Saudi jihadists such as Osama bin Laden during the war against the Soviet Union. While Salafist elders do not deny the community has been a source of recruits for IS, they say they are now being collectively punished."

Amnesty International, Taliban authorities must reveal Alia Azizi's whereabouts, 20 January 2022

"The Taliban authorities must urgently investigate the abduction of Alia Azizi, a senior female prison official who has been missing for more than three months after she reported for duty in Herat, and immediately and unconditionally release her if in their custody, Amnesty international said.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Alia Azizi, a member of the ethnic Hazara community and the Head of Herat Women's Prison, never returned home after going to work on 2 October 2021. Despite several pleas by her family to the Taliban to investigate the case, a veil of secrecy still shrouds her disappearance."

Gandhara, Taliban Accused Of Forcibly Evicting Ethnic Uzbeks, Turkmen In Northern Afghanistan, 9 December 2021

"Taliban fighters have been accused of helping to forcibly evict more than 1,000 people in northern Afghanistan, with the evictions targeting members of the ethnic Uzbek and Turkmen communities. Ethnic Uzbeks and Turkmen allege that Pashtuns seized their homes and land in the northern province of Jowzjan with the help of the Taliban, a predominately Pashtun group. The evictions came as Taliban fighters have expelled hundreds of Shi'ite Hazara families from their homes and farms in five provinces since the militants seized power in Afghanistan in August."

Religious minorities (including Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and Jews)

Human Rights Watch, Testimony to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 24 August 2022

"[...] Religious freedom does not exist in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Taliban authorities, citing an order from their leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, have stated that the laws of the previous government are no longer in effect and that only Sharia, or Islamic law, is applicable in Afghanistan.

The Taliban's interpretations of Sharia, however, and the new rules and policies they have announced since taking over, cannot be found in any other country with Islamic populations. Almost all of their rules severely restrict Afghans' basic human rights, and in particular the rights of women and girls. Under the Taliban's extremist interpretations of Sharia, Taliban officials have imposed a de facto ban on girls' secondary education, mandated women's bodies and faces be completely covered when they are outside their homes, and prohibit women from traveling or working without a male relative as a chaperone.

There is no other country in the world where women face such sweeping violations of their basic human rights.

The Taliban have also banned various other activities by men and women, citing Sharia, including prohibiting unrelated men and women from appearing in public together or going to parks and restaurants.

These restrictions also violate the rights of Afghans to live according to their own conceptions of their religious faiths.

But there are further abuses. The Taliban are failing to protect Afghanistan's religious minorities from violence, and are subjecting some groups to persecution.

The Taliban follow an ultraconservative Sunni interpretation of Islam. Yet approximately 10 to 15 percent of Afghans are Shia, and there are a significant number of Sufi, small numbers of Ahmadis, and some Hindus and Sikhs in urban areas. The Taliban have not stated that Shia or Sufi practices are forbidden. And the authorities have also promised protection to Hindus and Sikhs, although members of both communities have continued to leave Afghanistan, and only a little over 100 of either remain.

The Taliban does not consider Ahmadis to be Muslims and they have persecuted some of their leaders in the past as blasphemers. Most of Afghanistan's miniscule population of non-Muslims also continue to live

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

under threat of persecution, in particular Bahai, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and Christians, who practice secretly or have gone into hiding. An unknown number of Afghans consider themselves agnostic or atheist or otherwise do not practice Islam or any other religion. Taliban authorities view anyone who has left Islam to have committed apostasy, a crime they believe should be punished by death.

Serious problems for Shia, Sufi, and non-Muslims in Afghanistan today come from the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), the Islamic State's (ISIS) affiliate in Afghanistan, an armed extremist group. The ISKP has repeatedly carried out suicide bombings and other armed attacks against Shia communities, in particular ethnic Hazara. The Hazara, a predominantly Shia ethnic group, have faced discrimination and abuse by successive Afghan governments for over a century. Since the Taliban takeover, the ISKP has claimed responsibility for 13 attacks against members of the Hazara community and are implicated in at least three more. These attacks have killed at least 700 people.

We cannot overstate how horrendous these attacks have been. An ISKP suicide bombing on April 19 at a high school in Dashte-e Barchi in west Kabul—a predominantly Hazara and Shia area—killed and injured more than 20 students and education staff. (This neighborhood previously suffered several devastating attacks before the Taliban took power: a May 2021 attack by ISKP on a girls' high school that killed almost 50 students, mostly girls, and injured over 100 more, and the May 2020 attack on the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-supported maternity wing of the Dasht-e Barchi hospital.) On April 21, the ISKP then carried out a suicide bombing of the Seh Dokan Mosque in Mazar-e Sharif, one of Afghanistan's largest Shia mosques, killing 31 people and wounding 87 others.

In addition to these attacks, on April 27 suspected ISKP members killed five Hazara men on their way to the Dare-Suf coal mine in Samangan province. The next day, a bomb explosion killed 9 people and wounded 13 others in a public vehicle carrying Hazara passengers in Mazar-e Sharif.

The Taliban have condemned ISKP attacks and provided some families of victims with minor financial payments. Authorities have also vowed to protect vulnerable groups from attacks in the future. But there are few signs authorities are taking active or significant steps to do so.

This is the situation that Afghans are enduring today under Taliban rule. The entire population is being forced to live according to ultraconservative interpretations of one branch of a single religion. Over half of the population—women and girls—are subjected to sweeping and severe violations of their basic human rights. Afghan men and boys also suffer abuses under Taliban edicts. And the Taliban is doing little as an Islamic State offshoot hunts for opportunities to murder Afghanistan's vulnerable religious minorities. Afghanistan is a nightmare for religious freedom -- and other basic human rights.

Taliban leaders need to recognize that their vision for Afghanistan's future is built on oppression, and that to address the concerns of all Afghans, they need to take a rights-respecting approach to religion and other fundamental freedoms. This will mean engaging with the international community in a more cooperative manner and adopting international standards on human rights—for instance, by reversing policies violating the rights of women and girls to education, employment, and free movement and fully cooperating with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and UN Human Rights Council mechanisms. Greater Taliban respect for human rights can also contribute to better international cooperation in addressing the threat posed by ISKP, especially to religious minorities in Afghanistan. [...]"

Gandhara, Senior Clerics Caught In The Crossfire Of The Taliban's Intensifying War With IS-K, 24 August 2022

"As the Taliban intensifies its war against Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), religious clerics associated with the rival militant groups are being caught in the crossfire.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

IS-K militants have been blamed for the assassination of several pro-Taliban clerics in Afghanistan in recent weeks. The Taliban has also been accused of killing religious figures with alleged links to IS-K.”

“Many IS-K fighters are members of Afghanistan’s small Salafist community [...] Many IS-K fighters are members of Afghanistan’s small Salafist community [...]

Since seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban has waged a brutal crackdown on Salafists, who are believed to number several hundred thousand and are mainly concentrated in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, and Nuristan. Salafists accuse the Taliban of detaining and killing members of the community, and raiding and closing their mosques and religious seminaries. The Taliban’s clampdown has coincided with its intensifying war with IS-K militants.

Observers say the rising number of killings of rival Hanafi and Salafist clerics has recently become the main feature of the Taliban’s escalating war with IS-K militants.”

Khaama Press, USCIRF: ‘Severe’ Deterioration of Freedom of Religion since Taliban’s Takeover in Afghanistan, 24 August 2022

“In its most recent report, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) highlighted a “severe decline” in religious freedom since the Taliban’s takeover, which places religious minorities at risk of “extinction.”[...] The USCIRF report notes that The Taliban administration has failed to safeguard religious minorities from ISIS-K attacks despite repeated pledges to do so for all ethnic and religious communities Since the Taliban took over on August 15 of last year, religious minorities in Afghanistan have been threatened by an increase in terrorist attacks, forcing the country’s Hindu and Sikh minorities to escape persecution.[...] USCIRF even proposed that the Taliban administration in Afghanistan be designated as a “country of particular concern,” or CPC, for committing repeated, egregious, and systematic abuses of religious freedom.”

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Afghanistan Country Update, 23 August 2022

“This report analyzes the severe decline of freedom of religion or belief since the Taliban’s takeover in August 2021 and their de facto rule over Afghanistan. The Taliban’s imposition of their narrow interpretation of Sunni Islam poses a grave threat to the religious freedom and all Afghans who do not subscribe to that interpretation. The Taliban’s harsh enforcement of its religious interpretation violates the religious freedom of minorities, women, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community, Afghans with differing interpretations of Islam, and Afghans who follow no religion. Despite continued promises to protect all ethnic and religious communities residing in Afghanistan, the Taliban de facto government has been unable to provide safety and security to religious minorities against attacks from Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K). While some religious minority communities face the threat of extinction, others struggle to practice their faith in hiding due to fear of reprisal.”

Chatham House, Afghanistan: One year of Taliban rule, 15 August 2022

“Since seizing power, the Taliban claim they have achieved full territorial control, established security and removed ‘islands of illegitimate power’. However, while physical security has improved by some measures – aid agencies report enhanced access to some provinces – a significant rise in attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-KP) targeting Shia and other minorities is one of many reminders that Afghanistan is far from secure. In addition, targeted killings of high-profile Taliban supporters and members, some

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

claimed by the IS-KP in suicide attacks mimicking Taliban tactics, underline the vicious nature of the ongoing conflict.”

The New Indian Express, Explosion near Kabul Gurdwara day after Taliban say security issues solved, 27 July 2022

“A day after the Taliban claimed that security situation in Afghanistan had been resolved and urged its minorities -- Hindus and Sikhs -- to return to the country, an explosion took place near the Karte Parwan Gurdwara in Kabul. Though there are not any reports of casualties yet, the blast is reported to have occurred in a Sikh hakim’s shop next to the Gurdwara. This is the second time in less than two months that an explosion has taken place in the same place.”

Khaama Press, It’s Beyond Time for Afghans to Live in Peace: UN Envoy, 21 July 2022

“Despite a significant reduction in armed conflict, UNAMA recorded 2106 civilian casualties between mid-August 2021 and mid-June 2022. The majority of civilian casualties were attributed to targeted attacks by the ISIL against ethnic and religious minority communities.

“It is beyond time for all Afghans to be able to live in peace and rebuild their lives after 20 years of armed conflict,” said Markus Potzel, Acting Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan. “Our monitoring reveals that despite the improved security situation since 15 August, the people of Afghanistan, in particular women and girls, are deprived of the full enjoyment of their human rights.”

Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in Khorasan Province Exploits Tajik Martyrs for Online Recruitment in Central Asia, 15 July 2022

“On June 18, Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) militants attacked a Sikh place of worship, or *gurdwara*, in Kabul, killing two people, although Islamic State (IS) touted a much higher casualty total (The Hindu, June 19).”

Ariana News, India grants priority e-visas to Afghan Sikhs, Hindus after Kabul attack, 19 June 2022

“India’s ministry of home affairs has moved to grant emergency e-visas to over 100 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus after Saturday’s attack on a gurdwara in Kart-e-Parwan in Kabul. Two people, one Sikh and one security force member, were killed in the attack. According to the Hindustan Times, the e-visas will facilitate the evacuation of Sikhs and Hindus from Afghanistan. Officials said India’s National Investigation Agency (NIA) will likely investigate the incident. The NIA is already probing the March 25, 2020 attack on another gurdwara in Kabul, in which 27 Sikh devotees including an Indian national were killed. Indian officials said around 150 Hindus and Sikhs are living in Afghanistan currently. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned Saturday’s attack. He said: “Shocked by the cowardly terrorist attack against the Karte Parwan Gurudwara in Kabul. I condemn this barbaric attack and pray for the safety and well being of the devotees”.”

