

# ETMUN

**Unraveling the Domino Effect**



**Committee:** United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

**Topic:** Safeguarding Afghan Children's Rights and Ensuring

Sanitation Access

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## **Letter from the president:**

Dear Delegates,

Hello, and welcome to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) committee for ETMUN! It is with immense pleasure to be the president of a crucial committee that discusses the ongoing global challenges regarding children. I am Mustafa AlBakri, and I will be the President for this year's committee.

In this year's conference, we will be diving deeper into two topics. The first topic is "Safeguarding Afghan Children's Rights and Ensuring Sanitation Access." Afghanistan has been plagued by decades of conflict and instability, leaving millions of children vulnerable and deprived of their fundamental rights. The recent political and humanitarian crisis has further exacerbated the situation, with children facing increased threats to their well-being, including malnutrition, preventable diseases, and a lack of access to essential services. Delegates will discuss these issues, engage in strong debates, and produce crucial solutions for this topic.

The second topic is "Emergency Relief for Children in Gaza: Safeguarding Children Amidst Devastating Bombing Attacks." This topic is the most important in the ongoing issues of the world today. Gaza is a prison for over 2 million people, and over 40% are children! The continuous bombings have killed thousands of children, their families, their friends, and destroyed their future completely. What is the next step for this situation? What is the world going to do to solve this problem? Will the world stay silent, or will this issue be solved anytime soon? The delegates will be discussing the serious concerns that face the children in Gaza from trauma to lack of food, loss of families, homes, and severe injuries taken.

Delegates, I am so excited to meet you all and cannot wait for this conference and for these topics to be tackled. I hope you prepare well for them and wish you an amazing day!

Mustafa

## **Introduction:**

In 2001 the *United States of America* led a coalition force comprising of NATO members to topple the Islamic Emirate, and as a response for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the world trade center. The conflict is the longest conflict in the history of the United States, and *one of the most* devastating conflicts, completely destroying the country and the lives of those living in it. The war in Afghanistan cost a total of 2 trillion dollars and cost the lives of over 2,400 Americans, 79,000 Afghani servicemen, and 117,000 Afghani Civilians more than 28,000 being children, and millions more Afghani's were displaced, and it ranks 7th with the countries with the most internally displaced people. The United States wished to dispose of the Taliban government for harboring al Qaeda the group responsible for the September 11th attacks. The initial invasion was swift and successful, with the Taliban collapsing within a few weeks. However, the war soon evolved into a protracted insurgency, as the Taliban regrouped and launched a guerrilla war against the US-backed Afghan government. In 2014, the US and its allies began to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan. However, the Taliban quickly began to regain territory and by 2021, the Taliban had captured most of Afghanistan. including the capital city of Kabul. The US-backed Afghan government collapsed, and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan was a major setback for the US and its allies. It also raised concerns about the future of Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls. The Taliban has a long history of human rights abuses, and the lives of all afghani people are in danger.

## **Definition of key terms:**

**Taliban:** the Taliban is a fundamentalist Islamist militant group that originated in the early 1990s in Afghanistan. The name "Taliban" translates to "students" in Pashto, reflecting the group's early composition, mainly consisting of young students educated in religious schools.

**Insurgent movement marched on Kabul:** refers to the Taliban's swift and unexpected takeover of the Afghan capital on August 15, 2021.

**International Intervention:** Involvement of foreign governments and international organizations in providing aid, support, or diplomatic efforts to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan.

**Child Recruitment and Exploitation:** Risks of children being recruited by armed groups or exploited for labor, trafficking, or other purposes due to the unstable situation.

**Sanitation Access:** The provision of clean water, adequate sanitation facilities, and hygiene practices to ensure children's health and well-being.

**WASH Programs:** Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene initiatives to improve access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, and hygiene education in communities and schools.

**Child-Friendly Sanitation:** Implementing sanitation facilities specifically designed for children, ensuring accessibility and safety.

**Gender-Sensitive Sanitation:** Addressing the specific sanitation needs of girls and ensuring equal access and privacy in facilities.

