**Are Afghanis Not Legitimate Humans?**

[Sowaiba Mahmood](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/sowaiba-mahmood/" \o "More Articles by Sowaiba Mahmood)

March 7, 2024

In today’s world, climate change is the draconian enemy of the people living on this planet. This enemy extended its animosity from North to South, challenging human existence. Heat waves in Europe, floods, and droughts in Asia and Africa as the aftermath of climate change are worse than bombs and grenades. This enemy is strictly following the principle of equality as it is equally gruesome for both the countries who bolstered this issue and those who haven’t contributed such as Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a country that has the lowest historical emission of greenhouse gasses which is less than 01 percent of global trade. However, it is still ranked as the 6th most vulnerable country to climate change. As a victim of climate change, Afghanistan has been facing droughts, floods, avalanches, earthquakes, and the amplification of extremely hot temperatures to 1.8°C since 1950. Afghanistan is an agrarian society and more than 70 percent of the Afghan population resides in rural areas. Climate change is a serious threat for Afghanis and if this issue persists then it will be an impetus to food insecurity. And Taliban are not equipped enough to grapple with climate change alone, as most of the climate experts and technocrats fled from the country when the Taliban took over on August 15, 2021. If the international community does not contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change in Afghanistan, then the whole world will be held responsible for the deaths of starving Afghanis.

If the issue of climate change is left unresolved, the world must be ready to face direct repercussions.

Today, key positions in the climate sector are filled by religious scholars who have zero proficiency regarding this grim matter. Before the takeover of the Taliban, the reliance of Afghanistan was totally on foreign funding and approximately 32 environmental projects were undergoing but all these projects were frozen overnight. Afghanistan came under various sanctions and was isolated from the international financial system.

This scenario crippled the local banking system and multiplied the vulnerabilities of Afghanistan, a war-torn country, to hydrological, metrological, and climatological disasters. This further deteriorated the situation as the Taliban abolished the National Water Affairs Regulations Authority but over time the world observed positive slews in their policies for climate action. Taliban started rolling out policies related to climate to mitigate the situation as they set limits on coal-fired heating systems, allotted 6M Afghanis about $67000 for monitoring and maintaining the Qargha Dam, tried to build green belts, initiating plantation drives, and started constructing a long canal to irrigate agricultural lands.

Here the dilemma is that the first world countries are responsible for the catastrophes of climate change but the consequences are being faced by third world countries like Afghanistan. So, the international community ought to show interest in dealing with the catastrophes created by them in Afghanistan because the Taliban’s policy for the climate is determined by their behaviour. The problem is, that the majority of states do not recognize the government of the Taliban as a legitimate government. The international community fears legitimizing a non-state actor by engaging them and has concerns about partnering with a notoriously brutal regime.

So the invitation for the platforms of climate change is never extended to the Taliban. Even in the recent COP 28 held in UAE in December 2023, Afghanistan had no representation. Though UAE is included in the top 10 oil-producing nations and the process of oil production is sheer harmful contributing element to the environment, still it hosted an international conference regarding climate change. So if the countries who are the reason for bolstering the issue of climate change can host such events then why Afghanistan cannot even participate?

In this contemporary world, climate change can be referred to as a ‘conflict multiplier’ and in a country like Afghanistan, which is already ravaged by wars, the results could be worse. As climate change is a global issue, the solutions should also be globally applied if the world wants to win this battle for survival. If the issue of climate change is left unresolved, the world must be ready to face the direct repercussions as there will be more displacements, more destruction, more illegal immigration, hunger, crimes, poverty, and whatnot. The non-traditional insecurity in Afghanistan will become a great deal for the international community. The world must engage Afghanistan on climate issues because in Afghanistan there are not only Taliban but also a lot more Afghanis living there and suffering the havoc of climate change. And if the international community doesn’t recognize the Taliban as a legitimate government then the question arises, do they also not recognize millions of Afghanis living there as legitimate humans? The question remains unanswered by the international community.

*The writer is a freelance columnist.*