


SECURITY COUNCIL

Resource Guide

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FAMUN 2023 | 10 YEARS





RESEARCH GUIDE

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

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PREFACE

Dear Delegates,

Thank you for joining us in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for High School. We are excited that you want to be involved with Model UN. We celebrate FAMUN's 10th anniversary this year and are delighted that you will be with us thinking about how to flip the script.

We, the directors of the UNSC for High School at FAMUN 2023, have elaborated this research guide so you can be ready to contribute to the debates at our conference. It contains useful links, resources, and information about the situation in Afghanistan, which is the agenda item you will simulate. It is important to understand the political and historical process of this situation considered by the UNSC so you can have the ability to develop, with your fellow delegates, a resolution that resonates with the United Nations Charter, and that has, as a first priority, the maintenance of sustainable peace and international security.

Furthermore, you will find essential information about how the Security Council works and its decision-making process about the situation in Afghanistan. Delegates will be assigned in pairs to represent a Council Member in FAMUN 2023, and in this guide, you will be able to find information about the position of all Council Members, both permanent and elected.

Also, FAMUN 2023 is an amazing opportunity for you to be in touch with different people and develop new skills. Most importantly, our conference is a path to think about what is going on in the world and take action to be a part of the solution. Even if you are debating a conflict that is happening on the other side of the world, discussing how to establish peaceful and efficient solutions is key to personal and community growth, especially when youth takes the lead.

The Security Council is an important platform for States to solve issues related to international peace and security and it is now your role to engage in the discussions on the situation of Afghanistan, which is marked by violence against civilians and an aggravating humanitarian crisis. We recommend that you take a mindful look at this guide, exploring and expanding it. You must think outside the box to flip the script and dive into FAMUN 2023 with the instinct to change the way the Security Council operates.

Warm regards,

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the main six organs of the United Nations (UN). It is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, as defined by Chapter V, Article 24, of the UN Charter. The UNSC is composed of 15 members, of which five are permanent members (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States) and the other ten are non-permanent members, elected by the UN General Assembly for a 2-year mandate. The five permanent members, known as the P-5, have the so-called veto power, which means that any of these members can block a substantive decision of the Security Council by voting against a resolution, even if nine or more Council members agree with it. All the Council's decisions, according to Article 25 of the UN Charter, must be followed by all 193 UN Member States (UNITED NATIONS, 2023).

In order to maintain international peace and security, the UNSC has a range of instruments, presented in Chapters VI, VII, and VIII of the UN Charter. Based on Chapter VI, the Security Council can call on parties to a dispute to settle their differences peacefully and can provide mediation, conciliation, or arbitration services. If the peaceful means are not effective, the Council can take action under Chapter VII. Based on Article 41, the UNSC can impose sanctions, such as the complete or partial interruption of economic relations and the suspension of diplomatic relations on countries that threaten or breach international peace and security. And if necessary, according to Article 42, the Security Council can authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security, such as in cases of aggression. But it is important to highlight that the UN does not have an army, therefore, the use of force is made by the collective action of the UN Member States. Finally, under Chapter VIII, the Council can rely on regional organizations to fulfill its mandate (UNITED NATIONS, 2023).

Considering its role in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council first addressed the situation in Afghanistan in the context of the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989). On 27 December 1979, the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) sent more than 100,000 Soviet troops to Afghanistan to fight against insurgent movements, known as Mujahideen¹, by request of the Afghan government. In January 1980, the Security Council tried to draft a resolution regarding the conflict, but since the Western Council members wanted to condemn the Soviet actions, the USSR virtually exerted its veto power, preventing any further deliberations about the matter. In an attempt to circumvent the deadlock, the Council adopted its Resolution 462(1980), of 9 January 1980, calling for an emergency session in the General Assembly to discuss the matter. In this special session, the General Assembly adopted its Resolution ES-6/2, of 14 January 1980, condemning the Soviet invasion and calling for the

¹ The Mujahideen (holy warriors in Arabic) are members of various groups acting in Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989). They opposed the invading Soviet forces and the Afghan communist government, eventually overthrowing the regime with the support of Pakistan and the US (KUMAR; PANT, 2014, p. 120-122).





withdrawal of their military forces (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 1980, p. 1).

The Pakistani Government was also involved in the conflict. The country not only received lots of refugees but also helped the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviet forces with the support of Western countries, especially the United States (US). In the following years, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuellar, tried to establish negotiations between the Soviet-backed Government of Afghanistan and the USSR, on one hand; and Pakistan and the US, on the other. The negotiations resulted in the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan, known as the Geneva Accords, signed on 14 April 1988. Among the decisions negotiated in the agreement, the withdrawal of the Soviet troops was planned and it happened in 1989, marking the end of the war (UNITED NATIONS, 2002).

However, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the country dived into civil war, from 1989-2001. The conflict persisted since the leaders from the Mujahideen and other insurgent factions fought for seizing power in the country. The support from foreign actors, such as the US and Pakistan, deepened the conflict due to the creation of war zones between different enemy groups. The government of Mohammad Najibullah lasted only from 1989 to 1992 since he could not get popular support. The UN did not send blue helmets to address the civil war but rather proposed an impartial mechanism for government transition. In this context, the Security Council created the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), in 1992, to facilitate a settlement of disputes and start national reconstruction. This special political mission was established under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which meant that it did not have a military component and its main function was monitoring and mediation (KUMAR; PANT, 2014, p. 122-123).

In 1996, the Taliban² – a Sunni Muslim fundamentalist movement created in the 1990s with Pakistani support, whose main goal was to disseminate Islamic Law – managed to defeat the Mujahideen and eventually became a de facto authority, holding control of 90% of the country. At the same time, the new government did not get international recognition³, mainly because of the various accusations of human rights violations against women, children, human rights defenders, media workers, and UN personnel. As a response to these accusations, the Security Council decided to include in UNSMA's mandate the investigation of these and other human rights violations in the country. However, UNSMA did not reach success in establishing a peace settlement and the Taliban remained in power until 2001 (KUMAR; PANT, 2014, p. 123-126).

The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington brought great consequences to Afghanistan. The terrorist act was claimed by Al-Qaeda, an extremist group led by Osama Bin Laden, who, according to US

² The Taliban (students, or knowledge seekers in Arabic) are a political-religious insurgent force that emerged in southern Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan in the 1990s. Its goal was to disseminate Islamic Law throughout the region. Initially, the group was organized, funded, and trained by Pakistan and, later, received support from the US (KUMAR; PANT, 2014, p. 124).

³ Except for Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan.





intelligence, was being sheltered by the Taliban. Based on this, the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) initiated a military invasion in Afghanistan to capture Bin Laden. One of the US arguments to justify the military invasion was the Security Council Resolution 1368(2001), of 12 September 2001, which condemned the 9/11 terrorist attacks and authorized all necessary means to combat terrorism and restore international peace and security (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2001 a, p. 1-2). However, the initial objective of the military operation rapidly converted into an opportunity for the US and NATO to defeat the Taliban's control in the region and establish a new pro-Western government. This goal was quickly achieved considering the weight and violence of the military offensive.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan was critical by the end of 2001, as the number of the population in need of assistance reached the high of 6 million people facing a significant risk of famine, disease, and hypothermia (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2001 b, p. 9-11). In this context, the Security Council created the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), by its Resolution 1401(2002), of 28 March 2002, intending to support the reconstruction of the country and the establishment of a new democratic government. As UNSMA, the UNAMA is a special political mission under Chapter VI of the UN Charter and it has no police or military components (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2002 a, p. 2).

UNAMA's original mandate consisted of three specific points. The first one referred to efforts in favor of human rights and gender equality. The second one aimed at national reconciliation and unity, so political disputes could happen inside the parameters of the rule of law. The third one covered the coordination of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. In order to achieve these goals, UNAMA's action was based on two main pillars. The first pillar was concerned with political matters, that is, the Mission should foster political dialogue among all stakeholders, sustaining the link between the political sphere, civil society, and the international community. Also in the political component, the Mission was responsible for monitoring and investigating the political and human rights situation in the country. The second pillar was related to relief, recovery, and reconstruction, considering the need for humanitarian assistance; the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons; and the economic, social, and humanitarian crises in the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2002 b, p. 15; p. 17).

Under the US and NATO military occupation, UNAMA's actions supported many reforms in Afghanistan. The first years of this special mission witnessed a gradual process of democratization and efforts to rebuild the country's new international diplomatic image. In January 2004, the Loya Jirga (a national assembly composed of representatives from different ethnic, religious, and tribal groups) adopted the new constitution; and in 2005, elections took place for the inauguration of a new parliament. However, from 2007-2009, the Taliban recovered some of its power and conducted a series of terrorist attacks against parliamentarians and the civil population throughout the country, under the





justification to combat the US military presence. Besides, between 2011-2012, both the US and NATO began to gradually withdraw their troops, a long process that ended in 2021. It created a power vacuum that spurred the resumption of violence and allowed the Taliban to seize control of the country (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2020).

In August 2021 the government of President Ashraf Ghani officially fell, and he flew to the United Arab Emirates. At the same time, the Taliban returned to power as a de facto authority in Afghanistan. The Security Council urgently responded to these events by adopting its Resolution 2593(2021), of 30 August 2021. In this resolution, the Council condemned the attacks at the Kabul airport and urged for immediate humanitarian assistance and the protection of the human rights of women and children. Besides, it demanded the Taliban to comply with international agreements related to humanitarian assistance and called for a negotiated political transition (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2021, p. 1-2).

Further, the Security Council had to review the mandate of UNAMA considering the new context. The challenge was the following: it was necessary to negotiate directly with the Taliban government in order to guarantee the preservation of security and human rights in the country. However, these negotiations were not easy because the Taliban regime was not internationally recognized, and it did not comply with the terms ratified in February 2022 to facilitate humanitarian assistance. Against this backdrop, Council members presented divergent views on how to renew UNAMA's mandate. On one hand, China and Russia defended that the Mission's actions should be previously notified to the Taliban, but it was opposed by the US and other Council members that thought it would attribute so much legitimacy to the regime. Another issue was the expansion of UNAMA's mandate. China and Russia argued that the Mission should mainly focus on humanitarian assistance and economic recovery, while many other Council members called for an expanded mandate to include the protection of human rights and the promotion of gender equality (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2022).

