



UNHRC Model United Nations 2022

Afghanistan Refugee Crisis

Director: Cindy Chen

Chair: Manon Denux

Welcome delegates,

Our names are Cindy Chen and Manon Denux. We are pleased to serve as your Director and Chair of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in ZMUN 2022. UNHRC is the climax of the Model United Nations world where your debate, logic, and problem-solving skills can shine. It is an environment for delegates to enjoy the unique and fulfilling experience of a UNHRC committee. This year the UNHRC will be offering a vital topic in history and we assure you that it will be another unique experience for all delegates.

This iteration of UNHRC will be representing the Afghanistan refugee crisis as they tackle an issue that has persisted for more than four decades. Afghanistan has suffered upwards of 40 years of conflict, and reoccurring violence which has caused more displacement and human suffering. Nearly six million Afghans have been driven out of their homes and country, and with issues such as COVID-19, violence has reached its tipping point. Delegates must resolve this issue using their debate skills, logic, and any other method they believe is suitable. The fate and safety of more than 2.2 million Afghanistan refugees rest in your hands now.

To make this the most fulfilling experience possible, we encourage all delegates to read this backgrounder to its fullest and ensure that they are prepared for the conference. If you have any questions, worries, or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us at zmun.unhrc@gmail.com. The UNHRC staff is looking forward to meeting you all and tackling this situation with diplomacy and intuition.

Sincerely,

Cindy Chen and Manon Denux
Director and Chair of the UNHRC | ZMUN 2022

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Questions to Consider

1. What actions have been previously taken by Afghanistan to fight the refugee issue? Has it resulted in positive or negative consequences?
2. Which countries are allied with Afghanistan, and what countries are fighting against it?
3. What support systems need to be put into place inside the countries hosting Afghanistan refugees? Where would the money come from as well?
4. What is a way to aid Afghanistan in attempting to solve the current issues occurring? What countries would be willing to help them?
5. What are some possible temporary solutions that have been put in place to help the Afghan refugees that have worked? Why have these solutions been successful?
6. Will there ever be a possibility of the Afghan refugees returning back to their home? If not, where could they be placed instead?
7. What is the Afghanistan government doing about its current situation? Are there any other countries currently helping them in their current situation?
8. What is the Taliban's impact on Afghanistan refugees? Since they have begun their rule in Afghanistan, what has changed?
9. Due to the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, has there been hesitance for other countries to help with the refugee situation?
10. What is the financial toll on countries and their governments to host Afghanistan refugees? How long will they be able to keep them in their country?

Overview

Afghanistan was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah when the Pashtun tribes were unified. It served as a buffer between the British and Russian empires until it finally won independence in 1919, but its peace did not last for long. In 1996, Kabul finally got caught in the grasp of the Taliban; a Pakistani-sponsored movement. It was in 1995, the newly formed Islamic militia when the Taliban rose to power due to their promises of peace. The weary Afghans who were exhausted by decades of drought, famine, and war gave in to the Taliban, although the United States would not recognize the authority of the Taliban. From 1995-1999, the continuous drought caused parts of Afghanistan to become uninhabitable. Consequently, more than one million Afghans left for Pakistan, where squalid refugee camps waited. The U.S. and British forces begin to launch airstrikes on areas of Afghanistan while warplanes began to bomb Taliban targets. The continued fighting caused even more Afghans to flee to neighbouring areas.

The current situation of Afghanistan refugees is dire. Iran and Pakistan host approximately 90% of the displaced Afghans. The Afghan refugees make up the largest community of refugees under the UNHRC's mandate. Due to the Taliban's reign, many Afghans feel unsafe and are fleeing in search of a stable and safe destination. As per Human Rights Watch's report, there are a reported 2.6 million registered Afghans in different parts of the world. There are an estimated 3 million that are internally displaced.

Due to coalition forces withdrawing, there have been nearly 240,000 Afghans that have been internally displaced as of May 2021. The likelihood of these statistics alleviating is very slim, and the situation is deteriorating at a rapid pace. There have been nearly 111,000 casualties and 104.5 billion dollars of

foreign aid that the U.S. has dispersed. This issue had reached a new height of crises and needs to be immediately resolved.

Timeline

1921- After World War I, the British are defeated in the third British-Afghan War, and Afghanistan finally becomes an independent nation.