AVA, Daesh claimed responsibility for an attack on a Hindu Temple in Kabul, 19 June 2022

“The Daesh terrorist group claimed responsibility for a deadly attack yesterday (Saturday, June 18) on a Hindu Temple in Karte Parwan, Kabul province. Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) - Kabul: At least two people, including a Sikh citizen and an Islamic Emirate force, were killed and seven others were injured in an attack on a Sikh Gudwara yesterday. Interior Ministry spokesman told to media that the assailants targeted the guards with hand grenades before entering the Temple, then entered and clashed with security forces for

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

two hours. Yesterday's attack, which targeted the Temple of a non-Muslim minority in Kabul, provoked national and international reactions. Meanwhile, the Sikh Dupa Management Committee in Delhi called on the Indian government to relocate the remaining members of the Afghan Sikh community to the country. The committee condemned the attack on the Sikh Gurdwara in Kabul and expressed concern about the future security of the Sikh minority."

DW, Afghanistan: Deadly attack hits Kabul Sikh temple, 18 June 2022

"Several blasts and gunfire hit a Sikh temple in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Saturday, a Taliban official and witnesses said. At least two people were killed and seven others injured after two gunmen assailed the temple in an hourslong attack, according to Abdul Nafi Takor, a Taliban-appointed spokesperson for the Interior Ministry. He said the assailants also died in fighting against Taliban security forces. Those killed included a Sikh worshipper and a member of the security forces, he said. A car bomb also detonated in the area but caused no casualties, Takor said earlier. Videos on social media showed black smoke emanating from the temple in Kabul's Bagh-e Bala neighborhood. Gunfire can also be heard in the videos. Who might be behind the attack? There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. However, a regional affiliate of the extremist "Islamic State" (IS) group known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province has lately increased attacks on mosques and minorities across the country. An attack claimed by the IS at another Sikh temple in Kabul in 2020 killed 25. The group is seen as the greatest security challenge facing the country's Taliban rulers, who have been clamping down on IS in eastern Afghanistan since seizing control of the country in August last year."

AVA, Several explosions in Kabul, 18 June 2022

"Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) - Kabul: According to eyewitness, these explosions took place on Saturday morning (June 18) at a nearby Hindu temple. Eyewitnesses say that in the aftermath of the several explosions, firing were also heard in the area. Manjinder Singh Sirsa The head of the Sikh Gurdwara in Delhi says that the Hindu temple in Kabul has been attacked by terrorist. He wrote in Twitter that explosions has taken place in the precincts of the temple. Mr. Sirsa added that Gornamo Singh the person in charge of the place of worship has spoken with him. Videos published in social media indicate that Hindus were not harmed in the incident, and based on some reports, this morning they had gathered for a religious ceremony. The Interior Ministry has not yet commented on the nature of the blasts. No individual or group has claimed responsibility for the blast. It is said that two years ago, a number of terrorist entered to the Hindu Temple and killed many hindus. Meanwhile, Zabihullah Mujahid The "Islamic Emirate" spokesman said last week that the government is committed to protecting civil, religious freedoms and supporting all Afghan in every sections."

BBC, Afghanistan gurdwara attack: Sikhs say 'We don't feel safe', 18 June 2022

"The attack on a Sikh prayer site in the Afghan capital, Kabul, began early in the morning. Militants opened fire outside the fortified doors leading to the compound housing a Sikh gurdwara, as well as the homes of members of the community. The assailants killed the security guard, and armed with grenades they managed to make their way inside, whilst Taliban members stationed at nearby checkpoints rushed after them. "My house is just in front of the gurdwara, as soon as I heard firing I looked out the window, people were saying attackers are inside," Kuljit Singh Khalsa told the BBC. "It was chaos, then all of a sudden there was a blast from outside." A bomb hidden inside a car, parked next to a Taliban checkpoint, had been detonated, killing the unit's commander and ripping through the surrounding shops and homes. The attack had begun around half an hour before daily morning prayers were due to start. "If it had been

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

later, there would've been even more people inside," Mr Khalsa said. [...] So far, there has been no claim of responsibility but it appears likely that IS was also behind this latest attack. Afghanistan's Shia and Sufi Muslim minorities have also repeatedly been targeted by the group. IS is much less powerful than the Taliban and does not control any territory, but has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in the country's history. Overall, levels of violence in Afghanistan have fallen dramatically since the Taliban returned to power - ending their insurgency - but IS is undermining the Taliban's promise to have finally brought security to the nation. [...] All the attackers were killed around three hours after the assault began, during which time intense gunfire and multiple explosions could be heard. At least one Sikh man and one member of the Taliban's security forces were killed. Wandering through the still smoking wreckage of the Gurdwara, Sikh community members said they were grateful for the Taliban's help in bringing the attack to an end, but that they did not feel safe and wanted to leave the country. "We've appealed a lot to the Indian government, to find a way to give us visas, we don't want to live here anymore," said Sukhbir Singh Khalsa. "Those of us left here are only here because we don't have visas, no-one wants to stay here. This has happened now, tomorrow it will happen again, and then again after that.""

UNOCHR, Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

"In April alone, a spate of improvised explosive devices attacks resulted in civilians being killed and injured at schools, places of worship, markets and while on public transportation. Ethnic and religious minorities have also been directly attacked."

AAN, Policing Public Morality: Debates on promoting virtue and preventing vice in the Taleban's second Emirate, 15 June 2022

"The Taleban's 'religious police' are back in force, leaving many Afghans fearing a return to the notorious brutalities of the Taleban's 1990s Amr bil-Maruf ministry. Yet, two decades on, argues guest author Sabawoon Samim* (with input from Roxanna Shapour), Taleban views on the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice have evolved, as has Afghan society. While the Taleban still believe it is an Islamic state's duty to actively police public morality, he also traces the emergence of a new generation of Taleban leaders, some of whom are less conservative, and asks whether they may take a softer approach to policing public morality than their predecessors. [...] Drawing on 45 interviews with Taleban officials, fighters, tribal elders, teachers and others in five provinces, plus the capital, Kabul, conducted before and after the Taleban captured power [1] this report looks at Amr bil-Maruf in the two Taleban administrations twenty years apart. It considers the religious injunction that Muslims should hold each other accountable by promoting virtue and discouraging vice. We take a look at what was problematic about Amr bil-Maruf in the Taleban's first Emirate and how it changed during the insurgency. We relay ideas generally among the Taleban about what policing public morality should involve and at the re-established Amr bil-Maruf ministry – at how and why it has differed, so far, from the 1990s. In particular, the author looks at what sets at least some members of the new generation of Taleban leaders apart from their predecessors, and at how this might influence the Taleban's approach to policy and practice when it comes to policing public morality."

Tolo News, Blinken Concerned with Religious Freedom in Afghanistan, 4 June 2022

"US Secretary Antony Blinken expressed concerns over the situation of religious and ethnic minorities in Afghanistan.

Blinken delivered the remarks referring to the 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“In Afghanistan, conditions for religious freedom have deteriorated dramatically under the Taliban. Particularly as they crack down on the basic rights of women and girls to get an education, to work, to engage in society often under the banner of religion,” he said.

OHCHR, Statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, concluding his visit to Kabul and Balkh and Kandahar provinces carried out from 15 to 26 May 2022 (reduction in armed fighting and civilian casualties since August 2021; deterioration of the human rights situation; humanitarian and economic crisis), 26 May 2022

“The Special Rapporteur calls for investigation of and accountability for the series of attacks on places of worship and schools in Kabul, Kunduz, and Balkh provinces, instances of which have been claimed by the ISIS-K group. These appear to have specifically targeted members of the Hazara, Shia, and Sufi communities and to be part of a pattern of attacks and other discriminatory measures going back many years, especially against members of the Shia community. The killings and other violations that have been committed during these and other attacks, appear to be systematic in nature and reflect elements of an organizational policy, thus bearing hallmarks of crimes against humanity. I urge the Afghan and international community to work with me and other human rights mechanisms to address this issue utilising a victim-centered approach. I also remind the de facto authorities that they bear the primary responsibility for the protection of all Afghans, and especially of children, against real threats to life and security posed by any actors.”

UNAMA, STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL - ON AFGHANISTAN, 26 May 2022

“The Secretary-General condemns the recent attacks in Afghanistan, including on passenger vehicles in Mazar-e-Sharif City and the Masjid Sharif Hazrat Zakaria mosque in Kabul City, which have claimed the lives of numerous civilians, among them members of the Hazara Shia community and at least 16 children. The Secretary-General extends his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a swift recovery to those injured. Attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including mosques, are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law. The Secretary-General reiterates his call on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, as well as their right to freely practice their religion.”

The Guardian, Blast at Kabul mosque kills more than 50 worshippers, 29 April 2022

“A powerful explosion has killed more than 50 worshippers after Friday prayers at a Kabul mosque, the latest of a series of attacks on civilian targets in Afghanistan during Ramadan. The blast hit the Khalifa Sahib mosque in the west of the capital in the early afternoon, according to Besmullah Habib, the deputy spokesperson for the interior ministry. The attack came as worshippers at the Sunni mosque gathered after Friday prayers for a congregation known as Zikr – an act of remembrance practised by some Muslims but seen as heretical by several Sunni groups.”

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) News, UNAMA statement on deadly attack in Kabul, 29 April 2022

“KABUL – The United Nations in Afghanistan condemns in the strongest terms today’s deadly attack in a Sufi Mosque in the Darulaman area of Kabul, which reportedly resulted in scores dead and wounded. Today’s attack on the Khalifa Sahib Mosque is the latest in a series of indiscriminate assaults on civilian

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

targets in the capital and provinces, and directly affected at least two UN staff members and their families who were inside the mosque at the time of the attack. “Today’s attack, carried out on the last Friday of the Holy month of Ramadan and on the eve of the Eid-ul-Fitr, totally disregards human lives and religious sanctity. No words are strong enough to condemn this despicable act, targeting a place of worship, as Muslims across Afghanistan prepare to celebrate the Eid,” said Mette Knudsen, the UN Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan. “Recent attacks against civilians, targeting ethnic and religious minorities, represent a disturbing trend in Afghanistan. These violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws must end immediately.” The latest attack in Kabul follows a spate of attacks in recent weeks in mosques and schools in the major cities of Kabul, Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif, which appear to have specifically targeted members of the Hazara, Shia and Sufi minorities, including yesterday’s attack in Mazar-e-Sharif which also resulted in several killed and injured.”

Ariana News, [Afghanistan among the ‘worst of the worst’ in violating religious freedom: US panel](#), 28 April 2022

“Afghanistan should join a list of the “worst of the worst” violators of religious freedom, a U.S. advisory body is recommending to the State Department. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, said in its annual report issued Monday, that religious minorities have “faced harassment, detention and even death due to their faith or beliefs” since the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) came into power in August last year. It also cited attacks on religious minorities by ISIS in Afghanistan, which is an enemy of the IEA. Afghanistan is among 15 nations that the commission says should be on the State Department’s list of “countries of particular concern.” The commission, in its report summary, defined these as governments as the “worst of the worst” in tolerating or engaging in “systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom. The commission, created in 1998 under the International Religious Freedom Act, makes nonbinding policy recommendations to the administration and Congress. The State Department has adopted some but not all of its recommendations in the past. In the new report, the commission recommends maintaining 10 countries currently on the State Department list, including China, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It also recommends adding four more in addition to Afghanistan — India, Nigeria, Syria and Vietnam. The commission criticized the Biden administration for removing Nigeria from the list last year. The report said that in Afghanistan, many minority Jewish, Hindu and Sikh residents have fled the country after the IEA returned to power. It said many members of other religious minorities, such as Ahmadiyya Muslims, Baha’is and Christian converts are worshipping in secret for fear of persecution. Several deadly attacks on Hazaras, Shiite minority, have been attributed to the ISIS-K (Daesh) which is hostile to the IEA and proven to be a security challenge. The report said non-Muslim Afghans comprised a tiny fraction of the population. It said 99.7% of Afghans are Muslim, most of them Sunni Muslims, with about 10% to 15% Shiite Muslims.”