As a result of these negotiations, the Security Council adopted its Resolution 2626 (2022), of 17 March 2022, in which it renovated UNAMA's mandate for one year. In the resolution, the Council decided that UNAMA should keep "close consultations with all relevant Afghan political actors and stakeholders, including relevant authorities" (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2022, p. 1), not mentioning specifically the name of the Taliban. Besides, the Council reached an agreement in expanding the mandate of the Mission, including ten priority areas, such as: coordination of international donors and organizations to facilitate humanitarian assistance and reconstruction; improvement of security and arms control; the protection and promotion of human rights of women and children; and gender mainstreaming and empowerment (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2022, p. 2-4).

In the last report about the situation in Afghanistan (S/2023/151, of 27 February 2023), the Secretary-General highlighted four significant challenges in





the country. The first challenge deals with the political and security problems in Afghanistan. In the political realm, none of the Council members officially recognized the Taliban as a legitimate government because of various human rights violations, breaches of international law, and misalignment with its international obligations, such as the guarantee of human rights, the fight against terrorism, and a democratic transition. At the same time, UNAMA needs to negotiate with the de facto authorities to carry on its mandate, especially due to the Taliban's blockades to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In this sense, the Council needs to address how to deal with the Taliban as the de facto authority and how to promote a legitimate government in the country (AHMADI *et al.*, 2023).

In the security area, the main concern is the increase in violence, political instability, and terrorist threats. In the period from 14 November 2022 to 31 January 2023, there was a 10% increase in security-related incidents when compared to the same period in 2021-2022. These incidents were linked to terrorist and armed groups' acts, and social vulnerability (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 4-5). Besides, UNAMA reported several cases of human rights violations in the prison and judicial systems, recording "at least 9 extrajudicial killings, at least 17 arbitrary arrests and detentions and at least 9 instances of torture and ill-treatment" (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 8).

The second challenge involves human rights and humanitarian assistance. The situation of human rights violations is of deep concern, involving corporal punishment, persecution, arbitrary arrests, and the denial of human rights of women and children perpetrated by the Taliban. For example, UNAMA reported 63 allegations of human rights violations practiced by the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, including torture, deprivation of liberty, and arbitrary arrests. A central issue for this discussion is the progressive elimination of children and, especially, women's rights⁴, limiting the social, political, and domestic life of Afghan women, despite official statements by the de facto government about the protection of women's rights based on the Sharia law (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 2; p. 10).

Regarding humanitarian assistance, UNAMA is responsible for coordinating the team of UN entities on the ground in order to provide immediate access to food, water, health, and education. Two-thirds of the Afghan population (28.3 million people) will need humanitarian assistance in 2023, so the UN needs to raise at least US\$4.6 billion in donations, the highest pledge in humanitarian assistance in the world (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 12).

The third challenge is related to reconstruction and economic development given that since the Taliban took power the economy has slowed

⁴ The Secretary-General report highlighted the progressive restriction of women's rights in the country. On 20 December 2022, higher education for women was suspended; on 24 December 2022, Afghan women were prohibited from working in NGOs and the Taliban government implemented a specific dress code for women; on 8 January 2023, there was a positive measure: the reopening of schools for girls up to the sixth year; however, on 28 January 2023, private colleges were prohibited to enroll female students (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 2-3).





down, creating a public deficit, despite investments made in various sectors such as trade and infrastructure. Consequently, social vulnerability increased, being aggravated by poverty, food insecurity, and the climate crisis in the country. Currently, there is no long-term plan for the promotion of sustainable development in Afghanistan, so UNAMA must work closely with other UN entities on the ground to promote a fast economic and social recovery in the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 10-11).

The fourth and final challenge concerns the fulfillment of the UNAMA mandate considering that the Security Council renewed the Mission for one more year by its Resolution 2678(2023), of 16 March 2023 (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 1). The UNAMA personnel is facing several restrictions to carry on its mandate, especially after the Taliban prohibited Afghan women to work for the UN in Afghanistan and the various blockades and attacks against international civil servants. The Security Council, in its last Resolution 2681(2023), of 27 April 2023, called upon the de facto Taliban authorities “to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel throughout the country” (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 2).

Considering the complex situation in Afghanistan, the members of the FAMUN 2023 Security Council shall address three questions:

1. For the Taliban to be recognized as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, the members of the Security Council demand complete alignment with international law, such as a free and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance, the non-violation of human rights, and the establishment of a democracy. So how can the Security Council negotiate with the de facto authorities so they can meet international agreements to guarantee humanitarian assistance, respect for human rights, and the democratic transition while respecting the sovereignty of Afghanistan?
2. The Security Council has renewed UNAMA’s mandate annually since 2002, to assist the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Currently, the staff of the Mission is prevented from fully exercising their mandate due to restrictions imposed by the Taliban. How can the Security Council make the presence of UNAMA more effective, considering the constraints faced by UN personnel, especially women?
3. The Taliban government has increased the restrictions on the rights of women and girls, from limiting access to education to blocking women’s work in NGOs and international organizations. In addition, children are the most affected by violence and hunger and urgently need humanitarian assistance. How can the Council strengthen UNAMA’s mandate for the effective protection of human rights and





delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially for women and children?

