**VOICES OF AFGHANISTAN**

When we think of Afghanistan, we think war. We think of a country one would never dream of visiting, let alone living in. Before the Taliban arrived, this was a **harmonious society**. Religions lived in peace amongst each other, minorities thrived in all aspects. All of that changed in the 1990s when the **Taliban destroyed Afghanistan's social pillars**. They hunted minorities, erased cultures altogether, brought into action various laws against women and children, and **treated civilians with brute force**.

Afghanistan’s history reads like a war-book of imperial ambitions, military wonders, and spirited resistance. But, buried deep below the blood and debris is a different Afghanistan- one where cultures met and **free thought prospered, all before the arrival of Taliban**.

Under the intolerant rule of Taliban, Afghanistan suffocated. They killed more than **15,000 men in the name of religion**, often in front of their families. They seemed to thrive on such massacres in the 1990s, and left graphic imprints on the minds of the people.

But after 20 years of efforts by the US government and other western nations to **remould Afghanistan as a modern democracy**, the country has again fallen under the reigns of Taliban, a fundamentalist group that was overthrown by US led forces in 2001.

For the Afghans, the list of happy things is shrinking by the day. The Taliban is growing stronger, capturing lands with **virtually no resistance** from the country’s army and undoing decades of progress.

We have all seen and read Social Media posts where Afghans are seen clinging to the sides of aircrafts just in an effort to escape the country.

The people are handing off their infants to strangers across the border. Women are being forcibly married off to Taliban members. Children in many parts are losing their rights to education. At this rate, it won’t be long before we start hearing news of beheadings.

This is how the country of Afghanistan looks at the moment. It is in a state of **utter chaos and terrible distress.**

This capture has been disturbing for the people of the country as what started out as **fight for power** is now slowly turning into a **full-blown massacre**. People are in **excruciating pain**, which not only affects their **physical health**, but also leaves deep dents on the memories of children, and wounds the **mental and emotional health** of everyone who is caught in between this fight for power.

We have all seen the destruction and havoc unleashed by Taliban on the innocent civilians and the scenes are truly heart-wrenching. Since the takeover, Taliban has stated their **intentions of forming the government**, establishing diplomatic relations with other nations, work for their nation and also give women the opportunities to work, talking about equal rights. But their **actions prove against their word**.

Many heart-breaking and terrifying images and videos from across the country of innocent civilians being executed publicly have come to public views. For many people, living there is far worse than death.

Terrorism is not just limited to bombing and killing people. It is something **radical and extreme** that looks forward to impose **what they think is right religiously, politically, and economically** over the society on which they cast an effect on, no matter what measures have to be taken for it.

One fact which became evident was that this world had not, even today, properly understood **terrorism and the consequences that follow it**. Many countries like **Russia and China have marked their support** and recognized the government of the Taliban in the Afghan nation, despite them being a terrorist state. Recognizing and supporting a terrorist government shows our **failure to know and understand what terrorism is** and how dangerous it can be.

As far as the safety of the world is concerned, it is not a hidden fact that the United States has left **weapons of nearly about 85 million USD** in Afghanistan including Assault Rifles, Rocket launchers, Helicopters, Armoured Vehicles, Grenades, Short-Range Missiles and much more, which are now **under the control of the Taliban**.

Afghanistan has always been a site for wars. Nearly four decades of conflict has **bankrupted Afghanistan’s mental infrastructure**, if not also the resilience of its people. Its **rudimentary healthcare system** is scarcely able to cope with the physically ill, let alone those with mental illness and others left **psychologically wounded by a cruel epidemic of violence**. Not to mention, the severe effects on the families of those affected in these wars.

The news from the country that are being circulated are disheartening. As we sit here, reading these sad articles and these horrified social media posts about the suffering in Afghanistan and the horror of the encroaching Taliban and how awful it is, we cannot stop thinking about **what we would have done** if we were in the country. The Afghans have been nothing but courageous in this time of crisis, and we question ourselves if we could have done that. The terrors of Taliban are a horror show to even people witnessing it on screens, and to be there, and experience the dread first hand is not something we can imagine, as the third person.

At this point of time, Afghanistan needs all the support it can get from the world, be it military support, financial support, airlifts, or material support in the form of proper shelters and food.

The argument of whether America’s decision was right or wrong is not something we would dive into, but we do need to remember that the world had just recovered from the wounds of Syria, when Taliban reopened the 20-year-old cut on Afghanistan, and left it to bleed.  
  
The question that underlies all of these struggles is that **yesterday it was Syria, today it is Afghanistan**, but how much more can humanity take before there is not a shred of it left to be found?

**-ANNGELA ROY**