

News; International

UNICEF, 10 Million Afghan Children In Need Of Humanitarian Aid; Taliban Promise To Uphold Education For Women And Girls; U.S. Embassy Can't Ensure Safe Passage To Kabul Airport; French Professor Stuck In Kabul; Haiti Earthquake Survivors Deal With Aftermath; Pakistan Opens Both Border Crossing To Afghans; Afghan Refugee Makes It To U.S. After Four-Year Wait. Aired 3-4a ET

Rosemary Church, Kylie Atwood, Matt Rivers, Sophia Saifi, Gary Tuchman

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[03:00:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ROSEMARY CHURCH, CNN ANCHOR (on camera): Hello, and welcome to our viewers joining us from all around the world. You are watching CNN Newsroom. And I'm Rosemary Church.

Just ahead. Anger in Afghan streets is met with violent crackdowns in two cities. One is now on lockdown as the Taliban perform so-called clearance operations. Afghanistan deposed president surfaces after fleeing the country. Hear why Ashraf Ghani says he left his country to the Taliban.

And in Haiti, delayed aid deliveries fuel desperation and anger among earthquake survivors.

Thanks for being with us.

Thousands of people frantically trying to flee Afghanistan and the Taliban are encountering an increasingly volatile situation outside the Kabul airport. Heavy gunfire and violent confrontations were reported on Wednesday as Taliban fighters guarded airport gates.

The U.S. is working to evacuate as many people as possible before the end of the month. But President Joe Biden now suggests that U.S. troops may stay longer to ensure all Americans get out safely.

Afghanistan's former president who fled the country as the Taliban moved into Kabul has emerged in the UAE. In a video posted on social media, Ashraf Ghani said he did so to avoid bloodshed, including his own.

The U.S. estimates up to 65,000 Afghan nationals and their families may be eligible to be evacuated if they can get to the Kabul airport. Some 4,500 U.S. troops have secured the airfield, and evacuation flights are ramping up. But Taliban fighters outside are making it nearly impossible for Afghans to leave.

CNN's Clarissa Ward takes us through the chaos.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CLARISSA WARD, CNN CHIEF INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice over): America's last foothold in Afghanistan is now guarded by the Taliban.

UNKNOWN: I can see the Taliban are all over. And they don't allow anyone.

WARD: We've come to Kabul's airport to see the gauntlet people must pass through to fly out.

You can hear gunshots every couple of minutes.

UNKNOWN: CNN, CNN, CNN, CNN.

WARD: Quickly, we are accosted by an angry Taliban fighter. Can I ask you a question? Excuse me?

UNKNOWN: He says first --

WARD: Cover my face? OK.

UNKNOWN: Cover.

WARD: Cover my face. What is this? He told me to cover my face. But he doesn't want to comment on that truncheon he's carrying.

The fighter tells us these chaotic scenes are the fault of America. "The cause of all this is America in Afghanistan. Look at these people," he says. "America is really acting unfairly towards them. Why are they lying and telling them that they can go to America? Why don't they let them stay and help their country?"

OK.

UNKNOWN: He doesn't want to talk to you.

WARD: OK. He doesn't want to talk to me. That's why. All right. We keep walking to avoid confrontation. A man follows us, asking for advice.

UNKNOWN: How you can enter the base?

WARD: How you can enter the base?

UNKNOWN: Yes. Because they are saying in my e-mail --

(CROSSTALK)

WARD: Do you have paperwork to enter?

UNKNOWN: Yes.

WARD: Show me your paper.

UNKNOWN: To enter? No. Like we have e-mail. They call on me.

WARD: Was this an Italian company?

UNKNOWN: Yes, Italian company.

WARD: OK. Let's -- I don't want this guy to whip you.

UNKNOWN: OK.

WARD: All right.

UNKNOWN: Thank you, thank you.

WARD: Others crowd around us to show their documents. Camp Phoenix.

UNKNOWN: Yes.

WARD: You work for Camp Phoenix.

UNKNOWN: It's my -- translator.

WARD: You're a translator?

UNKNOWN: Yes.

WARD: OK.

UNKNOWN: Can you see this.

UNKNOWN: What we are then?

WARD: So, they are saying they all worked at American camps as translators for the Americans, and they can't get into that airport. These Taliban fighters are a little upset with us. So, let's keep going. We decide to leave and head for our car. The fighter takes the safety of his AK-47, and pushes through the crowd.

UNKNOWN: Stay behind him! Stay behind him!

WARD: You can see that some of these Taliban fighters they're just hopped up on adrenaline, or I don't know what. It's a very dicey situation.

[03:05:00]

Suddenly, two other Taliban charge towards us. You can see their rifle butt raised to strike producer Brent Swails. When the fighters are told we have permission to report, they lower their weapons and let us pass. OK. Now we are going. Get in the car.