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UN REFERENCES

In this section, we present sources from UN bodies that offer a wider analysis of the situation in Afghanistan. The Reports of the Secretary-General are documents that provide updates on the UN actions in the country every 3 months, covering areas such as security, humanitarian, political, and human rights. The Resolutions are the documents which formalize the decisions of the Security Council. We present a summary of each document, as well as the pages where you can find the most important information on the topic.

Reports of the Secretary-General

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security – S/2023/151 – 27 February 2023

Summary: This is the latest report of the Secretary-General about the situation in Afghanistan. The document highlights the restrictive measures implemented by the Taliban government, indicating that many of them are human rights violations. Women's rights continued to be violated, following the announcement in December 2022 of the prohibition of women's access to higher education and employment in national and international non-governmental organizations (p. 2). UNAMA reported an increase in extrajudicial killing of children and women, torture, arbitrary arrests, and the adoption of the first judicially sanctioned public execution by the Taliban (p. 8 and 9). The economic situation continued to deteriorate, as the country went through international banking issues, public debt, and a constant lack of energy supply (p. 11). Besides, food insecurity remained a concern, especially due to desertification and droughts (p. 12).

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security – S/2022/692 – 14 September 2022

Summary: One year after the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021, this Report of the Secretary-General addressed the consolidation of the Taliban's administrative control as the de facto authority in the country (p. 1-3). The period was marked by border incidents, especially with Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Uzbekistan, as the tensions between the de facto government and the international community grew (p. 4-6). The document also presented how the restrictions regarding women's rights increased considerably (p. 8-9). As the need for humanitarian assistance rose rapidly, the report highlighted the UN efforts to develop a new aid architecture for the country, through donor coordination to promote health, nutrition, and education services (p. 10-11).

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security – S/2021/759 – 2 September 2021

Summary: This Report of the Secretary-General presented the situation following the Taliban seizure of power on 15 August 2021, when former President Ghani fled





the country and the Government was dissolved. Provincial capitals and Kabul were taken by force, which meant a significant territorial expansion of the Taliban and a demonstration of power (p. 2; 4-5). The situation was worsened by the increasing violence, including civilian casualties and grave violations against children, women, human rights defenders, and media workers (p. 8-10). The third wave of the coronavirus disease intensified the humanitarian crisis, making it half of the population in need of humanitarian assistance (p. 11). Natural disasters contributed to greater food insecurity, with the occurrence of drought and new displacements caused by conflict (p. 13).

Security Council Resolutions

Resolution 2681(2023) - 27 April 2023 - [S/RES/2681\(2023\)](#)

Summary: In its most recent resolution, the Security Council expressed, in the preambular paragraphs, its deep concern regarding the erosion of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan. The Council also expressed its deep concern with the Taliban's ban on women from working for the UN, affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the implementation of the UNAMA's mandate. In the operative paragraphs, besides condemning the Taliban's decisions (paragraph 1), the Council reiterated its demand for all parties to guarantee safe and unimpeded humanitarian access (paragraph 3) and the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel in the Afghan territory (paragraph 5). The Council also highlighted the need for more effective measures to address the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan (paragraph 4).

Resolution 2678(2023) - 16 March 2023 - [S/RES/2678\(2023\)](#)

Summary: In this resolution, the Security Council extended UNAMA's mandate until 17 March 2024. In the preambular paragraphs, the Council highlighted the relevant role of UNAMA in Afghanistan and reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty of the country. In the operative paragraphs, the Council, besides extending UNAMA's mandate for one year (paragraph 3), highlighted the need to guarantee the freedom of movement of the UN and associated personnel throughout the country in order to fulfill the mission's mandate, since the Taliban posed severe restrictions to their work (paragraph 4).

Resolution 2626(2022) - 17 March 2022 - [S/RES/2626\(2022\)](#)

Summary: In 2022, the Security Council adopted only this resolution about the situation in Afghanistan. However, this is a robust resolution since it established new priority areas for UNAMA. In the preambular paragraphs, the Council expressed its deep concern about the economic, humanitarian, and security crises in the country. It also expressed its deep concern about human rights abuses and violations in Afghanistan, especially related to the situation of women and girls. In the operative paragraphs, the most important one is paragraph 5, which defined 10 priorities areas for UNAMA's mandate, such as: the provision of humanitarian





assistance; coordination of international donors and organizations; promotion of responsible governance and the rule of law; protection and promotion of human rights, gender mainstreaming and empowerment; support for children's protection; regional cooperation and stability; coordination of overall risk management; and the improvement of security and arms control in Afghanistan.