French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Afghanistan – Terrorist attacks](#), 22 April 2022

“France condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks of April 19 and 21 on schools in Kabul as well as yesterday’s attacks on the Seh Dokan mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif and in Kunduz province. These attacks, for which Daesh (IS-K) claimed responsibility, killed several dozen people and wounded more than a hundred, including young children.”

US DOS, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#), 12 April 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“In November and December, Taliban intelligence officials targeted Ahmadi Muslims for arrest. According to reports from international Ahmadiyya organizations, the detainees were physically abused and coerced into making false “confessions of being members of ISIS-K.” As of December the Taliban had released some of the Ahmadis while others remained in detention. Some of the released minors reported that their release was conditioned upon “repenting” their Ahmadiyya beliefs and attending a Taliban-led madrassa every day. [...] Sikhs and Hindus faced discrimination, reporting unequal access to government jobs, harassment in school, and verbal and physical abuse in public places. The pre-August 15 government delivered meals and aid to approximately 200 Afghan Sikh and Hindu families who returned from India in mid-May after facing financial hardship and COVID outbreaks in India. The government also directed increased security for the Sikh and Hindu communities and the deputy minister of Haj and religious affairs said in June that the ministry had undertaken 14 reconstruction projects for temples in view of their central role in the community. With the Taliban takeover, many of the estimated several hundred Afghan Sikhs and Hindus in the country may have fled to India and other countries. [...] In October Sikhs reported harassment by armed Taliban representatives at their central temple in Kabul. In late November more than 80 Sikhs and Hindus departed for India. After August 15, ISIS-K’s heightened activity further increased the targeting of non-Sunni groups. At least four attacks by ISIS-K targeted Shia and Hazara communities between October and December. Religion and ethnicity in the country were often closely linked, making it difficult to categorize many incidents as being solely based on religious identity. Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Ahmadi Muslims, and other non-Muslim minorities reported continued harassment and repression under both the pre-August 15 government and the Taliban. [...] There were no known reports of anti-Semitic acts. The one confirmed Afghan Jew residing in the country departed the country when the Taliban took over Kabul. [...] Ethnic Hazaras, Sikhs, and Hindus faced discrimination in hiring and work assignments, in addition to broader social discrimination...”

EUAA, Sikhs, including in Kabul, since the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan; reports of violence and discrimination by society, the state, and by armed groups, including the Taliban and Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP). (Reference period: 15 August 2021 – 18 March 2022), 23 March 2022

The EUAA COI Portal provides access to Country of Origin Information (COI) for use in Protection Status Determination procedures. It is managed by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). This COI is specific to the situation of Sikhs.

Christian Today, Afghan Artist Describes Life under Taliban, 10 February 2022

“Almost all Afghan Christians are converts from Islam and are not able to practise their faith openly. With the Taliban takeover, the pressure on Christian converts has grown exponentially, so many of them have gone into hiding in remote rural areas or fled the country. The Open Doors' field expert says for Christian converts who remain in Afghanistan there is no option other than to 'play the role of a Muslim'. If a Christian woman chooses not to wear a head-covering she will draw unwanted attention. If discovered, Christian converts will face harsh punishment as leaving Islam is punished by death.”

Religious News, Afghanistan tops Open Doors watchlist of worst countries for Christians, 19 January 2022

“Afghanistan is the most dangerous country for Christians, according to an annual list put together by the Christian watchdog group Open Doors USA. [...] Open Doors said the Taliban’s takeover of the Afghan government in mid-August forced many Afghan Christians — most of whom are converts from Islam — to go into hiding.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Al Jazeera, Afghanistan's last Sikhs in a dilemma: To stay or leave, 20 January 2022

"In the 1970s, Afghanistan's Sikh population numbered 100,000, but decades of conflict, poverty and intolerance have driven almost all of them into exile. The Soviet occupation, subsequent Taliban regime and bloody military intervention by the United States winnowed their numbers to just 240 last year, according to figures kept by the community. After the Taliban returned to power in August, opening the newest chapter in Afghanistan's dark history, a fresh wave of Sikhs fled the country. Today, Gurnam Singh estimates just 140 remain, mostly in the eastern city of Jalalabad and in Kabul."

Newsgram, What about Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan?, 26 November 2021

"Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan face a bleak future in a country dominated by the Taliban. While the Islamic fundamentalist organisation claims that minorities would be secure, many are apprehensive based on previous experiences.

Afghan Sikhs and Hindus have returned to their homes in various regions of the nation after spending weeks at the Gurdwara Dashmesh Pita, a Sikh shrine in Kabul's Karte Parwan neighbourhood. [...]

Minorities held out some hope for equal rights under the deposed civilian administration, despite years of systemic and structural discrimination. However, two large assaults in 2018 and 2020 destroyed this optimism.

In the first suicide explosion, Khalsa's father was slain, and at least 25 Sikh pilgrims were killed in the 2020 Gurdwara shrine assault. Both assaults were claimed by "Islamic State Khorasan" (IS-K), a regional offshoot of the "Islamic State" organisation. The gang was most recently responsible for the suicide assault that killed at least 182 people at Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport.

Sikhs and Hindus worry that under the new Taliban administration, they would be forced to wear yellow tags to indicate their non-Muslim identity, as they were in the past."

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Factsheet Afghanistan, 28 October 2021

"Religious Minorities in Afghanistan

[...] Despite initial statements from the Taliban that it had reformed some elements of its ideology, Afghans who do not adhere to the Taliban's harsh and strict interpretation of Sunni Islam and adherents of other faiths or beliefs are at grave threat. [...] The Taliban consider conversion from Islam to another religion apostasy, which could be punishable by death according to their interpretation of Shari'a or Islamic law. [...] Religious freedom conditions in Afghanistan have deteriorated since the Taliban seized control of the country on August 15, 2021. [...] USCIRF has received credible reports that the Taliban regime and rival militant group Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K) also present in Afghanistan have intimidated, threatened, and targeted members of religious minority communities and carried out violent attacks. Even before the Taliban took control of the country, in June 2021, Mawlawi Ayaz Niazi—a respected Sunni religious leader of the Wazir Mohammed Akbar Khan Mosque who espoused pro-government, anti-Taliban sentiments—was assassinated. [...]

Conclusion

Afghanistan's religious minorities and others who do not share the same religious beliefs as the Taliban are in danger of falling afoul of the Taliban's hardline Islamist beliefs. While religious freedom conditions in the country were poor under the previous government, these conditions have already worsened and have become dire under the Taliban and are likely to continue to deteriorate."

[...]

"The Targeting and Exodus of Hindus, Sikhs, and Jews [...]"

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

As the Taliban advanced toward Kabul in August, some Hindus and Sikhs took refuge in a Sikh temple in the capital while others tried to flee. As of October 2021, a little under 250 Hindus and Sikhs remain in the country following an evacuation effort by India. Nearly 140 Hindus and Sikhs who attempted to leave were not able to access the airport after the August 26 suicide bomb attack near the front gates. USCIRF received reports that just days after the takeover, armed Taliban representatives went to the Sikh Gurdwara in Karte Parwan in Kabul to urge Sikh and Hindu community members not to leave Afghanistan. Also in October 2021, the Sikh community shared videos of their Gurdwara in Karte Parwan being vandalized and ransacked by alleged members of the Taliban. Additionally, the last reported Jewish person in Afghanistan, Zebulon Simantov, finally left the country in September out of fear of persecution by the Taliban, leaving behind what had been the last operating synagogue in Kabul.”

[...]

“Practicing Faith in Fear: Christians, Ahmadi Muslims, Baha’is, and Nonbelievers [...]

According to reports received by USCIRF, the Taliban have reportedly gone door-to-door looking for U.S. allies, former government workers, rights activists, and Christian converts. Christians have received threatening phone calls, while one leader of a house church network received a letter on August 12 from Taliban militants threatening him and his family. Some Christians have turned their phones off and moved to undisclosed locations.

In Afghanistan, followers of the Baha’i faith have faced persecution both before and after the Taliban were in power. In 2007, the General Directorate of Fatwas and Accounts of the Supreme Court declared the Baha’i faith to be blasphemous and their followers to be infidels. The Baha’i community has lived in secret since this ruling.

Nonbelievers—who lived in fear even under the Western-backed government—are worried that their neighbors may turn them in to the Taliban. Atheism and agnosticism are considered apostasy and is punishable by death, according to the Taliban’s interpretation of Islam. Afghanistan’s small Uyghur Muslim community—thought to number around 2,000 to 3,000 and many are second- and third-generation Afghan citizens—has expressed fear that the Taliban could deport them to China where they face egregious persecution, which the U.S. government has designated as genocide and crimes against humanity. There are concerns that the Chinese government could use its economic and geopolitical leverage to pressure the Taliban to deport these Uyghurs. Just prior to the Taliban’s military takeover of Afghanistan, a top Taliban delegation traveled to China to meet with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi in July 2021. The Taliban previously deported Uyghurs at the request of the Chinese government in 2000.”

GANDHARA NEWS, Taliban Wages Deadly Crackdown On Afghan Salafists As War With IS-K Intensifies, 22 October 2021

“Hakimullah, a resident of Afghanistan’s eastern province of Nangarhar, says he is routinely subjected to violence and discrimination because of his faith.

As a member of Afghanistan’s small Salafist community, an ultraradical sect under Sunni Islam, he says he is frequently targeted by the Taliban, the militant Islamist group that seized control of the war-torn country in August.

Many Taliban fighters are followers of the Hanafi school of Islam, a rival Sunni denomination. The Salafists, also known as Wahhabis, see many other branches of the faith as heretical.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Since seizing power, the militant group has waged a deadly crackdown on Salafists, who accuse the Taliban of detaining and killing members of the community. They also allege that the Taliban has raided and closed down dozens of their mosques and madrasahs, or religious seminaries. [...]

"Since the Taliban seized power and hastened war with Daesh, they have forced people who wear knitted caps and long beards out of their cars and abused them for being Salafists," Hakimullah told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi, using the Arabic acronym for IS-K.

Many Salafists wear kufis -- white, knitted skull caps -- and sport long beards.

Hakimullah says that many of his friends who are Salafists have been detained or killed by the Taliban in Nangarhar, the epicenter of clashes between the Taliban and IS-K militants. [...]

In September, a senior Salafist cleric in Afghanistan, Sheikh Abu Obaidullah Mutawakil, was abducted and then found dead days later. The Taliban, which many Salafists blamed for the killing, denied it was responsible. [...]

The Taliban declared a general amnesty when it seized control of the capital, Kabul, on August 15. But human rights group accuse the Taliban of executing, torturing, and detaining its rivals, including members of Afghanistan's former armed forces."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Kabul Sikhs Fear For Safety After Armed Men Attack Temple, 6 October 2021

"Sikhs in Kabul say more than a dozen armed men attacked and briefly occupied a Sikh temple in the Karte Parwan district of the Afghan capital on October 5, tying up the guards and destroying security cameras. There were no major injuries reported.

The leader of the temple, Gurnam, told RFE/RL that it was unclear who the perpetrators were, but the incident has heightened concerns about the minority Sikh community's safety.

"At around 3:30 p.m. on [October 5], 15 to 20 militants entered the shrine and tied up the guards. They also broke security cameras," Gurnam said. "They were in the gurdwara (temple) for about half an hour. Security officials did not tell us if they were thieves or the Taliban."

Video that appeared on social media showed armed men inside the Sikh temple, with some commentators claiming that "Taliban" attacked the shrine and beat some worshipers.