I should emphasize that while the airport has been exceptionally chaotic, most of the city has been relatively calm. Again, today we saw people starting to come out onto the streets, stores were open, traffic was moving, traffic police were out, government worker.

The Taliban understands that this is their moment. That the world is watching, and that they need to provide some semblance of law and order, which makes those images from the airport all the more stark. And of course, the real worry now is that the airport is becoming like a powder keg, and that just one, one incident, one wrong move could risk everything exploding into a much more serious conflagration.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (on camera): CNN's Clarissa Ward reporting for us from Kabul.

Well, Afghans angry over the Taliban takeover took to the streets of two cities in eastern Afghanistan in protest. Sources say a curfew is now in place in the city of Khost after videos on social media purported to show hundreds of people taking part in demonstrations.

In Jalalabad violent clashes broke out between Taliban fighters and protesters who removed the militant's group flag from the city's main square.

CNN's Arwa Damon is following developments and she joins us now live from Istanbul. Good to see you, Arwa. So, what more are you learning about this unrest in these two cities. And what might the consequences be?

ARWA DAMON, CNN SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Well, let's start off by recognizing what an extraordinary act of courage it actually is. And this just goes to this point that Afghanistan of today is not the Afghanistan of 20 years ago when the Taliban were last in power. And so while the Taliban is saying that they are not the same Taliban of 20 years ago, neither is the population.

And yes, these are small-scale demonstrations, these are especially in Khost and Jalalabad, people who are going out who are protesting the Taliban takeover, who want to raise the Afghan national flag. They have a sense of pride in that and they don't want to see that replaced by the flag of the Taliban, which they don't necessarily relate to.

And this also goes to show one of the many challenges that the Taliban is going to be facing, as it attempts to govern for the first time. Look, 20 years ago the Taliban basically just held space and it was able to keep the population under control through pure fear. And yes, a lot of that fear does still exist today. But we will, I believe, continue to be seeing these small acts of incredible courage and defiance.

And the Taliban is going to have to figure out how to navigate all of this, how to deal with things like crowd control, how to accept voices of dissent, if it really wants to prove, not just of the population, but to the outside world that it has in fact change.

But Afghans realize right now what a different situation they're in. And look, 20 years ago, there was no social media. There really was no way to get your voice out, to get your perspective out. But now, even though, you know, as it was saying, this rein of fear does still exist. A lot of people are still understandably hiding away in their homes. There are a lot more tools for Afghans to protest the Taliban regime.

CHURCH: The world is watching very closely right now. Arwa Damon bringing us the very latest. Many thanks.

Well, defiant and unapologetic, the U.S. president says he believes the withdrawal of American forces has not been a failure. During an interview with ABC News, Joe Biden even went as far to say the exit could not have been handled any better.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS, CHIEF ANCHOR, ABC NEWS: We've all seen the pictures, we've seen those hundreds of people packed into a C-17. We've seen Afghans falling --

(CROSSTALK)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: That was four days ago, five days ago.

STEPHANOPOULOS: What did you think when you first saw those pictures?

BIDEN: What I thought was we have to gain control of this. We have to move this more quickly. We have to move in a way in which we can take control of that airport. And we did.

STEPHANOPOULOS: So, you don't think this could have been handled, this exit could have been handled better in any way? No mistakes?

BIDEN: No, I don't think it could have been handled in a way that -- we are going to go back in hindsight and look.

[03:10:01]

But the idea that somehow, there was a way to have gotten out without chaos ensuing, I don't know how that happens. I don't know how that happened.

STEPHANOPOULOS: So, for you, that was always priced into the decision?

BIDEN: Yes.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (on camera): The Biden administration may have discussed the potential for chaos. But a breakdown of this magnitude was clearly not expected. In the months leading up to the withdrawal, President Biden indicated everything would be under control. Take a listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: We will do it responsibly, deliberately and safely. And we will do it in full coordination with our allies and partners. Our military mission in Afghanistan will conclude on August 31st, the drawdown proceeding in a secure an orderly way, for our ties and the safety of our troops, as they depart.

There will be no circumstance where you will see people being lifted off the roof of an embassy of the United States from Afghanistan. It is not at all comparable.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (on camera): Well, clearly, it did not go as planned. So, some terrorist groups are reveling in the Taliban's return to power. Hamas, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and the Pakistan Taliban. And they are all praising the change in Afghanistan.

The nation was a terrorist haven last time the Taliban were in charge, and there are widespread concerns that that could happen again.

Well for more we are joined by Peter Neumann, professor of security studies at King's College London. Good to have you with us.

PETER NEUMANN, PROFESSOR OF SECURITY STUDIES, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON: Good morning.