Resolution 2615(2021) - 22 December 2021 - [S/RES/2615\(2021\)](#)

Summary: In this resolution, the Security Council adopted measures to address the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In the preambular paragraphs, the Council expressed its deep concern with the humanitarian crisis in the country, highlighting how women, children, and minorities were the most affected by hunger and violence. Besides, the Council recalled the expectation that the Taliban would fulfill its international commitments to guarantee free access to humanitarian assistance and not associate with terrorist groups. In the operative paragraphs, the Council decided that providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan was not a violation of the sanctions imposed against the country (paragraph 1). It also called on all parties to respect obligations under international humanitarian law (paragraph 3).

Resolution 2593(2021) - 30 August 2021 - [S/RES/2593\(2021\)](#)

Summary: This Security Council resolution was the first one adopted since the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021. In the preambular paragraphs, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty and national unity of the country. In the operative paragraphs, the Council condemned the terrorist attacks at the Kabul airport, which was claimed by the Islamic State (paragraph 1), and demanded that the Taliban not engage in terrorist activities (paragraph 2). The Council called for greater humanitarian assistance and reaffirmed the need of respecting human rights and the rule of law, which were the main achievements of the country in the last 20 years (paragraphs 3 and 4).

Other UN publications

This section aims to present other United Nations publications that will deepen your level of understanding regarding the situation in Afghanistan, bringing more specific data and information than those found in the introduction section.

UNAMA - Human Rights in Afghanistan: 15 August 2021 - 15 June 2022

Summary: In this report organized by UNAMA, there is an overview of the human rights situation in Afghanistan from 15 August 2021 to 15 June 2022, covering the first 10 months of the Taliban rule in the country. In the report, UNAMA denounced the Taliban attacks against the civic and political positions of Afghan women (pages 31-34). The report highlights the collapse of the debate on gender equality and inclusion and the maintenance of a paternalistic society supported by policies that increasingly distance women from the social and political





environment. Besides, the report presents the records of other human rights violations, such as ill-treatment, executions, and arbitrary detentions (p. 13-17).

UNHCR Afghanistan - Impact stories: Area-based approaches for return, reintegration, resilience & solutions, 2022

Summary: This report presents the strategy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Office in Afghanistan to assist refugees and internally displaced persons in the country. The UNHCR supports the Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) in the country, which are community-based areas to promote the reconstruction of basic services and essential infrastructure to support refugees and internally displaced persons (p. 4). Along with the PARRs, the report also explores the creation and function of other mechanisms developed by UNHCR to host and supervise displacement processes in the country (p. 5-8), such as the development of a Support Platform dedicated to the Strategic Solution for Afghan Refugees (SP-SSAR), a program created in 2012 jointly with the governments of Iran and Pakistan to facilitate voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration.

United Nations Office in Afghanistan – Statement and update from the United Nations in Afghanistan – 11 April 2023

Summary: In its latest statement, the United Nations Office in Afghanistan condemned the Taliban’s decision to prohibit Afghan women from working for the UN in Afghanistan (p. 1). Despite the restriction applied, the UN will continue to seek constructive interaction with the de facto authority as mandated by the UN Security Council (p. 1).

Official websites

This section indicates some official websites of the UN system that contain a series of reports, data, and updates on the situation in Afghanistan.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Summary: This is the official website of the United Nations Security Council. In the “Documents” menu, it is possible to access any type of Security Council document, such as resolutions, Secretary-General reports, press statements, letters and speeches. The documents are organized by year, and within them, you can search for “Afghanistan” by pressing “Ctrl + F”.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Summary: This is the official website of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In it, you can find more information about the mission and its mandate, as well as news, the latest activities, and all documents and reports that are related to the mission.





United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)

Summary: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the UN entity responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights. Its website brings together the latest news, statements, messages, and stories, as well as various reports on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

Summary: UNICEF is the United Nations Agency for Children and aims to provide resources to help children in humanitarian situations. This site contains monthly reports on the humanitarian situation faced by children in Afghanistan.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - Afghanistan situation

Summary: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the UN agency for refugees and internally displaced persons. Its website brings together the latest updates and reports on the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons in Afghanistan.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

Summary: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is one of the UN entities responsible for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. Its website presents reports on the humanitarian situation in the country and data on international donations for Afghanistan.





EXTRA RESOURCES

This section contains publications on the subject that are nonrelated to the UN. These publications introduce different perspectives on the situation in Afghanistan and its impacts on the region.

Security Council Report

Summary: The Security Council Report is a think tank with the mission to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the UN Security Council. Its website brings monthly updates about the Council's agenda. It provides inside information about the Council's meetings on Afghanistan, especially in the What's in Blue session.

Council on Foreign Relations - The U.S War in Afghanistan (2021)

Summary: This article aims to present chronologically the main events about the involvement of the United States in Afghanistan in the period 1999-2021. It is important to mention that the Council on Foreign Relations is a think tank based in the United States, so it presents the view and interests of this country on the matter.