But that accusation could not be confirmed.

Many religious minorities have suffered discrimination at the hands of Sunni Taliban militants, including during their reign in Kabul and other wide swaths of Afghanistan from 1996-2001.

The community of Afghan Hindus and Sikhs was once estimated to be more than 80,000 strong, but many left after the collapse of the communist regime in 1992.

Many have lost their businesses and properties during the various cycles of war during the past three decades."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara, Last Afghan Jew Leaves Amid Minority Exodus In Fear Of Taliban, 10 September 2021

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

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

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

Most members of those communities in Afghanistan have already left while others plan to join exiled

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

members of their community in India. Militant attacks have targeted their temples and leaders, killing scores, while criminals kidnap community members for ransom.

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

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

"The Islamic Emirate will take serious and effective steps to grant human rights, rights of the minorities and the marginalized communities within the framework of the holy religion of Islam," a September 7 statement by the Taliban government said. But members of minority communities find it difficult to trust such statements."

LGBTQI+ people, including hijras

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, [Afghanistan Country Update](#), 23 August 2022

"This report analyzes the severe decline of freedom of religion or belief since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021 and their de facto rule over Afghanistan. The Taliban's imposition of their narrow interpretation of Sunni Islam poses a grave threat to the religious freedom and all Afghans who do not subscribe to that interpretation. The Taliban's harsh enforcement of its religious interpretation violates the religious freedom of minorities, women, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community, Afghans with differing interpretations of Islam, and Afghans who follow no religion. Despite continued promises to protect all ethnic and religious communities residing in Afghanistan, the Taliban de facto government has been unable to provide safety and security to religious minorities against attacks from Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K). While some religious minority communities face the threat of extinction, others struggle to practice their faith in hiding due to fear of reprisal."

Byline Times, [‘They Can’t Survive Inside Afghanistan’: The Vulnerable People Still Stuck Under Taliban Rule One Year On](#), 15 August 2022

"[C]ampaigners warn that, 365 days since the US and UK were forced to evacuate from the troubled country, vulnerable women, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBTIQ people – as well as those who worked with British forces since 2001 – remain in Afghanistan and at risk of serious harm from Taliban reprisals. "There are almost no safe routes out of Afghanistan for vulnerable people," Rosie Shaw, co-founder of the Azadi charity that assists at-risk Afghans to evacuate and resettle, said. "The Government announced last August that it would launch the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, under significant pressure and media attention, and a year on the pathway to resettlement for vulnerable people is not open and it's not clear when it is going to open." "After the first year, pathway three will open to wider categories of vulnerable people to apply – such as women and LGBTIQ people. The FCDO guidance is clear that "if you are not a British Council contractor, GardaWorld contractor or Chevening alumnus, you will not be eligible for pathway three in year one". "Right now, the Azadi charity is in contact with an all-female family – a widow and her adult daughters. Under Taliban rule, it is difficult for the women to leave their

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

house to access even the most basic essentials. Women are expected to have a male guardian with them. "They're a classic case of a family who would be eligible to come to the UK under the ACRS," Rosie Shaw said. "All of them were involved in women's rights activism, they are all well-known in their community. But, 12 months later, they are not even in line for processing, they don't know when they will be able to apply to come to the UK, or how they can be referred to the scheme. It's hopeless. While there has been some attention on high-profile vulnerable women – such as former MPs, judges and lawyers – both Shaw and Zehra Zehadi, co-founder of Action for Afghanistan, are keen to emphasise that 'ordinary' women are also struggling. "Of course there is one category of risk," Shaw told Byline Times. "People who are military targets, for example. But you've also got incredibly vulnerable, widowed women, single women, women who don't have male family members, who can't go outside safely. They can't travel anywhere. They can't get jobs, they've been told that they can't go back to work. And so they have no way they can exist. They can't survive inside Afghanistan."

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, [A year on, Afghans hide out fearing death by data](#), 8 August 2022

"A year after the Taliban takeover, thousands remain in hiding, fearful that biometric data can be used to track them. [...] The 48-year-old, who asked that her last name not be used, knew only too well the danger she faced. The Taliban had previously bombed their vehicles; Sadaf was injured in two of those attacks and had lost several colleagues. "I didn't want anything to fall into the hands of the Taliban," she said by text message from an undisclosed location in Afghanistan. A week after the Taliban took over, men knocked on Sadaf's door and spent hours searching her home. They knew where she worked, and left with a warning that they were watching. The next day, Sadaf packed her belongings and fled, along with her children and husband, a carpenter. They have been in hiding ever since, lodging with relatives and friends, and never staying anywhere for more than two weeks.[...] Sadaf is among the tens of thousands of Afghans - including former government officials, judges, police and human rights activists - who remain in hiding one year on, fearful of being tracked with digital ID and data systems that the militants gained with regime change.

In the past year, human rights groups and the United Nations have documented the killing or enforced disappearance of hundreds of former members of the security forces, as well as journalists, judges, activists and LGBT+ people. A Taliban spokesman did not respond to a request for comment."

Khaama Press, [Foreign Policy Writer Forced to Issue a Public Retraction After Being Detained for 3 Days by the Taliban](#), 21 July 2022

"Lynne O'Donnell, an Australian writer who presently writes a column for Foreign Policy magazine, tweeted, "I apologize for 3 or 4 reports written by me accusing the present authorities of forcefully marrying teenage girls and using teenage girls as sexual slaves by Taliban commanders."

O'Donnell revealed on Wednesday that she was forced to make an apology by the Taliban. [...] The journalist said that the agents disapproved of her reporting on LGBTQ persons and asserted that there were "no gays" in the country.

As of yet, the Taliban's Ministry of Information and Culture and intelligence authorities have not reacted on O'Donnell's disclosures.

Following her alleged detention, harassment, and threats, Lynne O'Donnell, who has reported occasionally from Afghanistan for over 20 years, departed the country on Wednesday for Pakistan. [...]"

UNOCHR, [Oral update on Afghanistan Statement by Michelle Bachelet](#), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 15 June 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“Intersecting humanitarian and economic crises continue to have a devastating impact on the lives of all Afghans. Today, with mounting unemployment rates, 93 percent of all households are facing a high level of food insecurity with differential, devastating impact on those most vulnerable –female-headed households, aged persons, people with disabilities and children. Access to basic services including healthcare is also diminishing. According to the World Health Organization, some 18.1 million people are in need of health services, including 3.19 million children under five. Compounding all of this is the glaring absence of functioning national mechanisms to monitor human rights violations, severely limiting the ability to provide basic protection for the Afghan people, especially vulnerable groups such as children, people with disabilities, internally displaced people, minorities, and LGBTQI communities.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“According to media reports, the Taliban repressed members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community and would not allow members of historically marginalized minority groups to participate in ministries and institutions [...]

LGBTQI+ persons, already disadvantaged prior to August 15, faced further barriers to accessing reproductive health resources after the Taliban takeover. The already fragile community, which provided some resources to its members, largely disintegrated as members either fled the country or went into deep hiding. Widespread discrimination and abuse prevented most members from seeking reproductive or sexual-health assistance from all but the most trusted confidants. [...]

There were reports of harassment and violence of LGBTQI+ individuals by society and police. Same-sex sexual conduct was widely seen as taboo and indecent. LGBTQI+ individuals did not have access to certain health-care services and could be fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Organizations devoted to protecting the freedom of LGBTQI+ persons remained underground because they could not legally register with the government. [...]

The Taliban takeover of the country increased fears of repression and violence among LGBTQI+ persons, with many individuals going into hiding to avoid being captured by the Taliban. Many fled the country after the takeover. After the takeover, LGBTQI+ persons faced increased threats, attacks, sexual assaults, and discrimination from Taliban members, strangers, neighbors, and family members.

Members of the LGBTQI+ community reported being physically and sexually assaulted by Taliban members, and many reported living in physically and economically precarious conditions in hiding. In July a Taliban judge stated that gay men would be subject to death by stoning or crushing. In August a gay man was reportedly tricked into a meeting by two Taliban members and then raped and beaten. There were also reports from members of civil society that LGBTQI+ persons were outing purposely by their families and subjected to violence to gain favor with the Taliban. There were reports of LGBTQI+ persons who had gone missing and were believed to have been killed.

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct. Under sharia, conviction of same-sex sexual conduct is punishable by death, flogging, or imprisonment. Under the law, sex between men is a criminal offense punishable by up to two years’ imprisonment and sex between women with up to one year of imprisonment. Individual Taliban members have made public statements confirming that their interpretation of sharia allows for the death penalty for homosexuality. The law does not prohibit discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTQI+ persons faced societal and governmental discrimination both before and after the Taliban takeover.”

Pink News, Gay, Non-Binary Afghan Stabbed, Left for Dead by Taliban, 28 February 2022

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"A gay, non-binary Afghan has said they feel "hopeless" after they were stabbed by the Taliban 18 times in a horrific attack. Sara, who did not want to disclose their surname, claimed members of the Taliban "wanted to kill them" when they were attacked last week. The 23-year-old told the PA news agency they heard the Taliban saying: "Shame on you, it is our time to finish people like you." They were left with 18 wounds, including injuries to their legs, stomach and back, which needed stitches."

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan, 28 February 2022

"There is no legal protection for LGBT+ people, who face societal disapproval and discrimination from the Taliban. In a July 2021 interview, a Taliban judge advocated for the execution of men who engage in same-sex activity."

Thomson Reuters, As Taliban threats grow, LGBT+ Afghans struggle for work and food, 26 January 2022

"LGBT+ Afghans face increasing threats and violence five months since the Taliban seized power, with many forced into hiding and unable to earn a living amid a worsening economic crisis, researchers said on Wednesday.

Sixty LGBT+ Afghans who were interviewed by rights groups said the community was being targeted by members of the hardline Islamist movement and their supporters, making it too risky for them to work or even leave the house.

Two gay men said they had been raped by Taliban fighters, while many others said they had been threatened or attacked, found the report by Human Rights Watch and OutRight Action International, an LGBT+ nonprofit.

With Afghanistan's economy deep in crisis and millions at risk of starvation this winter, many of those interviewed said their inability to go out to work was an even bigger concern.[...] Even before the takeover, LGBT+ people said it had been too dangerous to live openly in ultra-conservative Afghanistan, where same-sex sexual relations are illegal under its 2017 penal code. Under the Taliban's first regime, from 1996 to 2001, there were reports that men accused of having gay sex were sentenced to death and crushed by walls pushed over by tanks. This time, the Taliban has sought to present a more moderate face on some issues but a spokesperson told Reuters in October last year that LGBT+ rights will not be respected under its strict interpretation of sharia law. [...]

Many of the LGBT+ people quoted in the research, who were given pseudonyms to protect their identity, reported threats by Taliban fighters and their supporters, including their own family members, neighbours and partners.

"From now on, any time we want to be able to find you, we will. And we will do whatever we want with you," said Ramiz, one of the gay victims included in the report, recounting threats from Taliban soldiers." Checkpoints have become hotspots, the LGBT+ people said, with armed Taliban guards searching people's phones for any evidence that would reveal their sexuality or gender identity.

Many interviewees said they erased their social media accounts, photos and messages, while others said Taliban members or informants had infiltrated LGBT+ messaging groups on social media platforms or dating apps to entrap them.

Dozens of LGBT+ Afghans have managed to flee to Britain, while Canada has also pledged to take an unspecified number.

British charity Micro Rainbow is supporting 43 LGBT+ Afghans in Britain, but receives requests every day for help from people still in the country or in neighbouring states, chief executive Sebastian Rocca said by email.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"Some report seeing LGBTQI people being executed on the streets when they are found out by the Taliban. Beatings and active searches ... are also commonly reported," he added.