CHURCH: So, before we get to that concern, I do want to ask you, how surprised you were by the speed at which the Taliban took over Afghanistan as the country's army melted away and the president fled. And should the U.S. have realized that an unpaid army was never going to stay and fight?

NEUMANN: Well, the important word you mention is speed. I don't think a lot of experts were surprised by the fact that the Taliban were on the march and that they would replace the Afghan government once the Americans had decided to withdraw. But the speed was a surprise. I am of no expert who would have predicted that Kabul would fall mid- August. A lot of people said September, October, but August was clearly earlier than most people expected.

CHURCH: Right. So how likely is it, do you think, that Afghanistan will again become a hotbed of terrorism, now that the Taliban are back in control?

NEUMANN: I think at this point in time, and immediately, it is quite unlikely. The Taliban have a lot of incentives to stop that from happening, not only because they realize that they made mistakes 20 years ago, and the presence of international terrorist groups was a reason that America came to Afghanistan in the first place, also because they are being watched, they are aware of being watched.

And they are sending all sorts of signals to the international community, not only to the west, by the way. Also, for example, to China, with whom they want to do trade. And the Chinese have told them very clearly, you cannot go too far. And we will not tolerate if you allow a systematic presence of terrorists in your country. So, for all of these reasons, for the time being, I think they will be very careful.

CHURCH: For the time being, as you say. So, do you accept any of the assurances coming from this newly-branded Taliban, that they have evolved into a modern force capable of governing a stable land? And even if some of the leaders at the top believe that, the message doesn't appear to have trickle down to the hard-liners, beating and shooting people outside the airport in Kabul. NEUMANN: Exactly, there are two difficulties with that. One is, are the -- are the people at the top, are the pragmatists at the top really in charge of their entire organization? Do they control every commander on the ground? It certainly doesn't seem to be that way.

And the second point is that they are pragmatists, they haven't necessarily changed their convictions. Even the most quote, unquote, "liberal Taliban," is still a Taliban. So, the chances are that once the international community is no longer watching, maybe in a few months' time, or in a year or two, perhaps they will revert back to wanting to implement the full program.

And besides, for women in Afghanistan, for example, it doesn't make much of a difference in terms of their perspective and future, whether they have to wear the burqa or not. They don't really have a perspective. They will not, in the long term, be allowed to participate in politics, be judges be journalists. Even the most pragmatic Taliban won't allow them to do that.

So yes, they may not be stoned tomorrow, but they still don't have a perspective in the country.

[03:15:05]

CHURCH: And of course, we have been watching the situation outside the airport in Kabul. You've got some Taliban members incredibly triggered. And it sets up the situation where, it's this powder keg, that our reporter Clarissa Ward is talking about. That could go off at any moment. And the worry is, what happens after that? Is that a concern for you?

NEUMANN: It is. And I mean, to be fair to the Taliban, this is a typical post-conflict situation. There is always going to be chaos and there is always going to be the kind of situation where you don't know exactly where it can go. And only in retrospect, you know, that was the particular incident that cause everything to explode.

So yes, it is a difficult situation. But it's also true that the Taliban are feeling overconfident. They are feeling drunk with power. And that's also a particularly dangerous moment, where of course, again, hardline commanders on the ground may want to exploit that, and turned that into a totally different direction.

CHURCH: Yes. Yes, that is definitely a very big concern. Peter Neumann, thank you so much for joining us. We appreciate it.

NEUMANN: Thank you.

CHURCH: And still to come this hour, Afghanistan's former president arrives in the United Arab Emirates and explains why he fled. A live report from Dubai coming up.

Plus, Russia and China are criticizing the U.S. for a messy withdrawal from Afghanistan, looking to capitalize on the chaos. We will have the latest on that. Back in just a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ASHRAF GHANI, FORMER PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN (through translator): I didn't want the bloodshed to commence in Kabul, like it had in Syria, in Yemen. So, I decided to go, to leave Kabul.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (on camera): Afghanistan's former president speaking publicly for the first time since leaving the country last Sunday.

CNN's Eleni Giokos is covering this for us, and she joins us live from Dubai. Good to see you, Eleni. So how is Ghani defending himself against these accusations we're hearing that he abandoned his country and he fled, apparently, with lots of cash.

ELENI GIOKOS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: You know, and that was the accusation, and of course the rumors about him leaving with bags of money. And the fact that the perception is, that he abandoned Afghanistan leaving for the Taliban to come in and take over the capital city.

But his explanation is very different, vastly different to what we've been hearing. He says that he was in a very dangerous situation, that the Taliban had entered the presidential palace, that they were moving from room to room, and he barely had enough time to grab his shoes and even his prized possessions, that being his books and his laptop.