1934- The United States recognizes Afghanistan as a country

1953- Mohammed Daoud Khan, a pro-Soviet General becomes prime minister. He looks to the communist nation for economic and military assistance. He also implements social reforms such as allowing women to have a more public presence.

1973- Khan overthrows Mohammed Zahir Shah, the last king. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan comes to power under Khan's regime. He also took down the monarchy and makes himself the president of Afghanistan. The Republic of Afghanistan has also established firm ties with the USSR.

1975-1977- Khan proposes a new constitution for women which grants them rights. He also forces multiple people who are suspected of not supporting him out of his government.

1978- In a communist coup, Khan is killed. In his place, Nur Mohammad Taraki takes his place. He is one of the founding members of the Afghan Communist Party and takes control as the president. Conservative Islamic and ethnic leaders who objected to the social changes Khan put began to start an armed revolt in the countryside.

1979- The United States withdraws its assistance to Afghanistan. There is a power struggle between Taraki and the Deputy Prime Minister, however, Tarai is killed on September 14th. The USSR later invades Afghanistan on December 24th to bolster the communist regime. Three days later, Amin and his followers are executed, and Deputy Prime Minister Babrak Karmal becomes the prime minister.

1982- Approximately 2.8 million Afghans have left due to the war in Pakistan. Another 1.5 million have left for Iran.

1984- The United Nations begins to investigate reported human rights violations in Afghanistan

1989- The U.S., Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union sign peace accords that guarantee Afghanistan's independence. It also allowed for the withdrawal of 100,000 Soviet troops.

1995- The Taliban rise to power on promises of peace, and most Afghans who are tired from years of drought, famine, and war give in to the Taliban.

1995-1999- A continuous drought devastates farmers and makes a lot of rural areas uninhabitable. Approximately 1 million Afghans flee to Pakistan where they languish in refugee camps.

1998- President Clinton orders multiple missile attacks against bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan. However, the attacks miss Saudi and other leaders of the terrorist group.

2000- bin Laden is believed to be in hiding in Afghanistan while growing an army of thousands of followers. He is training them in terrorist camps. The United States then demanded that bin Laden have to stand trial for the embassy bombings. The United Nations then punishes Afghanistan with sanctions restricting their trade.

September 11th, 2001- The World Trade Center in New York has four commercial airplanes crash into them. This terrorist attack killed thousands. The prime suspect in this attack is bin Laden.

October 7th, 2001- The U.S. and British launch airstrikes against targets in Afghanistan after their demands that bin Laden be turned over. American warplanes also begin to drop bombs on Taliban targets and bases which reportedly belong to the al-Qaida network.

2004- The presidential elections are held with more than 10.5 Afghans registering to vote. Karzai is elected to become the president.

2006- During the fighting between the Taliban and al-Qaida, and the Afghan government forces, NATO begins to expand its peacekeeping operation to the southern region of Afghanistan. Taliban fighters later begin a series of suicide attacks and raids against the international troops.

2011- U.S forces take over a compound in Abbottabad and kill the leader of al-Qaida; Osama bin Laden.

2013- The Afghanistan army takes over all of the military and security operations from NATO.

2019- The U.S and Taliban sign an agreement on a peace deal. It would serve as the preliminary terms for the U.S's withdrawal from the country by May 2021.

2021- President Biden announces that he aims to complete the U.S. troop withdrawal before 9/11

August 15, 2021- The Taliban takes over Kabul as the Afghanistan government crumbles.

August 26th, 2021- Outside of the Kabul airport, there are two suicide bombings. This caused thousands of Afghans to attempt to leave the country after the Taliban's takeover. The bombing killed approximately 169 Afghans and 13 United States troops. ISIS-K claimed to be responsible for the explosion.

Historical Analysis

The Origin of the Taliban in Afghanistan

After the Afghan war (1978-1992) Afghanistan's new government was not able to establish civil order outside of Kabul. The country was often subjected to frequent assaults from warlords and militias. Afghans would find solidarity in the Islamic sciences in southern Afghanistan. It was in 1994 when a group of former fighters began to pacify nearby areas. This group enjoyed the support of its promise of security and religious beliefs grew into what is now known as the Taliban. In 1996, the Taliban had seized Kabul and had control over the majority of the country.

Taliban rule received a significant amount of resistance after it implemented its own law. The Taliban ideology was a mixture of Deobandi traditionalism and Wahhabi puritanism, with a conservative Pashtun social code. This all created an extremely repressive regime for the Afghan people. There was a destruction of non-Islamic artistic relics and harsh punishments. By 2011, the Taliban held control of the majority of Afghanistan.