While granting asylum to people fleeing persecution is important, most LGBT+ Afghans will likely remain in Afghanistan, Heather Barr, associate director of women's rights at Human Rights Watch, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"The Taliban is very unlikely to ever accept fully the rights of LGBT people but at least some international pressure and attention to the rights of LGBT people could deter some of the worst abuses," she said."

Human Rights Watch (Afghanistan), Taliban Target LGBTQ Afghans, 26 January 2022
"Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Afghans and people who do not conform to rigid gender norms in Afghanistan have faced an increasingly desperate situation and grave threats to their safety and lives under the Taliban, Human Rights Watch and OutRight Action International said in a report released today.

"The 43-page report, "'Even If You Go to the Skies, We'll Find You': LGBT People in Afghanistan After the Taliban Takeover," is based on 60 interviews with LGBT Afghans. Many reported that Taliban members attacked or threatened them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Others reported abuse from family members, neighbors, and romantic partners who now support the Taliban or believed they had to act against LGBT people close to them to ensure their own safety. Some fled their homes from attacks by Taliban members or supporters pursuing them. Others watched lives they had carefully built over the years disappear overnight and found themselves at risk of being targeted at any time because of their sexual orientation or gender identity."

Human Rights Watch, 'Even If You Go to the Skies, We'll Find You': LGBT People in Afghanistan After the Taliban Takeover, 26 January 2022

"Afghanistan was a dangerous place for LGBT people well before the Taliban recaptured Kabul in 2021. In 2018, the government of President Ashraf Ghani passed a law that explicitly criminalized same-sex sexual relations, and the previous penal code included vague language widely interpreted as making same-sex relations a criminal offense.[2] LGBT people interviewed had experienced many abuses because of their sexual orientation or gender identity prior to the Taliban's return to power, including sexual violence, child and forced marriage, physical violence from their families and others, expulsion from schools, blackmail, and being outed. Many were forced to conceal key aspects of their identity from society and from family, friends, and colleagues. However, when the Taliban, which had been in power from 1996 to late 2001, regained control of the country in August 2021, the situation dramatically worsened.

The Taliban have echoed the previous government's support for the criminalization of same-sex relations, with some of their leaders vowing to take a hard line against the rights of LGBT people. A Taliban spokesperson told Reuters in October, "LGBT... That's against our Sharia [Islamic] law." [3] A Taliban judge told the German tabloid Bild shortly before the fall of Kabul, "For homosexuals, there can only be two punishments: either stoning, or he must stand behind a wall that will fall down on him." [4] A manual issued by the Taliban's Ministry of Vice and Virtue in 2020 states that religious leaders shall prohibit same-sex relations and that "strong allegations" of homosexuality shall be referred to the ministry's district manager for adjudication and punishment. [5]

Despite making repeated pledges to respect human rights, the Taliban have engaged in widespread rights abuses since retaking control of the country, including revenge killings, systematic discrimination against women and girls, severe restAfghanistan was a dangerous place for LGBT people well before the Taliban recaptured Kabul in 2021. In 2018, the government of President Ashraf Ghani passed a law that explicitly

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

criminalized same-sex sexual relations, and the previous penal code included vague language widely interpreted as making same-sex relations a criminal offense.[2] LGBT people interviewed had experienced many abuses because of their sexual orientation or gender identity prior to the Taliban's return to power, including sexual violence, child and forced marriage, physical violence from their families and others, expulsion from schools, blackmail, and being outed. Many were forced to conceal key aspects of their identity from society and from family, friends, and colleagues. However, when the Taliban, which had been in power from 1996 to late 2001, regained control of the country in August 2021, the situation dramatically worsened.

The Taliban have echoed the previous government's support for the criminalization of same-sex relations, with some of their leaders vowing to take a hard line against the rights of LGBT people. A Taliban spokesperson told Reuters in October, "LGBT... That's against our Sharia [Islamic] law." [3] A Taliban judge told the German tabloid Bild shortly before the fall of Kabul, "For homosexuals, there can only be two punishments: either stoning, or he must stand behind a wall that will fall down on him." [4] A manual issued by the Taliban's Ministry of Vice and Virtue in 2020 states that religious leaders shall prohibit same-sex relations and that "strong allegations" of homosexuality shall be referred to the ministry's district manager for adjudication and punishment. [5]

Despite making repeated pledges to respect human rights, the Taliban have engaged in widespread rights abuses since retaking control of the country, including revenge killings, systematic discrimination against women and girls, severe restrictions on freedom of expression and the media, and land grabbing. The danger now facing LGBT people in Afghanistan—in an environment devoid of legal protections, under authorities that have explicitly pledged not to tolerate LGBT people—is grave. rictions on freedom of expression and the media, and land grabbing. The danger now facing LGBT people in Afghanistan—in an environment devoid of legal protections, under authorities that have explicitly pledged not to tolerate LGBT people—is grave.""

San Francisco Bay Times, [LGBTIQ Afghan Refugee: 'I Feel Like a Human Being for the First Time](#), 13 January 2022

"While same-sex activity was criminalized under Afghan law during the American occupation, life for LGBTIQ Afghans is now far more precarious. A Taliban judge declared last year that "[f]or homosexuals, there can only be two punishments: either stoning, or he must stand behind a wall that will fall down on him," according to an open letter from several major LGBTIQ rights organizations to President Biden urging him to take bolder actions to protect LGBTIQ and other particularly vulnerable Afghans."

Radar Online, [LGBT Community Forced Into Sex Work - In Fear For Their Lives - As Taliban Rule Solidifies Across Afghanistan](#), 29 November 2021

"We are gay boys, but we cannot even share our problems with our families. My father or uncle will kill us. Or the Taliban will kill us," says the young Afghan – who thinks he is about 21 or 22 and refers to his love Zubair as his wife. "We are humans; we have rights, we have a life to live. But how?" [...]

For the most part, members of Afghanistan's LGBT community have had to keep their sexual orientation deeply hidden given the country's adherence to Shariah Law, previously as an "Islamic Republic" and now under the umbrella of "Islamic Emirate."

"Our villagers, all of them are in a Taliban world. If they find me, they will take me to the senior Taliban. Then, without any questions or chance, they will kill us," Himmat – who hails from the staunchly conservative Wardak province and speaks in halting English – pauses, sobbing into his scarf. "They think we are not humans." [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Taliban leadership of 2021 is yet to issue any formal decrees regarding same-sex relationships. Yet for the likes of Himmat and Zubair – who were only toddlers when the U.S. first entered their country and usurped the Taliban from power – there is a sense that their fate is a ticking time bomb.

Some NGOs have also pointed out that “kill lists” are floating among the Taliban, explicitly targeting the LGBT+ community. Over the years, gay men have reportedly been baited by various players – conning them to meet for sex work through social media, where they are sometimes raped and slaughtered. There are no laws on Afghanistan’s books protecting the minority group from persecution or harassment.

The couple, who both say they realized they were gay at around age 14, met several years ago while working for an LGBT+ rights group called the Youth Health Development Organization (YHDO). They wed in a small room with just a few gay friends present in 2018.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck last Spring, the men lost their jobs and have been struggling to survive ever since. And now, with a crumbling economy and escalating humanitarian crisis, Himmat says there are no other options for them to survive outside the sex work trade. [...]

The couple, who both say they realized they were gay at around age 14, met several years ago while working for an LGBT+ rights group called the Youth Health Development Organization (YHDO). They wed in a small room with just a few gay friends present in 2018.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck last Spring, the men lost their jobs and have been struggling to survive ever since. And now, with a crumbling economy and escalating humanitarian crisis, Himmat says there are no other options for them to survive outside the sex work trade. [...]

Moreover, the community has been targeted under the guise of fake evacuation schemes informing them to meet at a Kabul park to be escorted to safety. Only those messages have since been exposed as part of more extensive criminal activity to exploit and potentially harm the desperate and beleaguered. [...]

INews, Gay woman in Afghanistan shunned by her family and struggling to survive says ‘death is better than this life’, 22 November 2021

“Six months before the Taliban took over Afghanistan, 31-year-old Zahra*, a gay woman in Kabul, was beaten by her brothers and father for refusing to marry a man, forcing her to leave home. Afghans have been subjected to a regime that promises to kill LGBT people through stoning or a practice known as “wall-toppling” – crushing under rubble.”

Thomson Reuters, LGBT+ Afghans fear being forgotten in 100 days since Taliban takeover, 23 November 2021

"The Taliban is actively seeking out LGBTQI persons ... to kill them," said Kimahli Powell, executive director of Canadian human rights organisation Rainbow Railroad. [...]

For LGBT+ people who remain in Afghanistan, the situation has deteriorated markedly since Aug. 15.

One gay man contacted by email said a friend had been killed after gay material was found on his mobile phone during a checkpoint search. "(The) Taliban killed him and (gave) his dead body to his father," he said. [...]

With fears growing of a wider humanitarian crisis as the country heads deeper into winter but runs short on funds to be able to feed its 40 million-strong population, many are worried that LGBT+ people will be forgotten.

Pink News, Gay Afghan terrified his friends will out him to earn a ‘bonus’ from the Taliban, 8 November

“A gay man from Afghanistan who came out to two of his friends before the Taliban seized power is now living in fear that they will out him to the extremist group, putting his life in danger in the process. [...]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“The situation of living under the Taliban flag as a gay man is very tough,” Sulaiman tells PinkNews. “I’m really scared of them because I don’t know what they will do if they know about my sexual orientation. Because of this, I do not get out of my home often. I always stay home to avoid facing them.” [...] However, two of his friends do know about his sexuality. “I’m really afraid if my friends tell them about my situation because it’s a very, very big matter for them. If they share with them, they will receive a bonus from the Taliban.”

The situation is made all the more heartbreaking because Sulaiman has gone to great lengths to suppress and hide his sexuality. He says he has never had sex with another man and he has never had a boyfriend. His family is well-respected in his province and he knows that, if his sexuality got out, it would be a “big shame” for them. [...] “The LGBTQ Afghans are the first to be executed, last to be evacuated,” [Nemat Sadat] tells PinkNews. “They’re hiding in basements, closets, rooftops, and secret rooms behind trap doors.”

LGBT+ Afghans are “screaming in silence and solitude for the world to help them”, Sadat says. “The kind of persecution LGBT+ Afghans are collectively experiencing is unprecedented in our lifetime. [...]”

The outlook for LGBT+ people still stuck in Afghanistan is terrifying, he says. “Everyday people on my list are getting beaten, killed, going missing or [dying by] suicide. I’m under a lot of pressure to save the lives of LGBTQ Afghans who are at risk of imminent death.””

France24, The Taliban has a hit list for the Afghan LGBT community, NGO says, 2 November 2021

“Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan at the end of August, the persecution of the country’s LGBT+ community has ramped up - forcing many to live in hiding, fearing for their lives. “We have received reports of names of suspected LGBTQI people circulating,” said the head of the Rainbow Railroad, a Canadian NGO helping under-threat Afghans to flee into exile. The situation for the LGBT+ community in Afghanistan has never been easy. Same-sex relations have always been taboo in the Muslim-majority country, where – even under the former Western-backed government – non-heterosexual relations were illegal and could lead to up to two years in prison.

But since the Taliban came to power after the US military withdrawal on August 30, the situation has deteriorated rapidly. Although the militant group has not yet officially said how it plans to deal with acts of homosexuality, reports are increasingly suggesting that the Taliban is applying a strict interpretation of Sharia law, under which same-sex relations may be punishable by death. [...]

“We have received reports of names of suspected LGBTQI people circulating,” he said. In some cases, landing on one of these ad hoc lists could even prove fatal.

“We now know for sure the Taliban has ‘kill lists’ circulating, identifying LGBTQI+ persons.” [...]