I want you to take a listen to the danger that he was in, as he describes it.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

[03:20:01]

GHANI (through translator): If I had stayed the president of Afghanistan, I would have been hanged in front of the eyes of the people of Afghanistan. This would have been a dreadful disaster in our history. I am not fearful of an honorable death, but I don't want the dishonoring of Afghanistan.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GIOKOS (on camera): Yes. And that experience, he says, forced him in a very difficult predicament. He had to make the decision to leave. Now, the UAE confirmed that he is in fact here, they say that they welcomed him and his family based on humanitarian grounds. We don't know when he arrived or how he arrived, but that he is in fact in the UAE.

Now, we know that the Taliban has said in the past week that they wanted a peaceful transfer of power that they were sitting on the sidelines, but they felt they needed to come in and govern because the president fled, Ashraf Ghani saying a very different situation, that while they were discussing a peace deal and transfer of power, that they in fact then had a confrontation with the Taliban.

And he also said there was very little resistance when the Taliban entered the presidential palace, leaving him to flee. Now, he also says the responsibility of a failed peace deal falls squarely on the international actors, so that being the U.S. He spoke about the Taliban, also taking some responsibility as well as the Afghan government.

Then he reiterates that he wants a peace, a stability as well as development for Afghanistan. Now the question here, Rosemary, is he going to be negotiating from the sidelines, outside of the country, is he going to be voted in Afghan politics down the line?

What we do know is that he is in the UAE, and finally, at least we've heard from him since he fled on Sunday.

CHURCH: We'll watch to see what the next move is of course. Eleni Giokos joining us live from Dubai. Many thanks.

Well, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is defending his government's response to the withdrawal and evacuation. But he admits the collapse of Afghanistan was faster than even the Taliban predicted.

The prime minister face tough questions in parliament about intelligence failures assessing the Taliban strength. He told lawmakers the situation on the ground had stabilized somewhat but remains precarious.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BORIS JOHNSON, BRITISH PRIME MINISTER: We must also face the reality over the change of regime in Afghanistan. And as president of the G7, the U.K. will work to unite the international community via a clear plan for dealing with this regime in a unified and concerted way. We will judge this regime based on the choices it makes and by its actions rather than by its words.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (on camera): Mr. Johnson said British forces have evacuated about 300 U.K. nationals and more than 2,000 Afghans so far.

Well Russia and China say that they are looking forward to establishing peace in Afghanistan and are willing to work with the Taliban to achieve that. Something else they agree on? The U.S. is responsible for leaving the region in shambles.

CNN's Frederik Pleitgen has our report.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FREDERIK PLEITGEN, CNN SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice over): As the Biden administration faces global criticism for its chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan --

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

PLEITGEN: -- Kremlin controlled media isn't even trying to hide its glee, with the clear message that the U.S. can't be trusted.

UNKNOWN (through translator): Now the whole world saw American disgrace and failure and how U.S. diplomats and staff are rushing around Kabul airport while all U.S. allies saw pathetic excuses from Biden and Blinken.

PLEITGEN: Russia is still angry at the U.S. for Washington support of the Mujahideen against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980. Now Moscow cynically saying, at least the Soviet retreat was orderly.

"Apparently, we overestimated the talents of our American colleagues and as the army gave up without a fight," he says. The unraveling in Afghanistan comes only two months after President Biden on his tour of Europe assured allies that on his watch the U.S. would once again be a global leader.

BIDEN: We are going to make it clear that the United States is back and democracies in the world are standing together to tackle the toughest challenges.

PLEITGEN: But so far, Biden hasn't done much to signal coordination with NATO or allied countries since the Taliban overrun Kabul. As leaders voiced disappointment in the failed U.S. led mission.

[03:24:58]

ANGELA MERKEL, GERMAN CHANCELLOR (through translator): Developments in Afghanistan are obviously also bitter for Germany and other allied nations which, for 20 years following the 9/11 terror attacks, fought against terrorism and for freedom in Afghanistan under the leadership of the United States and NATO.

PLEITGEN: Meanwhile, Russia is not the only adversary looking to capitalize on the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Top Chinese officials recently met senior Taliban leaders to extract security guarantees and revive China's business projects in Afghanistan. Beijing's message, don't count on the U.S.

HUA CHUNYING, CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESWOMAN (through translator): Has the United States foreign policy failed? Will its allies think it's untrustworthy? I think the United States and the relevant countries will have their own thoughts and conclusions.

PLEITGEN: With the U.S. looking to wrap up evacuation flights from Kabul soon and allies in shock, China and Russia seemed to be savoring this moment of American failure while preparing to deal with Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

Fred Pleitgen, CNN, Moscow.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (on camera): And still to come, chaos outside the Kabul airport. For those still making the journey, the U.S. warns it can't guarantee they'll be able to reach the airport safely.

