

Glimpses of Kabul under the Taliban: Fighters patrolling roads, and lines at banks.

By Jim Huylebroek

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On Wednesday morning, just before 8 a.m., a line of Afghans had formed outside a bank in the Shahr-e Naw neighborhood of Kabul, the Afghan capital.

Most banks in the city had run out of cash on Sunday when the Taliban made their ultimate push into the city and panic broke out among residents. One person waiting in line on Tuesday said he was not sure whether this bank or others had any cash left. “But here I am, waiting,” he said. “I need money to buy food for my family.”

On Wednesday, the morning after Taliban officials appeared at a news conference in Kabul and formally announced themselves as the new leaders of Afghanistan, the capital was subdued. Some Taliban fighters patrolled the roads.

A day after reports that Taliban members had beaten civilians trying to approach Kabul’s international airport, there was little obvious sign of tension, although many residents were staying inside their homes.

Outside a government-run telecommunications company, a Taliban fighter conversed with a traffic officer, one of the few signs of the now-deposed civilian government. Behind them, on a concrete blast wall, a mural depicted the face of Yama Siavash, a journalist who was assassinated last November, a killing for which members of the Taliban claimed responsibility.

At a riverside market, a 20-year-old apple seller named Jawed, who like many Afghans has only one name, was more optimistic about the Taliban takeover.

His district of Qarabagh, north of Kabul, was the site of clashes in recent days as the Taliban advanced on the city. Now, with the roads quieter, Jawed said that sourcing his fruit, which comes from Pakistan, had become easier.

“The people are afraid right now — they’re not buying,” he said. “But at least it is better than yesterday. Things will slowly improve. The mullahs have arrived.”