The Beginning of the U.S. Attacks on Afghanistan

It was on October 7th, 2001 when a U.S.-led coalition began their attacks on a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Logistical support came from various countries such as France, Germany, Australia, and Canada, while troops were being provided by the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance rebels. This was the U.S.' response to the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington D.C. The conflict in Afghanistan would last two decades and become the longest war in U.S. history.

The invasion of Afghanistan was meant to target the terrorist Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization which was based in Afghanistan. Moreover, it also had intentions to target the Taliban fundamentalist government which had ruled the country as of 1996. During the Taliban's rule, there were great numbers of Afghans living in poverty, and approximately 4 million have suffered from starvation.

Weeks before the invasion, the U.S. as well as the U.N. Security Council demanded that the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden for prosecution. The Taliban denied the U.S. and instead placed counteroffers that were deemed unsatisfactory; the invasion began. Aerial bombardments of the Taliban and the al-Qaeda installations in Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Konduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif occurred. Humanitarian aid was given to the Afghan citizens. After the bombardments began to weaken the Taliban defense, a ground invasion began.

On November 12, Taliban forces retreated back to Kabul, and by early December, Kandahar; the last Taliban stronghold, had fallen. The Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar went into hiding and did not surrender. The Al-Qaeda fighters began to go into hiding through Afghanistan's mountains where anti-Taliban Afghan forces and the Al-Qaeda initiated a truce. This truce is what is now believed to have been a plan to allow bin Laden and other al-Qaeda members to escape into Pakistan. However, when

bunker used by al-Qaeda was captured, bin Laden had already escaped. It was only after a 10-year long manhunt, he was finally captured and killed in Pakistan by U.S. Navy Seals on May 2nd, 2011.

The Taliban's Return to Power

In 2018, the Taliban and the U.S. began meetings, as well as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates; the only countries to have a diplomatic relationship with both parties. The discussion topic was mainly regarding the U.S. troops in Afghanistan. However, the U.S. also sought reconciliation with the Taliban. In July, an agreement on general principles and ideology came to an agreement. Despite this the Taliban's representatives were still focused on reaching a deal with the U.S. In September, there were reports of an agreement, but an attack by the Taliban killed a U.S. service member.

In February 2020 a deal was signed with the United States for the full withdrawal of the U.S. troops. The Taliban also agreed to end their attacks on the U.S. forces. The deal included an agreement to begin talks with the central government, however, that negotiation was postponed due to their reluctance to carry out a prisoner swap. Nevertheless, the United States completed its full withdrawal of forces by April.

As the U.S. left Afghanistan, the Taliban quickly took over dozens of districts in Afghanistan through May and June. It zeroed in on several provincial capitals as well. Although the Taliban was lacking manpower, they were still able to overrun the country in the span of a few months. In mid-August, the Taliban had gained control over nearly all of Afghanistan. Although the Taliban seemed earnest to win legitimacy, many people hoped to see a more conciliatory regime compared to their previous times. Nonetheless, there were indications for little change and by September schools only for boys opened and brutal criminal punishments were reinstituted.

Current Situation

At the moment, Afghanistan is experiencing a humanitarian crisis, as the pandemic, violence, food insecurity, and poverty have brought more internal displacement for Afghans in the country. Following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the conflict began to give way to a human rights crisis. Women's rights and freedom of speech were taken away. Secondary schools for girls were vastly shut down and jobs for women in the government were also disallowed. Journalists were detained and abused by the Taliban; numerous media outlets took their reporting to a halt. Millions of Afghans face severe food insecurity and no income. In the months before the Taliban takeover, the fighting between the Taliban and the government caused a spike in civilian casualties from IEDs, mortars, and airstrikes. In conjunction with this, the Islamic State of Khorasan Province reported multiple attacks on schools and mosques.

Tens of thousands of Afghans fled after the Taliban takeover in August 2021. Countless others who wanted to flee are still looking for ways to safely depart from Afghanistan. Afghans are being targeted due to their past work or associations with the coalition forces, such as Afghanistan's former government, international development program, civil society, and other organizations which promote human rights. Days after the Taliban took over Afghanistan, a U.S.-led multinational airlift evacuated international passport holders and Afghans. The airlift evacuated approximately 125,000 people, but many Afghans

still remain. There is believed to be still several hundred foreign passport holders who have remained in the country.

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