**The Afghanistan Situation under the Interim Government**

[Dr Saira Asad](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/dr-saira-asad/%22%20%5Co%20%22More%20Articles%20by%20Dr%20Saira%20Asad)

October 22, 2021

After the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, the situation is rapidly changing in the Taliban’s government. Since 2015, the Taliban was seen with a different ideology of focusing on the provision of basic human fundamental rights to Afghans, especially women. Recently, the Taliban’s spokesperson and acting Minister of Information, Zabihullah Mujahid, spoke to local media in his interview on October 16, 2021, that laws are being made regarding the rights of women and will be announced soon. Still, it is to see how interim government will be able to prove itself a neutral and welfare government for Afghans.

The global alignment has been started to swing with their roles in the region. Pakistan has taken a positive step to support the Taliban’s government in this situation. From time to time, the Pakistani government is seen calling on the international community to come forward for the help of Afghanistan to avoid an economic and humanitarian crisis. On this issue, Turkey, Indonesia, and Qatar wish to avoid terrorism, human and drug trafficking, massive migration, and radicalisation. Iran is not accepting the new Taliban government and demanding new elections by giving fair participation of other ethnic groups. China and Russia have come up with a constructive bridging role in a war-torn country with dialogue, humanitarian assistance, and development plans. Global Times (2021) also stated China and Russia are sincere in their developmental and peace initiatives in Afghanistan, and eye on the upcoming October conference in Moscow on Afghanistan’s discussion. Beijing has announced $31 million as humanitarian aid in this regard. Pakistan and China were seen raising their voices for lifting the sanctions from Afghanistan. The recent visit of Uzbekistan to Afghanistan also shows interest in bringing peace and stability to the region. Tajikistan holds the same views as Iran on including Hazaras and Tajiks in the governmental structure to give the opportunity of their say and stabilise the inner differences among different ethnic groups. Being a Pakistani, Prof Dr Shahid Hussain from Jiangsu University’s Department of Materials Science and Engineering, China, also supported local and international stance on Afghanistan from his platform that Afghan people should not suffer in the political conflict, and that the international community must urgently sign agreements for stabilising the economy and averting a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

It is time for the Taliban to think seriously about increasing participation in government and the provision of fundamental rights.

A war-torn Afghanistan, apart from the economic crisis, is also under attack. Recently, an attack targeted Shias during Friday prayers at Kandahar in the south of Afghanistan. It was the second attack where 40 people were killed and many injured by the suicide bombers. A minority ethnic disturbance has been created, which has always been a sensitive issue. Earlier at Kunduz, 55 people were reported to be killed as the same natured suicide bombing on Shia’s mosque located in the north of Afghanistan occurred. The militant Islamic State’s Khorasan, ISKP (ISIS-K) claimed responsibility for both suicide bombing attacks. In total, three attacks have been carried out within two months. It is time for the Taliban to think seriously about increasing participation in government and the provision of fundamental rights. Side by side, various questions are raised regarding the Taliban’s ability to counter the potential threats from ISKP. Earlier, Pakistan also faced the same situation in Balochistan on the suicide attacks on the Hazara community residing in the province. Still, on the prominent occasions of Shias in Pakistan such as 9th and 10th Moharram; on the 40th day of Moharram, etc, security is required to avoid potential attacks again and again. ANI reported on October 17, 2021, that the Islamic State of Iraq and ISIS or Daesh claimed to kill Shia Muslims everywhere, and statement, especially for those Shias, residing in Afghanistan. This additionally indicates the deterioration of the Afghanistan situation since the US withdrawal. Still, the world has opted for a wait-and-see approach regarding the next move of the Taliban in the provision of security.

According to the June 28 report prepared for the UN, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team also apprehended an escalation from the foreign militants relocating to Afghanistan after US withdrawal. The report stated that ISKP suffered leadership, financial losses in 2020, territorial, and manpower at the hands of Afghan security forces and the US in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces, has forced to form sleeper cells in other provinces. A larger population having anti-Shia ideology has created the situation in present circumstances.

On the current situation of Afghanistan, senior defence analyst, Lt Gen (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi stated in “Better Morrow” Magazine that local and international detractors were seen taking over advantage of the situation, further fueling insurrections and the entire country is sinking in the bloody feuds, and abyss of anarchy. It was further stated that Afghanistan’s situation is fluid and still needed to see how the international community responded. Lt Gen (R) Asad Durrani, another senior defense analyst, stated that we needed to join hands to help the Taliban for saving them from spoilers, and to mobilise resources to make Afghanistan a viable state. Pakistan, being a neighbouring country, was always affected by terrorism. Brig (R) Asif Haroon Raja, senior defense analyst, was on the view that terrorism in the Af-Pak region will not die down as long as the funds and weapons will be provided to terrorists from intelligence agencies. Taliban and Pakistan seem to have remained in the grip of pulls and pressures of Indo-western machinations, he added.

In a nutshell, Afghanistan’s situation is fluid with steady moves. Recently, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the EU aid package for direct support to Afghans and would be channelled through the international organisations, not from the Taliban’s interim government. Taliban have asked for more time to settle themselves and haven’t refused to include the ethnic groups but some groups are dragging them to the old Taliban’s reputation. Instead of appreciation of the changed ideology of the Taliban, vested groups have taken unpleasant moves that are not only a threat to Afghanistan’s peace and security but also a great source of tension in the region. There is a need for Afghanistan to join hands with the opposition and leave differences among themselves to bring peace and avoid threats in the region.

*The writer is a researcher and columnist from Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia. She can be contacted at saira.asad2011@gmail.com.*