Plus, millions of Afghan children are in desperate need of help. I will speak with a top UNICEF official in Afghanistan pushing to help the country's most vulnerable.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CHURCH (on camera): Well caught in the middle of the upheaval in Afghanistan are the children. Some have been lucky, such as this child on board an American C-17 flying out of Kabul draped in a jacket from an air force member. This image represents a new beginning for the young refugee.

But circumstances remain dire for those who have stayed and are in need of immediate help. Almost 10 million children need humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. That is according to UNICEF, which is asking for unhindered access to all regions so they can provide food and shelter.

Joining me now is Mustapha Ben Messaoud, chief of field operations and emergencies for UNICEF in Afghanistan. Thank you so much for talking with us.

MUSTAPHA BEN MESSAOUD, CHIEF OF FIELD OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCIES, UNICEF AFGHANISTAN: Thank you for having me.

CHURCH: So, 10 million Afghan children in need of humanitarian assistance. How is UNICEF providing that and how much more difficult will this task be now that the Taliban are in charge? Particularly getting to those hard-hit areas, those hard to reach areas.

[03:30:02]

MUSTAPHA BEN MESSAOUD, CHIEF OF FIELD OPS AND EMERGENCIES, UNICEF AFGHANISTAN (on camera): Thank you. They are close to 20 million Afghans that are in need of humanitarian assistance, half of them are children. And then we have women on top of that number.

Right now, 550,000 Afghans have been displaced from their houses and villages, and half of them are also children. UNICEF has prepared for such a situation, to a certain extent throughout our 17 field offices in the country. We have prepositioned ready to use food, vaccines and water and sanitation material. But the scope of needs is beyond on what we have prepared for. And we are slightly short in terms of immediate capacity. And from here until December, we are short in terms of money and we will need \$76 million to cope with the needs on the ground.

CHURCH: So what sort of help are you likely to get from the Taliban? Will they make this easy for you or difficult?

BEN MESSAOUD: We have had ongoing discussions with communities, and we build trust over the 65 years that we have been here. And those discussions included Taliban leadership at the field level. Since the last few days, our zonal offices have been in daily contact with NGO commissioners and political leadership at the field level. So far, we have received positive feedback from them. They want UNICEF to stay and deliver. We have heard positive feedback from them about girl's education and women's rights. We are looking carefully, as things are unfolding, and we will stay at the state of readiness to engage when and if difficulties pop ups around with that in relation to them.

CHURCH: Let's look at that point on education because we do want to know what's going to happen with the children, particularly the girls, when it comes to access to education, to schools. The Taliban are now saying they will let girls go to school. But there's much skepticism about this, given some members of the Taliban had said, this won't happen. So, we are getting these mixed messages. What are you hearing, though, specifically? And are you taking them at their word here?

BEN MESSAOUD: So let's go back to maybe last December, when UNICEF signed a work plan with the Taliban to rollout education in classrooms. And there have been difficult areas to reach, with a focus on girl's education. So that work plan was signed with the Taliban and the same Taliban as today, in towns. We heard from them that girls would be allowed to school until class 12. Yesterday, we heard that young women around --

CHURCH: Sorry, did you say to age 12 or grade 12?

BEN MESSAOUD: Class 12, so grade 12, sorry.

CHURCH: Right. Because we've heard that they will allow up to age 12 and then of course beyond there, that's where the big question is, what will happen to those female students.

BEN MESSAOUD: I think we are still looking and trying to make sense of the extent to what they said during the press conference. For us, access to education for girls is a principal, a hard principle, (inaudible) for UNICEF. So as I said, we will be looking ahead at the development. And we are ready to engage on this specific topic with them as soon as we have clarity on what is going to be the policy for the Taliban.

CHURCH: And how much do you worry about what will happen to Afghan women, particularly those who have been educated over the last 20 years? Would you worry about their future?

BEN MESSAOUD: If we go back 20 years in time, the education of young girls and young women was close to zero. Today, women's education is probably around 37 or 38 percent. We have made quite substantial gains in terms of education for girls and women. And we want to go forward on this journey. And ultimately, I

think there is a sense to have women having equal rights for education and for work because, otherwise, they would be no nurses, no doctors, no teachers. And I think that is a discussion that we would like to engage with them, if we see issues arising in Kabul and across the country.

[03:35:08]

CHURCH: Yeah. We are already hearing stories of women losing their jobs. So we will remain hopeful. We will be watching to see if there are some better signs ahead. Mustapha Ben Messaoud, thank you so much for talking with us.

BEN MESSAOUD: Thank you for having us.

CHURCH: Well chaotic scenes are unfolding outside Kabul's airport, as thousands of Afghans and foreign citizens are desperate to leave. And for those simply trying to get to the airport, it is a dangerous journey. And the U.S. embassy warns it can't ensure safe passage.