Powell also said the Taliban seem to have complemented these lists through active persecution, by means of “entrapment” and data leaks.

“[Some] individuals who have reached out to us have told us about how they’ve received a mystery email from someone claiming to be connected with Rainbow Railroad asking for their information and passport. That’s how we know the information has been leaked.” [...]

Powell described the current climate in Afghanistan as “lawless”, saying the general uncertainty and unpredictability of what Taliban rule entails for the population as a whole has even led to some people turning in family members for suspected LGBT+ activity.”

BBC, ‘I feel free’ - LGBT Afghan refugees arrive in UK, 31 October 2021

“The Taliban return sparked a mass exodus of people who believed they would be in danger if they stayed, including people who worked closely with the US and its allies, and a number of high-profile women.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Members of the LGBT community are also trying to leave, unsure of their future under the Taliban. The last time the group were in power - between 1996 and 2001 - gay men were reportedly stoned to death. The community has not lived openly in the 20 years since - like many, the man the BBC interviewed has a wife and child.

"The LGBTI [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex] community was a secret underground community, but we knew each other and our network, and if one of us got arrested, they could have found the rest of us," he told the BBC.

"Kabul is not a big city, and with the way the Taliban are ruling the country, it was not that difficult to find high profile LGBTI people. We also heard a couple of people were arrested."

The man's escape was only possible with the help of international LGBT organisations. An initial attempt to leave on evacuation flights out of Kabul airport - past the "terrifying" Taliban guards - failed.

But almost two months on, having made it to a third country to wait for a visa, the man arrived in the UK. Officials explained that the UK foreign secretary and UK and Canadian organisations Stonewall and Rainbow Railroad intervened to help the first 29 people.

More members of Afghanistan's LGBT community are expected to leave in the coming months.

Their arrival comes as a spokesman for the Afghan finance minister said human rights would be respected within the framework of Islamic law, but not gay rights. "LGBT... That's against our Sharia law," Ahmad Wali Haqmal said."

Deutsche Welle, Trans in Afghanistan: A mortal danger under the Taliban, 2 October 2021
"Attacked in the street

Khalid [a gay Afghan man] has taken precautions. As the Taliban advanced on Kabul, he swapped his jeans and a hooded jacket for traditional Afghan clothing. He even grew a beard — so as not to attract attention. But he's really a feminine guy, he says. And he knows that this alone can be dangerous for him.

On August 15, the day the Islamists took Kabul, he left his room to run errands. He thought he was well prepared. But his precautionary measures were not enough.

In the middle of the street, he felt a sudden pain in his right shoulder. "Then there was this Talib. I did not see him. He had a plastic pipe which is used for water. It was really thick and heavy. He hit me on my right shoulder. It hurt a lot, my eyes were full of tears. Then he used some curse words in Pashto, basically, he said: 'Why are you walking so feminine, don't you know how to walk [properly]?'"

Khalid has stayed at home since then.

Brutal punishment under the Taliban

Under the Taliban, LGBTQ people like Khalid and Danish fear for their lives. For a man who has sex with another man there are only two possible punishments — and both are lethal, according to a Taliban judge who spoke with German tabloid newspaper Bild in an exclusive interview a few weeks before the takeover: "Either stoning or he has to be behind a wall that falls on him. The wall must be 2 1/2 to 3 meters [ca. 8 to 9 feet — Editor's note] high."

At the end of September, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, a senior founding member of the Taliban, told The Associated Press news agency that the government would reintroduce executions and hand amputations, just like they did in the 1990s.

Back then, Turabi was the justice minister in the Taliban government. According to an Australian government report, homosexuals in Afghanistan were executed regularly between 1996 and the fall of the Taliban in autumn 2001."

Amnesty International, Afghanistan: The fate of thousands hanging in the balance, 21 September 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“In this report, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) have documented incidents of human rights violations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the takeover by the Taliban on 15 August”. The report references a number of sources, including: [...]

Tracey Shelton. ABC. 2 September 2021. “LGBT Afghans are on the run, afraid they could be stoned to death under Taliban law”.

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

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

Disability rights activists

Byline Times, ‘Keep Watch Over Us’ A Plea from the Women Abandoned in Afghanistan, 26 January 2022

“Arzo is 24 years old and disabled, having lost a leg as a child to polio. She is now a physiotherapist at the International Red Cross, where she deals with the rehabilitation of women and children who have lost a limb due to a bomb, illness, or a violent attack. Arzo was also a promising wheelchair basketball player and a member of the Afghan team who starred in the Asian Games. Fortunately, Arzo still manages to work, as the Red Cross is an international institute – but being a woman, she is no longer allowed to play basketball. The Taliban consider some activities, such as sports, as exclusively male prerogatives and see the “invasion” of these fields by women as a threat. Some Taliban Groups even believe that a woman can get pregnant simply by playing sport. “When the Taliban arrived, I ran to the airport but I couldn’t catch the plane,” Arzo told me. “I stayed there for two days, waiting and in all that chaos, I lost my bag which contained many precious memories. I am very afraid for my future, I had dreams, hopes, but now I cannot think of anything. I only think about the restrictions that have been imposed on us and I wonder if it will ever change.””

The Nation, The Taliban Is Targeting Disability Rights Activists, 2 September 2021

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

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

Academics, teachers, translators, and scholars (including university employees)

Al Jazeera, Prominent Taliban scholar killed in Kabul attack, 11 August 2022

“However, regular attacks by armed groups, many of them claimed by an ISIL affiliate known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, ISKP (ISIS-K), have taken place in recent months. Lately, the group has increased attacks on mosques and minorities across Afghanistan.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

The Guardian, FCDO 'error' reveals data on Afghan teacher in hiding from Taliban, 10 August 22

"An Afghan teacher who has been in hiding with his wife and two children since the Taliban takeover last August has been told by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office that his personal details have been passed on to a member of the public "in error". The data breach is the first known leak under the government's Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, which prioritises those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and vulnerable people, including members of minority groups. The man and his family are of a religious minority and speak limited Dari or Pashtu, having spent many years abroad. Those wishing to apply for transfer to the UK through the ACRS must complete an "expression of interest" form. The family's personal details from this form were leaked to another Afghan citizen, putting them at risk of being found by the Taliban."

The Guardian, 'Shameful': Afghans who helped UK abandoned to a life of fear under the Taliban, 7 August 2022

"Home Office accused of failing to ensure safety of thousands including teachers and translators. Thousands of Afghans who worked for the UK have been abandoned and remain at risk from the Taliban a year after the evacuation from Kabul, a coalition of human rights groups has said. In a parliamentary briefing, nine expert groups on Afghanistan criticised the British government's resettlement schemes as "unjustifiably restrictive". They said it was deeply concerning that the government is currently not offering a safe route for many Afghan women and girls or to oppressed minority groups. The government has opened two programmes, the Afghan relocations and assistance policy (Arap), which has brought 10,100 eligible Afghans to the UK, and the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS), which will allow up to 20,000 to settle here. But the failures of the schemes, the report said, have forced Afghans to use dangerous unofficial routes. During the first three months of 2022, people fleeing Afghanistan were the largest group risking their lives crossing the Channel."

ICG, UN voiced concerns over human rights under Taliban's governance, while Taliban continued to battle Islamic State Khorasan Province and Northern Resistance Front, 2 August 2022

"In report on human rights, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 19 July reported "erosion of women's rights has been one of the most notable aspects of the de facto administration to date". In attempt to garner domestic legitimacy, Taliban authorities organised gathering of nearly 4,500 scholars and community leaders; participants 2 July pledged allegiance to Taliban Emir, denounced rebellion against govt, and called on international community to recognise Taliban govt. On economic front, hardship continued [...]."

The Khaama Press News Agency, Religious Scholar Gunned Down in Northeastern Afghanistan, 30 July 2022

"Local sources in the Afghan northeastern province of Kunar say that unidentified gunmen killed a religious scholar in Kunar province. According to the sources, the victim is identified as an Imam (prayer leader) of a mosque in Kunar province, who went by the name Sheikh Mohammad Israel Sahibzada. The religious scholar is reportedly killed by unknown armed men on Friday evening, 29th of July, as he was returning home from prayer in the Sahibzada village in Kunar province. While the Taliban officials have not yet responded to the accident, the perpetrators are alleged to have fled the crime scene. Afghanistan's capital and provinces have experienced a rise in insecurity recently. A leading Salafi scholar and well-

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

known religious figure, Sardar Wali Saqib, was murdered at his place of residence two weeks ago in Kabul.”

US DOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022

“During the year antigovernment forces, including the Taliban, carried out numerous deadly attacks against religious leaders, particularly those who spoke out against the Taliban. Many progovernment Islamic scholars were killed in attacks for which no group claimed responsibility. On January 24, unidentified gunmen shot and killed Maulvi Abdul Raqeeb, a religious scholar, imam, and teacher. On March 3, Kabul University professor and religious scholar Faiz Mohammad Fayez was shot and killed on his way to morning prayers. On March 31, the ulema council chief in northern Takhar Province, Maulvi Abdul Samad Mohammad, was killed in a bomb blast when an explosive attached to his vehicle detonated. [...]”

Juris, Afghanistan dispatch: new restrictions imposed on students and faculty at Afghan universities, 15 March 2022

“The Taliban-led Ministry of Higher Education has recently re-opened the doors of universities to students and professors after nearly seven months of closure. However, this is contingent on students and universities across Afghanistan adhering to a set of new rules and procedures that violate freedom of speech. The Ministry of Higher Education’s new procedure is in direct contravention of existing Afghan laws and regulations. The procedure, in particular, prohibits students and professors from discussing or publishing information about their universities to local and foreign media. They are not permitted to speak to the media about academic obstacles or the learning environment. The procedure applies to both governmental and private universities. Previously, private universities were ordered to implement new policies that separated male and female students, required male professors to teach only male students and female professors to teach only female students, and allowed old male professors to enter female classrooms in the absence of female professors. It seems that all of the above is now codified in one procedure and sent to public universities across Afghanistan. Additionally, students from Baghlan and Badakhshan universities also tell local media that they are instructed not to use smartphones inside the university compound. Kunduz and Al Biruni university professors have also been warned not to share anything on social media. Kabul university students and professors are also instructed to comply with the above. The education sector of Afghanistan has been adversely affected since the seizure of power by the Taliban in August last year. A large number of professors either left their jobs or left Afghanistan for a safer country. With this being said, there are reports that the number of students in both public and private universities have considerably decreased. Local media report that higher education in private universities is actually on the verge of collapse due to the absence of professors as well as students.”

ANI, Another Afghan university professor goes missing who criticized Taliban, 6 March 2022

“An Afghan university professor and political analyst, Sayed Baqir Mohsini who had criticized the Taliban has gone missing since Friday afternoon. According to Mohsini’s family, he and a relative were on their way to participate in a TV program in the capital city of Kabul on Friday afternoon when they disappeared, reported Tolo News. His relatives said that they have contacted several security departments but have yet to get a response.”

AVA Press, Gunmen raid university professor’s house in Kabul, beat his wife and daughter, 13 February 2022

“[...] a university professor in , said armed attackers pretending to be the ruling government forces invaded his house and beat his wife and daughter.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"He wrote on his page Saturday night that a group of gunmen with "Taliban-issued " entered his home for inspection, beating his family members. "I experienced a sad and humiliating incident today," Nikouei wrote. My wife and daughter were severely beaten, my and that of my family are in the worst condition. My was severely injured."

"He criticized the continuing unrest in Kabul, adding that there is no order in the city and no one is accountable. "It's as if we're stuck in the middle of nowhere among predatory wolves," he added. "The citizens may be torn apart, looted, and removed. This is the fate of an Afghan man who is doomed to live." "Mr. Nikouei emphasized that he was not in contact with any and that it was his and his wife's duty to educate.