Human Rights in Afghanistan following Taliban Takeover (2023)

Summary: In this resource guide organized by the Harvard Model Congress - Boston 2023 you will find a summary of the actions of the United Nations, UNAMA, and the Security Council in recent years in Afghanistan (p. 6-8). In addition, the attempt to approach Taliban leaders is portrayed (p. 6), and, also, the refusal to recognize these leaders afterward (p. 8).

'I had tears streaming': a sobering film about the last months of the Afghan war", an article about the documentary "Retrograde" (2022)

Summary: Retrograde (2022) is an immersive documentary about the last nine months of the presence of the US in Afghanistan and it is available at Disney+. The newspaper The Guardian published an article about the documentary based on an interview with the director Matthew Heineman, who says that his goal with this project was to make the viewer feel what it is like to be in the conflict by showing scenes of bombings, the departure of the US army from the region and the daily life of citizens.





DATABASES

Below you can find two official databases where you can find more detailed and quantitative information regarding the situation in Afghanistan. We inform you that, due a lack of cooperation from the Taliban government, most of the data is not updated, the most recent being dated 2021.

United Nations Statistics Division (Unstat) - Sustainable Development Goals

Summary: The United Nations Statistics Division (UNStat) makes available various data related to both economic and social aspects of the countries. In the sector dealing with the Sustainable Development Goals, it is possible to monitor the implementation of each of the 17 goals in Afghanistan. Remember that the most recent data in this database is from 2021.

Statistical Office of the European Union

Summary: The Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) is a department of the European Union in charge of publishing economic and social data at the European level. Despite working exclusively with the European region, information on Afghan immigrants and refugees who have moved to the region can be found in the database.

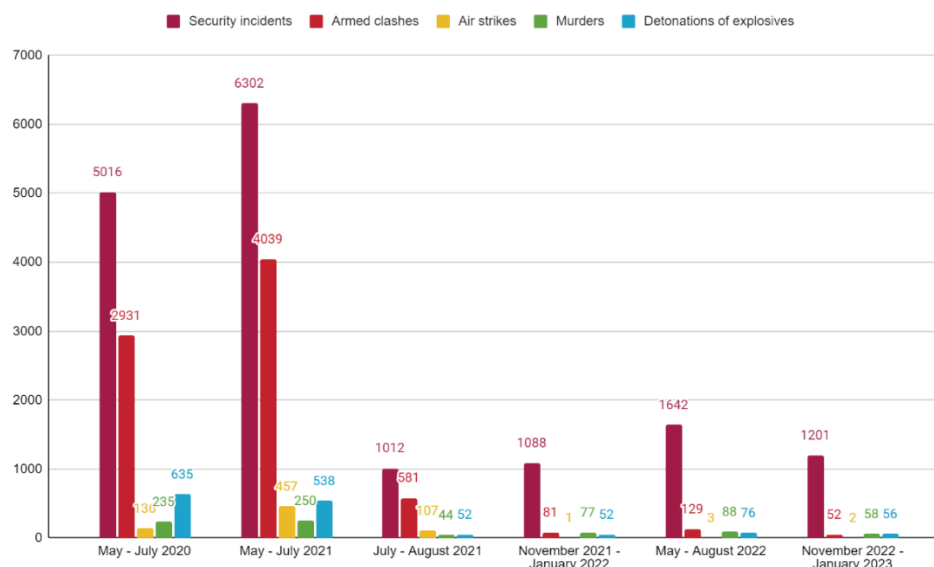
Graphics

Due to the difficulty faced by the official databases to update information after the Taliban takeover in 2021, we present some graphics of our own elaboration that systematize some data presented in the reports of the Secretary-General, UNAMA, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



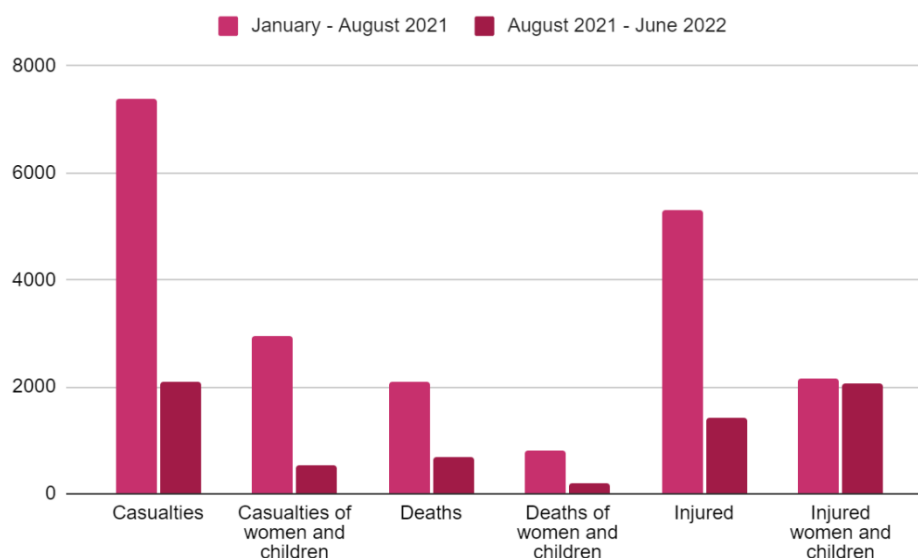


Graphic 1 - Security incidents in Afghanistan, 2020-2023 (per number of incidents)



Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023, p. 4-5; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2022, p. 4; and UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2021, p. 5-6.