CNN's Kylie Atwood has the details.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

KYLIE ATWOOD, CNN NATIONAL SECURITY CORRESPONDENT (voice over): The State Department told Americans in Afghanistan that they should head to the airport and a security alert on Wednesday telling them that flights are going out, first come first serve basis. But they also told them that they cannot assure them that they are going to get safe passage on the way to the airport, given what is unfolding.

But of course, that calls into question just how confident the Biden administration is in what they have said our Taliban assurances for safe passage, for these Americans and for these Afghans heading to the airport, trying to get on these evacuation flights out of the country. Now there are also thousands of Afghans who are trying to get out of the country, applying for special visas to the U.S., refugee status.

The State Department is trying to come up with some sort of organization to get these thousands and thousands of Afghans out of the country. It's a little bit unclear right now just which ones are heading out. But they are telling those two have already secured the visas, to head to the airport. Others folks are telling them to wait for the word.

But the question is, will the United States be able to get out all these Afghans and particularly all of these Americans, before the U.S. presence in the country is no longer at that airport? State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NED PRICE, U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN: We are going to do as much as we can for as many people as we can for as long as we can. We have capable partners on the ground, many of which remain present in Afghanistan, despite the uncertain security situation, who are able to operationalize that humanitarian assistance.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ATWOOD: And when it comes to the U.S. presence in the country, there are some questions about that extending, but for right now it is focused for the coming weeks on maintaining a presence at the airport in Kabul. And the Secretary of Defense said that they don't have the capability right now to be going out across the country and helping with safe transit to the airport for these Afghans and for these Americans, who are trying to make their way and finding challenges with the Taliban.

Kylie Atwood, CNN, the State Department.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CHURCH: Victoria Fontan is a French professor who's stuck in Kabul because she says the Taliban won't allow her to leave to protect her security. And she joins us now from Kabul via Skype. Thank you so much for talking with us. I'm so sorry you're having to deal with this. Talk to us about what happened when you went to the airport and showed your travel and identification documents.

VICTORIA FONTAN FRENCH PROFESSOR TRAPPED IN KABUL (on camera): Hello, well, actually, I never made it to the airport. We have been stuck and waiting for a few days, but what happened last night is that Filipino colleagues of ours went to the gate of the airport that they were supposed to cross to get a flight and there were shots fired in the air.

They showed their identification and they were not allowed in. So, they were on the flight manifest, they had very documentation ready to go and they just weren't enable to enter the gate and they had to -- they were intimidated by the Taliban and then they had to retreat back to the base where we are.

CHURCH: So what are you planning to do next? What is your next step?

FONTAN: Well, we are going to see what the company that is hosting us is planning to do. But of course we are a team of eight, from the University with me, on this compound. And so we did a helicopter landing survey today in the morning. We've been asking for a helicopter since last Sunday when we realized that it could be very difficult to leave.

And right now we are trying to organize this lift, and at least we know it's possible to land. But it's a matter of finding the resources to actually bring us back to the airport so that we can take a plane. There are no shortages of planes. It's just about getting to the airport and crossing that fateful gate, really.

CHURCH: And what has the French embassy said to you about getting you safe passage there? We already know that the U.S. embassy can't promise American citizens that. But are the French saying anything different?

[03:39:58]

FONTAN: No, because I'm the only French person, so they say that it would be very difficult for one French person, alone. And so they keep monitoring the situation, they call me every time there is a plane. They tell me OK, you can go on the next one, you can go on the next one. But right now I would say they are getting worried a bit, because it looks like the window of opportunity that we have to leave is closing, pretty fast.

CHURCH: Are you feeling safe? Are you feeling really concerned at the moment?

FONTAN: We are very safe where we are, and we have everything that we need. But I am concerned that the situation deteriorates, and that it's going to be more and more difficult to leave as the amount of planes that are helping people depart are diminishes. So, you know, in those situations, very volatile situations, as we have seen in the past few days, anything can change at any moment. And we don't know if we are going to be stuck here for some time.

CHURCH: And is there someone within the French embassy that is in constant contact with you? At least reassuring you that this is going to end well?

FONTAN: They are monitoring and they are calling me or texting me maybe twice a day. I'm the one who text them, because they have to deal with so many people who are in my situation and cannot get through those gates. There are many French nationals still stuck in Kabul. And they're doing all they can. But I think everybody was unprepared. And now it's about stepping up and giving the means to actually remedy the situation. It's not about lack of preparedness anymore. We've been waiting for days.

CHURCH: And of course, we know it took 11 days for the Taliban to basically take over Afghanistan. But as they were moving closer and closer to Kabul, did the French embassy give you a heads up that it might be time to go at any point?

FONTAN: Every day. Every day. They did call me every day. But they -- we decided to leave on Friday night, and that's when they said, it's a matter of days. But until then, you know, even then, we were thinking, even they were thinking that it could take maybe a few weeks for Kabul to fall. Even the Taliban were surprised, in the first speech of a (inaudible), he said, you know, this went a much faster than we thought it would. We were help by God.

