**No Time to Save Humans in Afghanistan**

[Munir Ahmed](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/munir-ahmed/)@EmmayeSyed

January 19, 2022

Insensitivity prevails for 28 million humans of Afghanistan while the UN is shouting for urgent help believing that half the population now faces acute hunger, over nine million people have been displaced and millions of children are out of school. The lives of one million children are at risk as they are now facing severe acute malnutrition. Displaced families face a harsh winter, health crisis, and food shortage.

It has been over a week now but no major move is seen to the “urgent and largest single country” UN appeal for humanitarian aid. On January 11, the UN and partners launched a more than $5 billion funding appeal for Afghanistan, in the hope of shoring up collapsing basic services there, which have left 22 million in need of assistance inside the country, and 5.7 million people requiring help beyond its borders.

Speaking in Geneva, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said that $4.4 billion [in 2022] was needed for the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan alone, “to pay direct” to health workers and others, not the de facto authorities. In his opinion, this is the largest ever appeal for a single country for humanitarian assistance and it is three times the amount needed, and actually fundraised in 2021.

Humanitarian agencies inside Afghanistan can only operate if there’s cash in the economy.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called for $623 million, to support refugees and host communities in five neighbouring countries, for the Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan.

The UN officials have warned of the consequences of “insufficient action” that would aggravate the situation to $10 billion next year. The scale of need is already enormous, and this is an absolutely essential “stop-gap” measure. Martin Griffiths has warned, “Without this being funded, there won’t be a future, we need this to be done, otherwise there will be outflow, there will be suffering.”

Strangely, the humanist and human rights-supporting countries are still silent despite the UN Security Council resolution adopted on December 22 last year. The UNSC cleared the way for aid to reach Afghanistan while asking to prevent funds from falling into the hands of the Taliban. It is indeed essential that humanitarian agencies inside Afghanistan have sufficient funds and other resources. They can only operate if there’s cash in the economy, which can be used to pay officials, salaries, costs, fuel, and so forth.

This is ironic that the world has shut the doors of life on the people of Afghanistan for the crimes they never committed. Victim of international conflicts and conspiracies for decades, the humans of Afghanistan are watching the inhuman behaviour of the world’s power corridor. Leaving the country intentionally in the hands of the Taliban, the US and partners deliberately pushed the region towards the crisis. Humanitarian partners are on the ground and waiting for the aid to scale up and stave off widespread hunger, disease, malnutrition, and ultimately, deaths. Natives are internally displaced. Thousands have already fled to the neighbouring countries. Urgent measures are needed to stabilise the situation inside Afghanistan, including the internally displaced people. It is critical to prevent a larger crisis of external displacement.

UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi appealed for $623 million in funding for 40 organisations working in protection, health and nutrition, food security, shelter and non-food items, water and sanitation, livelihoods and resilience, education, and logistics, and telecoms to meet the challenge of the internal and external refugee crisis. Nonetheless, he appreciated Pakistan for sheltering vulnerable Afghan refugees for decades. The rapidly increasing crisis in Afghanistan would have a severe regional impact if not dealt with adequately sooner than later. The refugee influx to already suffering Pakistan and Iran, the hosts to millions of Afghan refugees for four decades, would multiply the crisis in manifolds for the region. The Central Asian States have already started facing the refugee challenge.

Israel has donated $500,000 to the United Nations for food, medical aid, and other assistance for Afghan refugees in Tajikistan, as reported in the international media. The donation came the same day the UN launched the $5 billion appeal to combat the Afghanistan crisis. Good, something is better than nothing even if to improve its global repute.

Instead of giving Afghanistan its own money, about $7 billion reserves in the American banks, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the United States government’s initial 2022 contribution of more than $308 million in humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan. President Biden has been clear that humanitarian assistance will continue to flow directly to the Afghan people and the United States remains the single largest provider of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. No doubt, this contribution reflects a continued US humanitarian assistance to helpless Afghans in the US-created crisis for decades. Only economists can give a rough idea about the annual financial benefits to the US of keeping $7 billion reserves of the Afghanistan Central Bank in their banks. Roughly $2.5 billion more is said to be held in banks in Europe. Stalwarts of humanism in Europe are silent too. Their silence is not meaningless.

What to talk about the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC)-the useless leadership of 57 countries. Nothing more came out of an announcement of establishing a humanitarian trust fund for Afghanistan from its extraordinary conference in Islamabad. It is probably sleeping while the crisis is set to multiply.

*The writer is an Islamabad-based policy advocacy, strategic communication and outreach expert. He can be reached atdevcom.pakistan@gmail.com.*   
*He tweets @EmmayeSyed*