**Hygiene Promotion:** Promoting proper hygiene practices, including handwashing, to prevent diseases and improve overall health.

**Community Engagement:** Involving and empowering local communities to participate in and support sanitation programs for children.

**Child Participation:** Ensuring children have a voice in decisions affecting their rights and access to sanitation facilities, considering their perspectives and needs.

**NGOs:** Non-Governmental Organizations are private organizations that operate independently of government control. They are typically formed by individuals or groups to address specific social, environmental, or humanitarian issues.

**USAID:** United States Agency for International Development, an independent agency of the United States federal government that's primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

## **General Overview:**

The Afghanistan crisis is one of the most devastating human rights crises in the 21st century with its origins dating back to the 1979 soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In 1978 Muhammad Dawud Khan was overthrown by the Soviet Union, this sparked rebellion from Islamic insurgents known as the mujahideen. Backed by the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. December 22nd, 1979, soviet paratroopers landed in Kabul and by 1980 there were more than 125,000 soviet soldiers. By 1989 the Soviet Union had withdrawn due to the heavy casualties they suffered. The country remained in turmoil after the Soviet withdrawal due to the immense power vacuum they left, the Soviet Union had killed nearly 2 million Afghani civilians. In the early 1990s, the Taliban, a Sunni Pashtun Islamist movement, emerged from the mujahideen. The Taliban quickly gained control of most of the country and imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law. The Taliban also provided safe haven for al-Qaeda.

September 11th, 2001. *The 911 attacks, a series of four terrorist attacks coordinated by the Islamic terrorist group Al Qaeda* against the United States. The results costed the lives of 3,000 people and injured 25,000 others. The attacks resulted in 10 billion dollars of property damage and had a substantial impact on the world and American citizens. The first attack involved American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, both of which were hijacked and flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, causing them to collapse. The second attack involved American Airlines Flight 77, which was hijacked and flown into the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C. The fourth hijacked plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was intended to hit the United States Capitol or the White House but crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, due to passenger resistance. The 911 attacks are widely regarded as the deadliest terrorist attacks in history, and it triggered the Major US initiative of “the war on terror”. The attacks led to the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the US led invasion into Afghanistan to dispose the Taliban regime. The attacks led to a heightened sense of security and a decrease in civil liberties. The attacks also had a lasting impact on the American psyche, leading to increased anxiety, fear, and Islamophobia. *The attacks were authorized after the Taliban refused to extradite Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Ladin to the United States* following the attacks, as the Taliban government had been harboring al Qaeda. The operation

was declared operation Enduring Freedom as part of the earlier declared war on terror in Afghanistan.

There were multiple complications during the operation although taking control of the country from the Taliban was relatively swift. The NATO Coalition led by the US eventually supported the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan fighting against the Taliban, its allies, and its militias. Complicating the fight were Taliban splinter groups and other more radical religious groups such as al-Qaeda and later the Islamic State. These radical groups sometimes fought for the Taliban, sometimes fought for their own goals, and sometimes fought against both the Taliban and the Government.

Afghanistan is a rural country with some 80% of the 33 million population living in the countryside, this provided the Taliban and other militias ample spots to hide and attack coalition forces. Afghanistan is a largely tribal society with a 50% majority of the population being ethnically Pashtun, which meant that communities and tribes felt a deeper sense of connectedness and nationalism to their tribe than the government or nation of Afghanistan. This often meant that tribes would side with the government and Coalition forces, or the Taliban based on which was more beneficial at the moment. And the power difference between the coalition forces and the Taliban led to asymmetric warfare. The Taliban owing their roots to 1980 Mujahideen guerilla fighters relied heavily on old highly effective tactics used to combat the soviets, such as taking advantage of the variable and mountainous terrain. Suicide bombers, cars, and IED (Improvised Explosive Devices) were relied on heavily, an IED's became a staple choice for the Taliban around 2009. The Taliban also used insider attacks as the war drew on, by planting personnel in the Afghan military and police forces.