"The Ministry of Interior has not yet responded to the ruling government.

"With the fall of the previous government, there have been numerous reports of entering homes. The authorities promised to prevent such incidents, but so far, this commitment has not been fulfilled."

Treatment of family members of those sought by the Taliban

AVA Press, 4 missing women activists freed: UNAMA, 14 February 2022

"After a long period of uncertainty about their whereabouts and safety, the four 'disappeared' , as well as their relatives who also went missing, have been released by the de facto authorities."

AFP reported Mohammadi and Ayar went missing weeks later. Several relatives of the women activists had also disappeared."

AVA Press, Gunmen Raid University Professor's House in Kabul, Beat His Wife and Daughter, 13 February 2022

"On Saturday night a group of gunmen with "Taliban-issued ID cards" entered his home for inspection, beating his family members.

A university professor in , said armed attackers pretending to be the ruling government forces invaded his house and beat his wife and daughter.

He wrote on his page Saturday night that a group of gunmen with "Taliban-issued " entered his home for inspection, beating his family members. "I experienced a sad and humiliating incident today," Nikouei wrote. My wife and daughter were severely beaten, my and that of my family are in the worst condition. My was severely injured.""

Open Democracy, 'I had no hope left': Ex-NATO contractor forced to walk across Afghan border, 24 January 2022

"When the Taliban began door-to-door searches for NATO contractors, Moheeb was left with no choice but to attempt to flee the country on foot [...] Moheeb was supposed to be evacuated to Qatar and then await instructions from NATO representatives to see which country agreed to sponsor him. Some of his colleagues who got out earlier were taken to the US, Canada and Belgium. [...] Moheeb couldn't secure travel documents for his family since the former Afghan administration offices were shut down after the Taliban takeover. [...] He decided to await further instructions. But with increasing security threats and door-to-door searches for former US and NATO contractors, Moheeb was running out of time to make it out of the country. He moved his family from one relative's house to another while waiting for a response from NATO on the next evacuation. [...] In the last week of October, after Pakistan announced the reopening of the Torkhum border crossing and the issuing of 'free' online visas, Moheeb made his decision to cross. "I decided to take matters in my own hands and set out to cross the Torkhum border and move

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

to Pakistan,” he explains, taking a moment to express his anguish and adds, “How can they just ignore our emails after all these years? I kept hearing news of the Taliban searching and killing former US and NATO contractors. It felt like a betrayal.” [...] Moheeb confirms that some of his colleagues made attempts to cross the border to Iran via Nimroz, however, many of them returned alleging violence. “The Iranian border police were deporting Afghans who managed to get across. It was clearly not an option for me as I had many witnesses confirm that the Iranian border force was using violence to disperse Afghan refugees,” he explains. Left with just one option, Moheeb packed the minimum and took a minibus towards Torkhum. The border had been closed for civilians following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul with exceptions for medical emergencies. Witnesses confirm that thousands of Afghans thronged the border. Families including women and children were camping without access to food and water. When Moheeb arrived in a town closer to the border, the news of swelling crowds at the borders discouraged him from making the journey. But after making a final attempt to request an update on the evacuation, he hit the road. [...] Moheeb's family members haven't been able to get passports because they are worried if they apply, the Taliban will locate them and put their lives at risk. [...] “Although now I don't know how to get out of Pakistan. I've read in the news that the Pakistani authorities are deporting Afghan refugees. What will I do if NATO responds and the evacuation starts from Kabul?” He fears if he receives a response and has to go back to Afghanistan, the Taliban will get hold of him during evacuations. Moheeb concludes our conversation with the hope of hearing a response to his emails. “I hope the new year will bring with it some opportunity for Afghans at risk to start a new life. I request NATO to help us and our families.””

The Guardian, The Taliban shot my wife in the head': ex-UK government contractor, 16 January 2022
“Asif* has lost almost everything since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. His wife was shot dead. He fled to Pakistan but has no legal status there and is living in a mosque while seeking treatment for recurrent cancer. He worked for the United Nations and other international organisations including the former UK Department for International Development (DfID). Until 2016 he also worked for Adam Smith International on British government-funded projects.

In September, my wife went to the house of one my relatives with another family member to collect some of our belongings – she was three months pregnant with our first child. They went at midnight, so they wouldn't be seen or recognised.

But someone must have reported them, because early in the morning the Taliban came to the house and started shooting. She had been asleep, and when she came out to see what was happening, one of the Taliban just shot her in the head.

Three days later, she died in hospital. After she died they detained the other family member for a few days and said: “We won't release you until you say where Asif is.”

Jurist, Afghanistan dispatches: UN says 'The safety of Afghan judges, prosecutors, and lawyers – particularly women legal professionals – is a matter for particular alarm., 15 December 2021

“The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has documented 59 apparently arbitrary detentions, beatings, and threats of civil society activists, journalists, and staff of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission attributed to the de facto authorities. Several women's rights defenders have been threatened, and there is widespread fear of reprisals since the violent crackdown on women's peaceful protests in September. In some instances, relatives and family members of civil society actors, and human rights defenders have faced threats and intimidation. Many media outlets have shut down and numerous civil society groups have also closed.”

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

Mirror, 'My family went into hiding in Afghanistan after the Taliban came looking for me', 23 November 2021

[...] As today marks 100 days under Taliban control, we hear from Shukoor Sangar and Zahra Joya, who both fled their country in fear of their safety.

Just weeks before the Taliban took control, Shukoor, his heavily pregnant wife and their two young boys were advised to leave for the UK for their safety.

Shukoor worked as a protocol visa officer and executive assistant to the New Zealand ambassador. The 46-year-old and his family have been housed in West London but he left behind his mum, four sisters and one brother.

[...] "My family is currently in hiding, in Afghanistan, because after I left the country, the Taliban came looking for me. The Taliban searched every corner of our house, they took my car, documents and some embassy photos. I've told my family to never go back to our home, to just forget it.

Hull Daily Mail, Hull City of Sanctuary: Refugee's fears for family back in Afghanistan, 16 November 2021

"Naser, 39, had worked with the British armed forces for 16 years and he was aware he may not survive once the Taliban took full control of the country.

[...] While Naser and his family have settled well in Hull, there are still huge worries eating away at him.

"Many of my family members are still in Afghanistan and their lives are at great risk because they are related to me.

"I am very frightened for them and their lives are still in danger."

JURIST, Afghanistan dispatches: 'Only time will tell if we stay subject when we're hungry.' - JURIST - News - Legal News & Commentary, 15 November 2021

"JURIST EXCLUSIVE – Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Here, a law student in Kabul offers his perspective on recent Taliban abuses of power amidst a rapidly-deteriorating economic situation. [...] In a city ruled by rapists and murderers, a knock at the door is heard. A young girl in her twenties—to judge by her appearance—opens the door and sees a number of Taliban carrying weapons. They ask for her brother, who was an officer of the Afghan National Army forces. But he's not there. In his absence she's dragged to the police precinct, where she's asked for sexual intercourse, beaten and lashed. She says a Taliban officer tell the others to not let her go as she is a northerner. She later she posts her story in a video after barely avoiding being raped by several men; she shows her bruises while covering her face. The girl was lashed heavily, resulting in bloody cloths and bruises in the areas she can show to the camera. In the end she calls angrily for the leaders of the northern provinces and the politicians who fled with millions in cash to resist the Taliban."

Foreign Policy, Afghan Crime Wave Adds to Taliban Dystopia, 29 October 2021

"The Taliban are also using lists of former officials and civil activists to pinpoint their children. "They took four such sons from a prominent school in Kabul. When the police station was asked, they said, 'We don't know who entered the school,'" the source said. "Life is broken."

Another Kabul resident said the father of an associate was kidnapped and a ransom of \$3 million demanded for his release. "But no one has that sort of money; they couldn't pay, and he was killed," he said."

Jurist.org, Afghanistan dispatches: 'Anyone on the Taliban's blacklist is in great danger.', 26 October 2021

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

“JURIST EXCLUSIVE – Law students and lawyers in Afghanistan are filing reports with JURIST on the situation there after the Taliban takeover. Here, a Staff Correspondent for JURIST in Kabul offers observations on the Taliban’s targeting of perceived or potential opponents in Afghanistan who publicly object to their policies, who were associated with the previous government, or who worked with foreign forces prior to the Taliban takeover. [...]

It’s mostly social activists, former military and government officials, CSOs, and traders who have been targeted, warned, and even affected by the Taliban. In particular, former government officials in Panjshir, Mazar, and Samangan provinces have been targeted, leading to the death of one in Samangan province. A few weeks ago the Taliban even went farther and stated some specific individuals – especially those who worked with the foreign forces – should give themselves up to be prosecuted or they will prosecute their family members if they find them. Anyone on the Taliban’s blacklist is in great danger.

The Taliban are using different techniques in targeting people. They have issued warning letters to some former government officials stating that if they do not give themselves to them then their families would be arrested. Several officials of the the central bank received warning letters in the last three weeks. They all received written warning letters signed and stamped by the Taliban. One of the warning letters shared with me said “You should have stopped working with a slave government under control of Americans; we shall punish you so others take a lesson.” Fortunately, the target of this letter is already out of the country. In another incident from the central bank, the Taliban went to check the former Chief of Staff of the central bank who was said to have worked with the ex-governor of the bank too closely. However, they could not find him.

The Taliban appear to have monitored government officials closely before they seized power in August. Most of the people who got killed by them were government officials. I myself lost three friends in a car bombing several months ago.”

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Afghan Pilots Who Fled To Tajikistan Say Taliban Is Threatening Relatives Back Home, 23 October 2021

“Afghan military pilots who fled to Tajikistan when the Taliban seized power in Kabul say the militant group is pressuring them to return to Afghanistan by threatening to kill their relatives.

Trained by the United States, the Afghan pilots say their documents have been completed for traveling and they hope they will soon be able to go to the United States.

But two Afghan pilots who are sheltering at sanatoriums on the outskirts of Dushanbe told RFE/RL's Tajik Service on October 23 that the Taliban is now trying to force them to return to Afghanistan.

One Afghan pilot, speaking on condition of anonymity, told RFE/RL that his son back in Afghanistan was beaten by the Taliban and that the militants threatened to kill the boy if the pilot did not return.

Another pilot told RFE/RL that Taliban militants have gone to the homes of several of his family members to demand that the pilot return to Afghanistan.

He told RFE/RL that the Taliban has a list of the names of all 143 Afghan pilots now in Tajikistan. He said Taliban authorities are increasing pressure on all of the pilots by threatening their relatives in Afghanistan. Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid denied that the Taliban is threatening the relatives of the pilots.”

The Guardian, Afghans seeking Australian humanitarian visas say Taliban are ‘hunting us like animals’, 10 October 2021

“Afghans who have applied for Australian humanitarian visas say they are living in fear as the Taliban are “hunting us down like animals”.

Accounts of their “painful” experiences under the Taliban regime – including testimonies of beatings,

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

interrogations and threats to family members – are set to be provided to a Senate inquiry into Australia's engagement in Afghanistan, which begins public hearings on Monday.

A Hazara man described being interrogated by the Taliban as they demanded to know whether he was a civil activist and had any links to foreigners. The man, whose name cannot be published for safety reasons, said he was taken into a cell where he was blindfolded and gagged.

"I received 26 lashes. I felt the first five lashes and after that I couldn't feel anything anymore, my back became numb."

He recounted later being threatened with execution. "I believed my life would soon be over. I was so frightened," he wrote. He was eventually released from custody and is now in hiding, sleeping in a different place every night.

"The Taliban have been calling me every night," he wrote. "They tell me not to try to run away, that wherever I am, even outside of Afghanistan, they will find me."