And so everybody was taken aback by the speed, including the Taliban. So we could not have known the trends and the French either. But they were telling us to be cautious. The last plane to go was actually on July 17th. So, we had a chance to leave then, and I came back, I was on vacation and I came back to prepare the semester.

CHURCH: Right. Victoria Fontan, thank you so much for talking with us, we hope you get out very soon, joining us live there from Kabul. Many thanks.

FONTAN: Thank you.

CHURCH: And we are going to take a quick break, we'll be back in just a moment.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[03:45:00]

CHURCH: Haiti's Prime Minister is calling on the nation to unite and start rebuilding after a devastating earthquake. This is a new home for some survivors, a growing tent city on the southwest coast, one of the hardest hit areas.

With no place to go and no aid coming in, they say the government is doing next to nothing for them. In only three days, Haiti was hit by the quake that killed more than 2,000 people and by tropical depression Grace. The storm caused mud slides that are now hampering aid deliveries.

As Matt Rivers shows us survivors have to deal with the aftermath of both on their own.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MATT RIVERS, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Driving into rural Haiti is not easy, miles and miles of tough unpaved roads. But it's at the end of those roads where some of the worst damage from this earthquake lies. This is Korai, a fishing town of 30,000, where hundreds of structures have been destroyed. Kelen Rashard (ph) lost everything when the ground shook.

I lost my business and my home, she says, I have six kids to send to school and I don't know what I'm going to do.

Hers was just the first home we saw. Up the street, we couldn't drive passed this home because, like so many others here, what remains could collapse at any moment. So these guys behind me aren't professionals. They're just locals with hammer, wood, and nails trying to figure out a safe way to bring that severely damaged building behind me down to the ground. They told us that in the nearly five days since this earthquake happen, they still have not had one representative from the central government show up.

It's a tough place to get to, but as some pointed out to us, we managed to do it. So why hasn't the government? Anger, a persistent sentiment for many. This man's family was injured when their home collapsed.

Do you think that the government can come here and help you?

UNKNOWN: I don't think so, I don't think so. I don't think so.

RIVERS: So you are not waiting for them?

UNKNOWN: No, no.

RIVERS: And are you frustrated with that?

UNKNOWN: Yes, yes, very frustrated. I'm very frustrated.

RIVERS: Some blame corruption and a lack of will for government inaction. There's also the recent assassination of Haiti's president, gang violence, and a lack of quality infrastructure possibly at fault. This bridge in the city of Jeremie, in rough shape before the earthquake, now so damage that heavy trucks like these loaded down with aid, cannot cross. Supplies sometimes hand carried. No matter the reason, the reality persists. People in need are growing increasingly desperate. I need help, she says, and no one is helping me. So far, it's only God who I think will help me.

The place where she might pray for that, the church in the town center, also destroyed. Thankfully, fewer people died during this earthquake compared to previous similar quakes. Imagine, as one person told us, if it had happened on a Sunday morning when church was full.

And we did reach out to the Haitian central government asking, have you sent representatives to Korai to see the hundreds of structures that have been destroyed? What are you planning on doing to try and make the lives of people affected by this earthquake better? They did not respond to our request for comment.

Matt Rivers, CNN, Jeremie, Haiti.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CHURCH: And learn how you can help the people of Haiti by going to CNN.com/impact.

Well the border crossings are open, but Pakistani officials say there has been no surge of Afghan refugees so far. An update from Islamabad just ahead.

Plus, some refugees have been able to escape Afghanistan and the clutches of the Taliban. But no amount of distance can separate them from the fear that their lives may still be at risk.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNKNOWN: You felt that your life was threatened --

UNKNOWN: Yes.

UNKNOWN: -- if you stayed there?

UNKNOWN: Yes of course.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

[03:50:00]

CHURCH: Welcome back everyone. Well, both of Pakistan's major border crossings are now open to Afghan nationals holding Pakistani visas. Pakistan's interior minister says, more than 400 Afghans have entered the country since Saturday, but none of them is a refugee. He said there's been no surge of people and the scene is peaceful and calm. So let's turn to Sophia Saifi in Islamabad. Sophia, what is the latest on this and why are we not seeing these surges of refugees?

SOPHIA SAIFI, CNN PRODUCER (on camera): Hi, Rosemary. Well let's just go a little bit back in time. So in early summer in June, Pakistan's Prime Minister had gone ahead and stated that Pakistan's new refugee policy is going to be that it's not going to be taking in any refugees into the country from Afghanistan, if things go bad on the other side of the border.

