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COI QUERY RESPONSE

AFGHANISTAN – HEALTH ISSUES

A report issued in February 2024 by *Human Rights Watch* states that: “The sharp reduction in financial and technical development support for Afghanistan’s public health system since the Taliban takeover in August 2021 has severely harmed the country’s healthcare system.”¹

An article published in *Conflict and Health* in April 2024 states that: “Access to basic rights, including healthcare and education, is still a major concern in the country, particularly for some vulnerable populations.”²

A report published by the *European Union Agency for Asylum* in June 2024 notes that: “After the Taliban takeover, the already weak public health system was heavily impacted by the halt in aid flows. The few private healthcare options that remained have often been too expensive for people to afford. At the same time, working conditions and the availability and quality of care deteriorated due to the lack of skilled staff, shortages in medical supplies and medication, and harassment by the Taliban against staff members and against women seeking care.”³

A report issued in October 2024 by the *WHO* states that: “Afghanistan is grappling with significant health challenges marked by a fragile healthcare system and unequal access to services, particularly in rural areas.”⁴

¹ Human Rights Watch (12 February 2024) “A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future”, Afghanistan’s Healthcare Crisis, p.1).

² Conflict and Health (22 April 2024) Access to care in Afghanistan after august 2021: a cross-sectional study exploring Afghans’ perspectives in 10 provinces, p.2

³ European Union Agency for Asylum (18 June 2024) Country Guidance: Afghanistan, p.99

⁴ World Health Organization (14 October 2024) Afghanistan: Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), p.2

In November 2024 the *European Union Agency for Asylum* states that: “Health facilities suffer from poor infrastructure, lack of equipment...and personnel...There has also been a general shortage in medicines...”⁵

In December 2024 the *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* states that: “The severe shortage of doctors, including specialists, has left millions of Afghans with limited or no access to health-care services.”⁶

A paper issued by the *Sri Lanka Journal of Surgery* states in 2025 that: “Spine surgery is one of the least developed surgical specialties in Afghanistan due to the lack of local orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons.”⁷

In March 2025 the *WHO* states that: “TB poses a serious public health challenge in Afghanistan, with over 50 000 cases reported in 2024. The disease persists despite the availability of more than 875 TB treatment centres across the country which provide free diagnosis and care...”⁸

In April 2025 the *UNHCR* states that: “Afghanistan’s health system remains deeply strained by years of conflict, weak infrastructure, and economic instability.”⁹

This document also states that: “The main barriers preventing returnee households from accessing medical care included financial constraints, distance to healthcare facilities, lack of transportation, and a shortage of qualified medical personnel.”¹⁰

A publication issued in April 2025 by the *British Medical Journal* states that: “Afghanistan’s health system is on the brink of disaster.”¹¹

In April 2025 *Conflict and Health* states that: “Substantial geographic disparity exists between provinces, with remote provinces reporting far fewer key health workers compared to the national average and Kabul representing approximately 50% of the country’s specialized physicians.”¹²

A report published by *Nature* in April 2025 states that: “Access to health care centers in Afghanistan and its districts can vary depending on location and security...in rural or remote areas, access to health care can be limited or existing.”¹³

⁵ European Union Agency for Asylum (November 2024) Afghanistan – Country Focus, p.77

⁶ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (22 December 2024) Exodus Of Doctors Leaves Afghans Scrambling For Treatment, p.1

⁷ Sri Lanka Journal of Surgery (2025) Establishing a spine surgery service in a low-resource setting: an experience from Herat, Afghanistan, p.23/1

⁸ World Health Organization (24 March 2025) United to End Tuberculosis across Afghanistan

⁹ UNHCR (April 2025) Post Return Monitoring Survey Report; April 2025, p.31

¹⁰ *ibid*, p.33

¹¹ British Medical Journal (16 April 2025) Afghanistan’s fragile health system faces catastrophe without immediate international funding

¹² Conflict and Health (17 April 2025) Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country’s capacity for Universal health coverage, p.1

¹³ Nature (18 April 2025) Understanding patient perceptions of access to healthcare centers in one of the major cities of Afghanistan, p.2

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