It is one of several testimonies compiled by an Australian citizen who has been helping Afghan nationals apply for Australian humanitarian visas, with the support of Rural Australians for Refugees.

In another account provided to Guardian Australia, a former Afghan national army soldier said he had come out of hiding briefly to "send the papers and identity documents to friends who are helping me apply for a humanitarian visa to Australia".

"They [the Taliban] say they forgive everyone who has worked with foreigners, or who worked in government or in the army," he wrote. "But in reality, they are hunting us down like animals. I fear we will all be killed in the end."

A worker for a non-government organisation noted the Taliban were going door-to-door, purportedly to assess humanitarian needs.

"They are using this as a way to spot people, in the guise of a humanitarian assessment, which is disgusting basically. They are doing evil things behind 'good deeds'."

This person said he was hoping to leave Afghanistan legally and had received an acknowledgement letter from the Australian government for his family's humanitarian visa application in mid-September.

Meanwhile, a Hazara hospitality worker described the past few weeks as "the darkest of my whole life". He said many young people were "willing to gamble with their lives to illegally cross the borders into neighbouring countries".

"Living here is much more suffocating and more painful. It's a slow, gradual death," this person wrote.

"I just hope that at least we can get out of here and be somewhere where we will be treated as human."

Deutsche Welle, Fleeing Afghan women footballers seek new home from Pakistan, 1 October 2021

"A group of 32 Afghan women football players and their families are seeking safe haven from the Taliban in third countries after fleeing to Pakistan, the former Afghanistan women's team captain said on Friday. Women's team captain Khalida Popal told DW that some of the players "had their houses burned down and some family members were taken by the Taliban."

Some 135 people — 32 players and coaches as well as their families — "were displaced from their provinces" because of their involvement in women's football, Popal added."

BBC News, Female Afghan judges hunted by the murderers they convicted, 28 September 2021

[Names have been changed for this article by the source]

"For more than three decades, Judge Sanaa investigated cases of violence against women and children.

She says the majority of her cases involved convicting members of the Taliban as well as militant group Isis.

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

"I have received more than 20 threatening phone calls from former inmates who have now been released."

She is currently in hiding with more than a dozen family members.

Only once has one of her male relatives returned to their former family home. But as he was packing some clothes, the Taliban arrived at the house in several cars full of armed men, led by a commander.

"I opened the door. They asked me whether this was the judge's house," he says. "When I said I didn't know where she was, they threw me on the stairs. One of them hit me with the butt of his gun and started beating me. My nose and mouth were covered in blood."

After the armed men left, Sanaa's relative took himself to hospital.

"I told another relative we must keep changing the house where my sister is staying. There is no other way out now. We can't escape to any other country, even Pakistan.""

TOLO News, Woman Activist in Kandahar Says Family Members Beaten, 12 September 2021

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

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

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

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

Thomson Reuters Foundation News, Brother of Afghan opposition figure executed by Taliban, family says, 10 September 2021

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

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

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

OCHCHR, Afghanistan: Journalists at risk of persecution need urgent protection – UN experts, 3 September 2021

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

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

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

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

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

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

SECTION 2 - COI SOURCES

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

International Organisations

- [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International Organization for Migration \(IOM \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan \(UNAMA\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#) [31.08.2022]
See [Message from the UNICEF representative](#), 14 August 2022
- [United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner \(UNOHCHR\) \(Afghanistan news\)](#) [31.08.2022]
See [Afghanistan: UN human rights experts warn of bleak future without massive turnaround](#), 12 August 2022
- [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UNOCHA\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
 - [Humanitarian Response \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\) \(Afghanistan\)](#)
 - [Afghanistan Situation Page](#) [31.08.2022]
 - [Operational Data Portal](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations Secretary-General reports](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations World Food Programme \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations World Health Organisation \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]

Intergovernmental Sources

- [European Union Agency for Asylum \(EUAA\) COI Portal](#) [31.08.2022]
Note: EUAA published a new [COI report on Afghanistan](#) in January 2022. Next to open-source material, the report features unpublished information obtained from interviews and written correspondence. This information can be found across several sections of the report, including sections on media presence, central control, implementation of Sharia law in daily life, compliance with Taliban moral and religious norms, women and girls, Hazara and Shia Muslims, persons affiliated with the former government, persons seeking asylum and remaining abroad, and returnees, ISKP, and Taliban's ability to secure law and order. The EUAA published a new [COI report on Sikh people in Afghanistan](#) in March 2022. The EUAA published an updated [COI report on Pakistan](#) in May 2022. The report revises the previous EASO COI report Pakistan – situation of Afghan refugees, released in May 2020. It specifically covers developments between 1 May 2020 and 17 March 2022. The EUAA published a new COI report on [Afghanistan / Passports, citizenship certificate, getting documents legalised, situation in July 2022](#), on 7 July 2022. The original is in Finnish. The EUAA published a new COI report on [thesecurity situation in Afghanistan](#) in August

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

2022.

Government sources

- Danish Immigration Service [31.08.2022]
 - Country Reports [31.08.2022]
Country report published by the Danish Immigration Service, Afghanistan Taliban's impact on the population, June 2022. This present report is a product of a Danish Immigration Service (DIS) mission to Islamabad, Pakistan from 28 March to 5 April 2022. The purpose of the mission was to collect updated information on the situation for the civilian population in Afghanistan since the Taliban assumed power in August 2021. It focuses on various areas including: Insecurity and crime levels; Targeted individuals; Family members to targeted individuals; Monitoring and intelligence gathering; Vulnerable groups (women, ethnic and religious minorities, and the LGBTQIA+ community); Rule of law; and Conditions for Afghans returned to Afghanistan.
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs [31.08.2022]
 - Ambtsbericht [31.08.2022]
- Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service [31.08.2022]
 - landenrapporten, specifically on the situation in Afghanistan [31.08.2022]
 - Topic: Afghanistan [31.08.2022]
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada [31.08.2022]
 - Responses to Information Requests [31.08.2022]
 - National Documentation Packages [31.08.2022]
- The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre Landinfo [31.08.2022]
 - Afghan publications page [31.08.2022]
- French Ministry of Foreign Affairs [31.08.2022]
 - dossiers pays [31.08.2022]
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom [31.08.2022]

NGOS and think tanks

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

- Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) [31.08.2022]
- Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) [31.08.2022]
- Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) [31.08.2022]
- Amnesty International (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
See The Rule of Taliban: A Year of Violence, Impunity and False Promises, August 2022
- The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- Care International (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- Chatham House (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

- [Center for Strategic & International Studies \(CSIS\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Congressional Research Service](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Council on Foreign Relations \(CFR\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
 - [Global Conflict Tracker \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Danish Refugee Council \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Global Shelter Cluster \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Heinrich Boll Stiftung \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Human Rights Watch \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- *See [Afghanistan: Taliban's Catastrophic Year of Rule; Denial of Women's Rights, Media Crackdown, and Retaliatory Killings Amid Mass Hunger](#), 11 August 2022*
- [International Crisis Group \(ICG\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
 - [CrisisWatch Database](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International Disability Alliance](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International Institute for Strategic Studies \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International NGO Safety Organisation \(INSO\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Jamestown Foundation \(Central Asia\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Medecin Sans Frontieres \(MSF\) \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Norwegian Refugee Council \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- *See [Afghanistan at a Precipice: Humanitarian overview one year since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan](#), 10 August 2022*
- [Refugees International \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Royal United Services Institute \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Samuel Hall \(South and Central Asia\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Save the Children \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
 - [Blog \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction \(SIGAR\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Swedish Committee for Afghanistan](#) [31.08.2022]

Media

[Additional media sources may be included in this report but have not been systematically checked on a weekly basis]

- [Afghan Voice Agency \(AVA\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Al Jazeera \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Ariana News](#) [31.08.2022]
- [BBC News](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Deutsche Welle \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [EurAsia.net](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Inter Press Service News Agency](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Jurist.org](#) [31.08.2022]

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

- [Kabul Now](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Khaama Press \(Afghan News Agency\)](#) [31.08.2022]
See [A Year of Extreme Violence, Poverty, Natural Disaster under Taliban Rule](#), 11 August 2022
- [Pajhwok Afghan News \(Afghan News Agency\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Qantara.de](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Gandhara](#) [31.08.2022]
- [The Guardian](#) (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- [The National News](#) (World) [31.08.2022]
- [The New Humanitarian](#) (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- [Thomson Reuters Foundation News](#) (Afghanistan) [31.08.2022]
- [ToloNews](#) [31.08.2022]
- [UN News](#) [31.08.2022]

Contacts on the ground

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

- [ACTED \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Afghan Aid](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Afghan Women's Education Centre](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society \(AICS\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Agha Khan Foundation \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Aschiana Foundation](#) [31.08.2022]
- [CARE](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres \(MSF\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [The Liaison Office](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Mercy Corps \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]
- [Oxfam \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]

Databases

ACCORD – Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation. [31.08.2022]
See [ACCORD, Afghanistan: Overview of recent developments and key players in Afghanistan](#), 13 June 2022,
and [ecoi.net](#) featured topic on [Afghanistan: Overview of recent developments and key players in Afghanistan](#), 10 August 2022

- [wEcoi.net \(Afghanistan\)](#) [31.08.2022]

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

Databases

- [Asylos's research notes](#) [Subscription only]
- [COI Forum](#) [Subscription only]
- [EASO COI Portal](#) [European Asylum Support Office's portal]
- [Electronic Immigration Network](#) [Subscription only]

This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

- [ECOI.net](#) [European Country of Origin Information Network]
- International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP): [Visa and Refugee Information Reports](#) [“provide information on the refugee protection program, if any, in the countries of flight; the ability of refugees in those countries to work, pursue an education, and live freely; and the penalties, if any, imposed upon individuals living in the countries of flight without lawful immigration status”]
- [Refworld](#) [UNHCR’s portal]
- [ReliefWeb](#)

Sources

- [Afghan Islamic Press](#) [Subscription only]

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

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

Additional useful databases and sources to find expert witnesses

Please note that these experts have not been vetted by us and each database/source will have its own vetting process.

- EIN Experts Directory – The Electronic Immigration Network Directory of Experts gives access to detailed information from a wide variety of experts in a fully searchable database.
- Rights in Exile Programme’s “Country of Origin Information Experts database”.
- The Centre for Gender and Refugee Studies’ [Expert Witness database](#) [requires registration]
- Country experts cited in relevant UK country guidance determinations
- Interlocutors cited in EASO COI products
- Interlocutors cited in fact-finding mission (FFM) reports. These are published by a range of country of asylum/receiving country’s governments. You can find them through a Google search or on [ecoi.net](#).
- Academics and/or (I)NGOs who are cited in this COI Repository
- Ask an expert who you have worked with in the past to suggest other relevant individuals who may be in a position to comment.
- Global Experts – Global Experts is a UN database of academics, analysts, former officials, faith leaders, civil society activists, private sector/business and media experts around the world. You can search for experts by area of expertise as well as by geographical area.
- Expertise Finder – Expertise Finder is a directory of experts in a variety of subjects. Search by keywords, for instance country, to find experts and their contact details.
- SheSource – Same concept as the two sources above, except that this website only lists female experts.
- CGRS – The Center for Gender and Refugee Studies – California features a webpage with a list of experts providing practice advisories and declarations for US Courts hearings regarding vulnerable groups (LGBTI, Women, Children etc.).
- Google Scholar / Microsoft Academic – Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic are search engines for academic publications, although you will find media articles on there as well. On Google Scholar, clicking on an author’s name will typically take you to his / her profile

This COI Repository is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

page. Contact details are not provided, but affiliation is; you can then search on his / her institution's website.

This *COI Repository* is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.