The United States did not invade alone and instead invaded with a close ally the United Kingdom. Eventually a dozen more countries joined the coalition, and later the United Nations Security Council authorized an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), with a mandate to help the Afghans maintain security in Kabul and surrounding areas. Its mandate did not extend beyond the Kabul area for the first few years. Eighteen countries were contributing to the force in February 2002. Following its early successes, the US's counterterrorism objectives in Afghanistan were limited to locating senior Taliban and al-Qaeda figures; there was no clear US objective beyond this. The Bush administration initially opposed

nation-building, but as the US stayed, it gradually filtered into the justification for remaining. Bush stated in a speech in April 2002 that he wanted to rebuild Afghanistan. Additionally, the US tried to instill women's rights and democracy as moral imperatives. The development effort in Afghanistan, which centered on aid and the establishment of institutions to govern the nation, was aided by the international community. The US made improvements in community development, health care, and education a priority during its reconstruction. Early in 2002, the US helped finance and support the establishment of an Afghan army. But the army was assembled gradually, sluggish because of conflicting agendas and the US perception that the Taliban posed little threat anymore. Instead of building a new military, some in the Bush administration preferred to use the Northern Alliance and warlords. The Taliban were further helped by the army's lack of training and equipment, which made it an afterthought.

The Taliban reorganized and plotted their comeback between 2002 and 2005. Excessive pressure to track down terrorists by Coalition forces resulted in some public support for the Taliban. Coalition forces would deploy on missions with dubious intelligence, once becoming victims of a false tip from a target's political adversaries. Very few senior al-Qaeda or Taliban figures were apprehended. Most of those apprehended were low-level Taliban operatives with scant knowledge of al-Qaeda. During operations, many civilians were killed, including those attending a wedding that was mistaken for a Taliban meeting. Taliban recruitment was fueled by Coalition forces' repeated mistakes.

By 2011 over 110,000 soldiers were in Afghanistan. 2010 to 2013 saw a significant increase in fighting, as well as an increase in casualties. In 2010 seven hundred airstrikes took place as opposed to the 243 in 2009. The use of IED's increased, civilians' casualties increased, and military operations increased sixfold. The Taliban announced on April 30 that they would begin their spring offensive, and the Battle of Kandahar in 2011 was a part of that offensive lasting. The Taliban began a significant attack on Kandahar's government buildings on May 7. The BBC described it as "the worst attack in Kandahar province since the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, and an embarrassment for the Western-backed Afghan government."

US officials declared on May 2, 2011, that Osama bin Laden, the chief of al-Qaeda, had been killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, during Operation Neptune Spear, which was carried out by the US Navy SEALS. Following the raid, Pakistan was the subject of intense international

scrutiny. The Pakistani government stated that since 2009, it has shared information about the compound with the CIA and other intelligence agencies but denied having provided shelter to bin Laden.

In 2014 The United Kingdom officially announced that it would be withdrawing from Afghanistan, handing over its last base on the 26th of October, Camp bastion. And the United States followed suit handing over the last base, Camp leatherneck to afghani forces the same day. Around 5000k English troops remained in Afghanistan in “noncombatant roles”. On 28 December 2014 NATO officially ended combat operations in a ceremony held in Kabul. In the time of the slow American and English withdrawal the Taliban offensive increased. The United States increased the number of airstrikes to support the Afghani army, but it had begun to lose ground at an alarming rate. The Taliban began recapturing town after town and city after city, although police-controlled checkpoints on the road leading to the capital of Kabul began to fall one by one. In 2020 after the American election 47<sup>th</sup> president of the United States Joe Biden, greatly and suddenly increased the rate of withdrawal of American forces. This left the Afghani Army and police isolated and as a result the Capitol city of Kabul fell days later. The sudden withdrawal also provided the Taliban with loads of American Military Vehicles and weaponry, all of which was seen in the aftermath of the battle of Kabul as the Taliban paraded them through the streets. The situation in Afghanistan does not seem to be headed for the better as the Taliban seize more control over the government. It has become increasingly difficult for any form of political collaboration due to the fact that it would entitle the collaboration with a terrorist organization.

In 2021, UNICEF provided humanitarian assistance to 8.1 million children in Afghanistan. The organization also worked to protect children from violence and exploitation, and to improve their access to education and healthcare.