And that is something that Pakistan has stuck to, ever since we've seen what has unfolded in Kabul over the weekend. They are sticking to that. The Pakistani military, for the past two years, has been fencing the border between the two countries and as of 10 days ago, had announced that they have fenced about 90 percent of that once very porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

So what we are seeing is, is almost a strict rule that, you know, in the past, about 40 years ago, even 20 years ago, during 2001, Pakistan host of the largest number of Afghan refugees in the world. At one point there were about three million Afghan refugees within Pakistan. And now the country is saying that it just doesn't have the economic capacity to do so anymore.

So yes, the Pakistani embassy in Kabul is open. Afghan nationals who worked for foreign media, who worked for international organizations are being given visas, but you need to have proper documentation to get into the country, which was not the case previously. It was always been a very easy border for Pakistani's and Afghans to go back and forth. There are links between the two countries, their families are on either side which are connected. And we still have not seen that surge up.

Because perhaps the region I spoke to you in (inaudible), they don't have any proper -- you know, major plans in place at the moment to, you know, accommodate any refugees. So, it's just something that's changing day-by-day. We haven't seen a surge, and it's just something that point to develop in the days to come, as we have already seen on this story. Rosemary?

CHURCH: Alright. CNN's Sophia Saifi, joining us live from Islamabad, Pakistan, many thanks.

One Afghan refugee waited nearly four years for the visa that would allow her safe haven in the United States. She is one of the lucky ones but despite being a world away, the threat of the Taliban still keeps her up at night. CNN's Gary Tuchman has our report.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

GARY TUCHMAN, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Thirty-old Tamana lived her entire life in Afghanistan, until this past Friday, when she flew to Washington after receiving a special immigrant visa allowing her to move to the United States.

How did you feel when you landed in the capital of the United States? What went through your mind?

TAMANA, AFGHAN REFUGEE: I said that I am dreaming. This is not possible that I am in the United States.

TUCHMAN: Tamana worked in Afghanistan for USAID, the foreign aid organization that is an independent agency of the U.S. government. She applied for a visa four years ago, as she increasingly got worried about her safety, because she worked for Americans.

You felt your life was threatened --

TAMANA: Yes.

TUCHMAN: -- if you stay there?

TAMANA: Yes, of course. Yes.

TUCHMAN: Tamana's mother has passed away, but her father, three brothers and two sister remained in Kabul. She financially supported them and has no idea when she will see them in person again and prays that they won't be targeted because of her.

How worried are you about your family right now being there?

TAMANA: Believe me, I cannot sleep, every night. But I am thinking about my family. What should I do?

TUCHMAN: Tamana and many other Afghan refugees are being supported by a group called Lutheran Social Services of the national capital area. One of the group's offices is in this Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Virginia where boxes of donations are arriving by the hundreds to help the expected huge influx of Afghans who will be arriving in the days and weeks to come.

[03:55:15]

TAMANA: Everyone I've met is so grateful to be here and they are so full of hope and I find that really inspiring.

TUCHMAN: What did you do in Afghanistan?

TAMANA: I was working as an interpreter for the U.S. Army.

TUCHMAN: Twenty-nine-year-old Razia is one of those inspiring people. She arrived in the United States when she was 24, all by herself. Her parents, two sisters and one brother remain in Kabul. She now worked for the social services group and continues to financially support her family with her American salary.

RAZIA, AFGHAN REFUGEE: Taliban always say that we are against foreigner countries to be in Afghanistan, especially United States. And they will kill anybody that help them, anyone that works for them.

TUCHMAN: So you feared for your life?

RAZIA: Yes.

TUCHMAN: The takeover by the Taliban and the ensuing chaos are profoundly affected Afghans who have been fortunate enough to receive visas. Their anxiety has dramatically increased.

This may be a painful question but are you concerned that because people know what you did, working for the U.S. government that your family could be in danger? RAZIA: Yes. Actually, the other day, I told my sister to burn all the certificates that I had from the U.S. government because I had a lot of certificates and my mom hung one of them on the wall, actually. You know, like --

TUCHMAN: Because she's proud of you?

RAZIA: Yes, you know, she was. And I told them, just destroy it. You know, because I was scared, if the Taliban goes to our house, because I hear they are searching some houses -- I told them just to destroy them.

TUCHMAN: Tamana is now looking for a job, a permanent place to live. And not allowing herself to look back.

You know that, it may be a long time before you see your family again.

TAMANA: Yes.

TUCHMAN: But you felt that your life was in danger and you needed to be here.

TAMANA: Yes, yes.

TUCHMAN: And you had no choice?

TAMANA: I don't have any choice.

TUCHMAN: Gary Tuchman, CNN, Fairfax, Virginia.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CHURCH: Two incredibly brave women there.

And thank you so much for your company, I'm Rosemary Church, do stay with CNN. My colleague, Kim Brunhuber will have more news for you after this short break. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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