Graphic 2 - Casualties (deaths and injured) in Afghanistan, January 2021-June 2022 (per number of people)

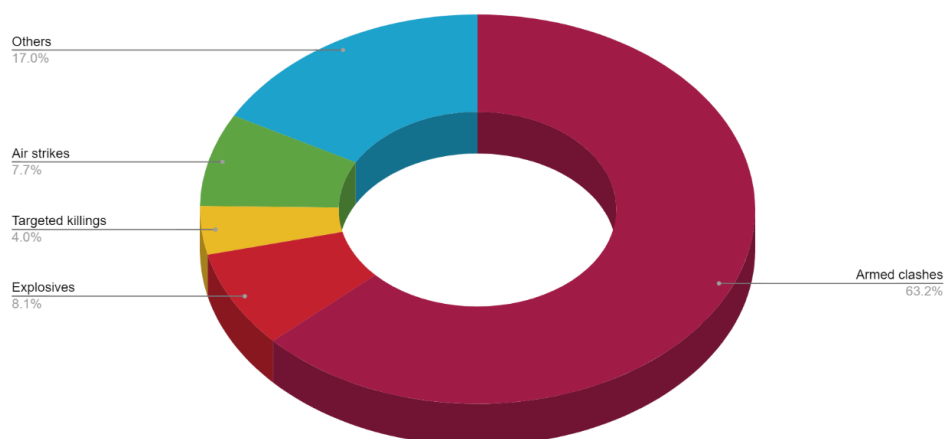


Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN, 2022, p. 9-10.



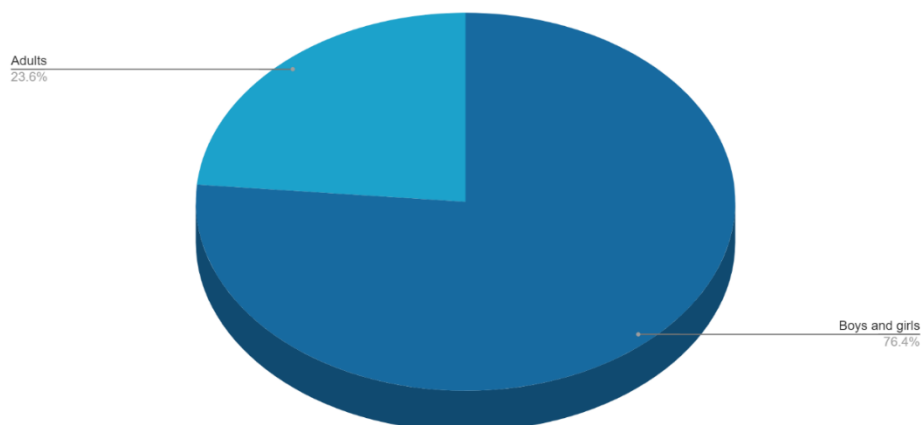


Graphic 3 - Causes of casualties in Afghanistan, 2021 (percentage of the number of incidents)



Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2022, p. 4.

Graphic 4 - Grave violations against civilians in armed conflict in Afghanistan, adults vs. children, April-June 2022 (percentage of the number of people)

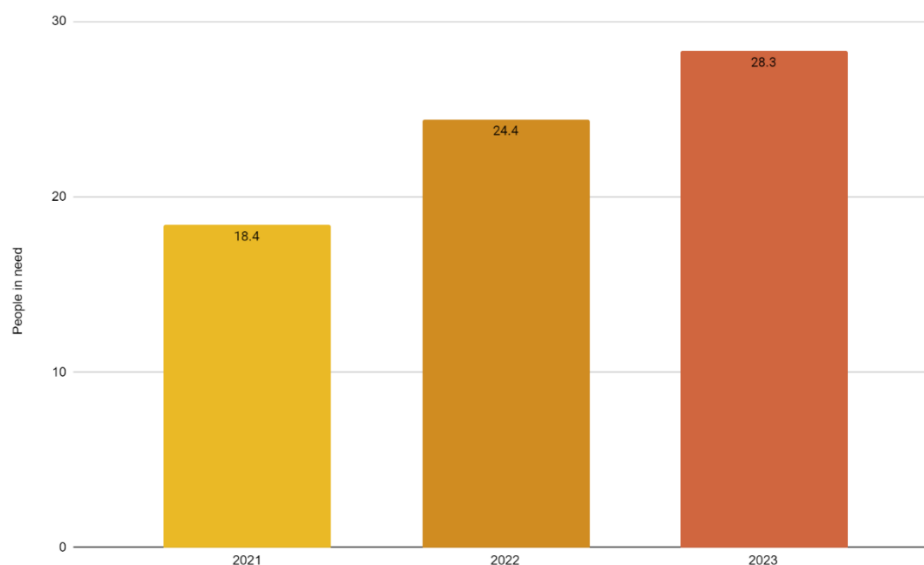


Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2022, p. 8.