UNICEF has faced challenges in operating in Afghanistan, including the ongoing conflict and the country's economic crisis. However, the organization remains committed to helping Afghan children and families.

Here are some examples of UNICEF's work in Afghanistan in 2022:

- Provided lifesaving supplies to 2.5 million children affected by conflict and displacement.
- Vaccinated 1.5 million children against measles.
- Supported the education of 1.8 million children.
- Provided nutritional support to 1 million children.
- Provided psychosocial support to 1 million children affected by violence.

UNICEF continues to work in Afghanistan to provide humanitarian assistance to children and families in need. The organization is committed to helping Afghan children and families build a better future.

Although reports published by UNICEF state that:

- Access to education: Only 43% of Afghan children are enrolled in primary school.
- Access to healthcare: Only 62% of Afghan children have access to basic healthcare services.
- Access to clean water and sanitation: Only 52% of Afghan children have access to clean water and sanitation.
- Access to nutrition: One in three Afghan children is malnourished.
- Access to protection: One in five Afghan children is affected by violence.

## **Major Parties Involved:**

- **The United States and its allies:** The United States and its allies, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, invaded Afghanistan in 2001 in response to the September 11 attacks. The US-led coalition overthrew the Taliban regime, which had been harboring al-Qaeda, the terrorist group responsible for the attacks. The US and its allies remained in Afghanistan for two decades, providing security, training Afghan forces, and supporting the Afghan government.

- **The Taliban:** The Taliban is a Sunni Pashtun Islamist movement that emerged in Afghanistan in the early 1990s. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic law. After being overthrown by the US-led invasion in 2001, the Taliban launched an insurgency against the Afghan government and its allies. The Taliban gained strength over the years, and in 2021, they launched a major offensive that quickly overran the Afghan government and captured Kabul, the capital city.
- **The Afghan government:** The Afghan government was established in 2001 after the US-led invasion. The Afghan government was supported by the US and its allies, but it struggled to maintain control of the country. The Afghan government was plagued by corruption, factionalism, and a lack of legitimacy. In 2021, the Afghan government collapsed after the Taliban captured Kabul.
- **Al-Qaeda:** Al-Qaeda is a Sunni Islamist terrorist group founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. Al-Qaeda was responsible for the September 11 attacks, as well as other terrorist attacks around the world. Al-Qaeda had a safe haven in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, and it provided support to the Taliban during the insurgency.
- **Pakistan:** Pakistan is Afghanistan's neighbor to the east and south. Pakistan has a long and complex history with Afghanistan, and it has played a significant role in the Afghan crisis. Pakistan supported the Taliban during the 1990s, and it has continued to provide support to the Taliban in recent years. Pakistan's role in the Afghan crisis has been controversial, and it has been accused of harboring Taliban fighters and providing them with financial and logistical support.
- **Iran:** Iran is Afghanistan's neighbor to the west. Iran has also played a role in the Afghan crisis, although its role has been less direct than that of Pakistan. Iran has supported the Northern Alliance, a group of Afghan factions that opposed the Taliban. Iran has also provided some support to the Afghan government.

- **Russia:** Russia is Afghanistan's neighbor to the north. Russia has also played a role in the Afghan crisis, although its role has been limited. Russia has supported the Afghan government, and it has provided some military assistance to the Afghan security forces. Russia has also been involved in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Afghan crisis.
- **China:** China is Afghanistan's neighbor to the northeast. China has played a more active role in the Afghan crisis in recent years. China has invested heavily in Afghanistan's economy, and it has also provided some military assistance to the Afghan government. China has also been involved in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Afghan crisis.

### Timeline of events:

September 9, 2001: Mujahideen fighters loyal to Ahmed Shah Masoud capture Kabul, the Afghan capital, from the Taliban, who had ruled the city since 1996.	September 9, 2001
October 7, 2001: The United States launches Operation Enduring Freedom, a military campaign against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.	October 7, 2001
November 25, 2001: The Taliban surrender Kabul, and the Afghan Northern Alliance takes control of the city.	November 25, 2001
December 22, 2001: The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1386, which establishes the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to maintain security in Afghanistan.	December 22, 2001
June 18, 2002: Hamid Karzai is elected as interim President of Afghanistan by a loyal jirga, or grand council.	June 18, 2002
December 7, 2004: Hamid Karzai is elected as President of Afghanistan in Afghanistan's first direct presidential election.	December 7, 2004
August 20, 2009: The Taliban launch a major offensive in southern Afghanistan, killing hundreds of Afghan civilians and soldiers.	August 20, 2009

May 2, 2011: Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda, is killed by U.S. Navy SEALs in a raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan.	May 2, 2011
June 1, 2011: U.S. President Barack Obama announces that all U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan by 2014.	June 1, 2011
December 18, 2014: Ashra Ghani is elected as President of Afghanistan in Afghanistan's second direct presidential election.	December 18, 2014
April 14, 2021: U.S. President Joe Biden announces that all U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021.	April 14, 2021
August 15, 2021: The Taliban capture Kabul, the Afghan capital, and the government of President Ashraf Ghani collapses.	August 15, 2021
August 30, 2021: The last U.S. troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan, ending the 20-year U.S. war in the country.	August 30, 2021

## **Possible solutions:**

1. **Calls for** immediate action to protect and promote children's rights in Afghanistan through the establishment of a dedicated agency or task force focused on child protection in conflict-affected areas:
  - a. To Apply child-friendly spaces in conflict-affected areas through:
    - i. Emphasizing the need for safe and structured learning environments, psychosocial support, and recreational activities in these spaces.
    - ii. Encouraging the deployment of child protection specialists and community facilitators to ensure the safety and well-being of children.
    - iii. Stressing the provision of mental health and psychosocial support services for children and families affected by the conflict.
  - b. They should encourage the implementation of community-based child protection programs that are based on:

- i. The prevention of child labor, trafficking, and recruitment by armed groups through targeted awareness and intervention strategies
  - ii. The promotion of birth registration and documentation, ensuring children's legal identity and access to services
  - iii. The importance of gender-sensitive approaches to address the specific needs of girls, including their safety, education, and health.
2. **Calls for** stabilizing the WASH sector.
- a. To prevent a collapse of the WASH sector and sustain basic human services, by coordinating with de facto Authorities, civil society, and the private sector to:
    - i. Support operation and maintenance of WASH infrastructure through provision of supplies, parts, and fuel.
    - ii. Pay critical WASH technical staff for their services.
    - iii. Train new and junior WASH staff to bridge the capacity gap.
    - iv. Support to Community Development Councils in rural areas
    - v. Scale up open defecation eradication programs.
  - b. Develop a Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework by:
    - i. Implementing a robust system to monitor the functionality and effectiveness of WASH infrastructure, ensuring regular assessments and maintenance schedules.
    - ii. Establishing metrics and indicators to track the impact of WASH initiatives on children's health, education, and well-being.
    - iii. Conducting evaluations to measure the success of programs and make data-driven adjustments for sustained improvement.
    - iv. Engaging independent oversight to ensure transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of resources for WASH initiatives.
    - v. Providing regular reports and updates to stakeholders, including the international community, on the progress and challenges within the WASH sector.

## **Guiding questions:**

1. Who are your country allies with?
2. Is your country with, neutral, or against Afghanistan?
3. If with, what measures have they took to resolve the issue?
4. What actions can countries take to resolve the issue of Afghan children's access to sanitation and general rights?
5. What is your job as a country?
6. What is the effect of existing regional internal conflicts on the Afghan children's rights and/or sanitation access?
7. How do internal groups (Taliban) higher the risk of the existence of the issue?
8. What strategies can be initiated to resolve the issue of children's rights and access to sanitation in Afghanistan?
9. What are the main reasons behind this issue of children's rights in Afghanistan?

## **Beneficial resources:**

- <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>
- <https://www.unicef.org/media/118356/file/%20UNICEF%20Afghanistan%20WASH%20on%20the%20Brink%202022.pdf>