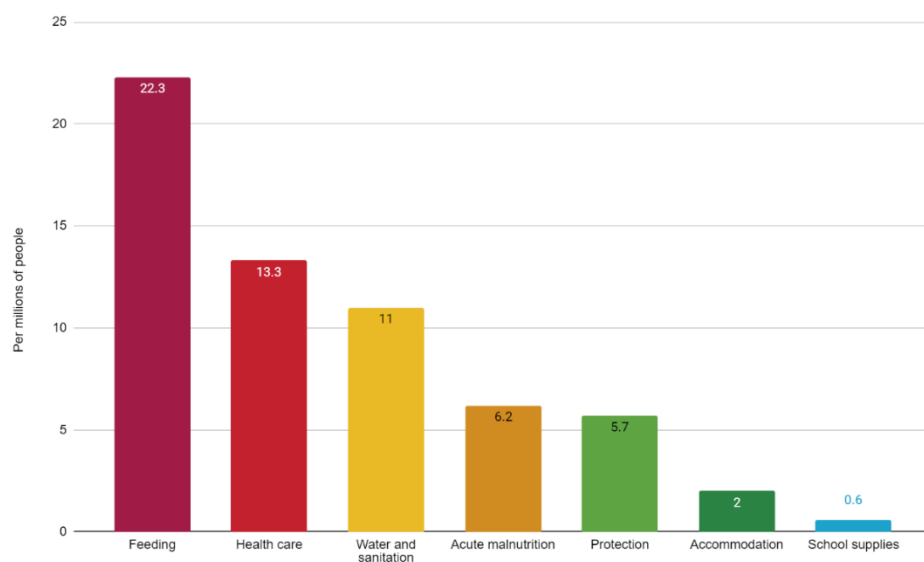


Graphic 5 - People in need of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, 2021-2023 (per million people)



Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023, p. 2; p.12.

Graphic 6 - People assisted by humanitarian assistance delivered in Afghanistan, per area of assistance, 2022 (per million people)

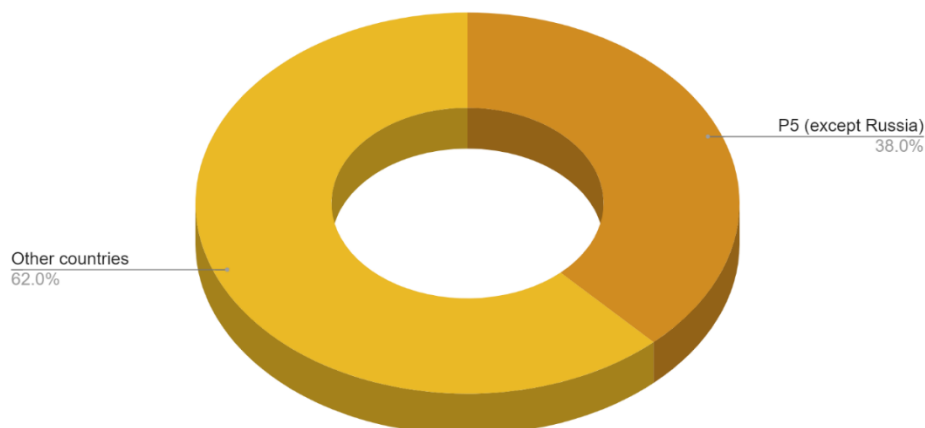


Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023, p. 12-13.



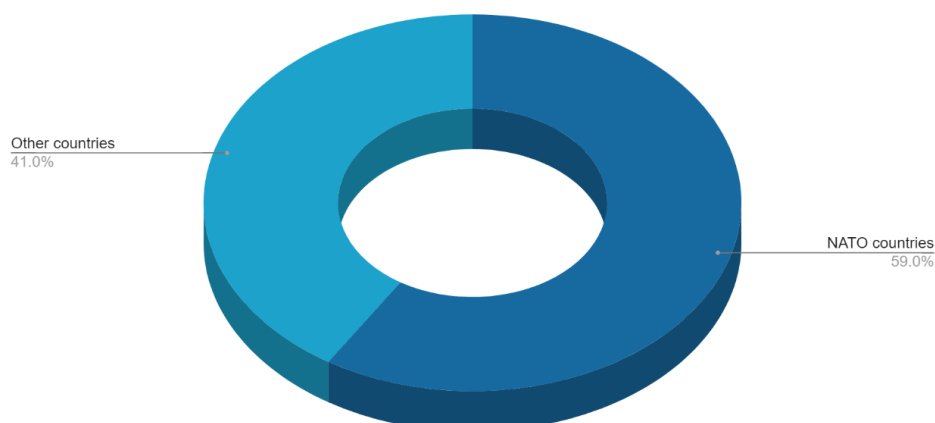


Graphic 7 - Participation of the P5 (except Russia) in the pledge for financing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, 2022 (percentage)



Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, 2022, p. 1-2.

Graphic 8 - Participation of NATO countries in the pledge for financing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, 2022 (percentage)

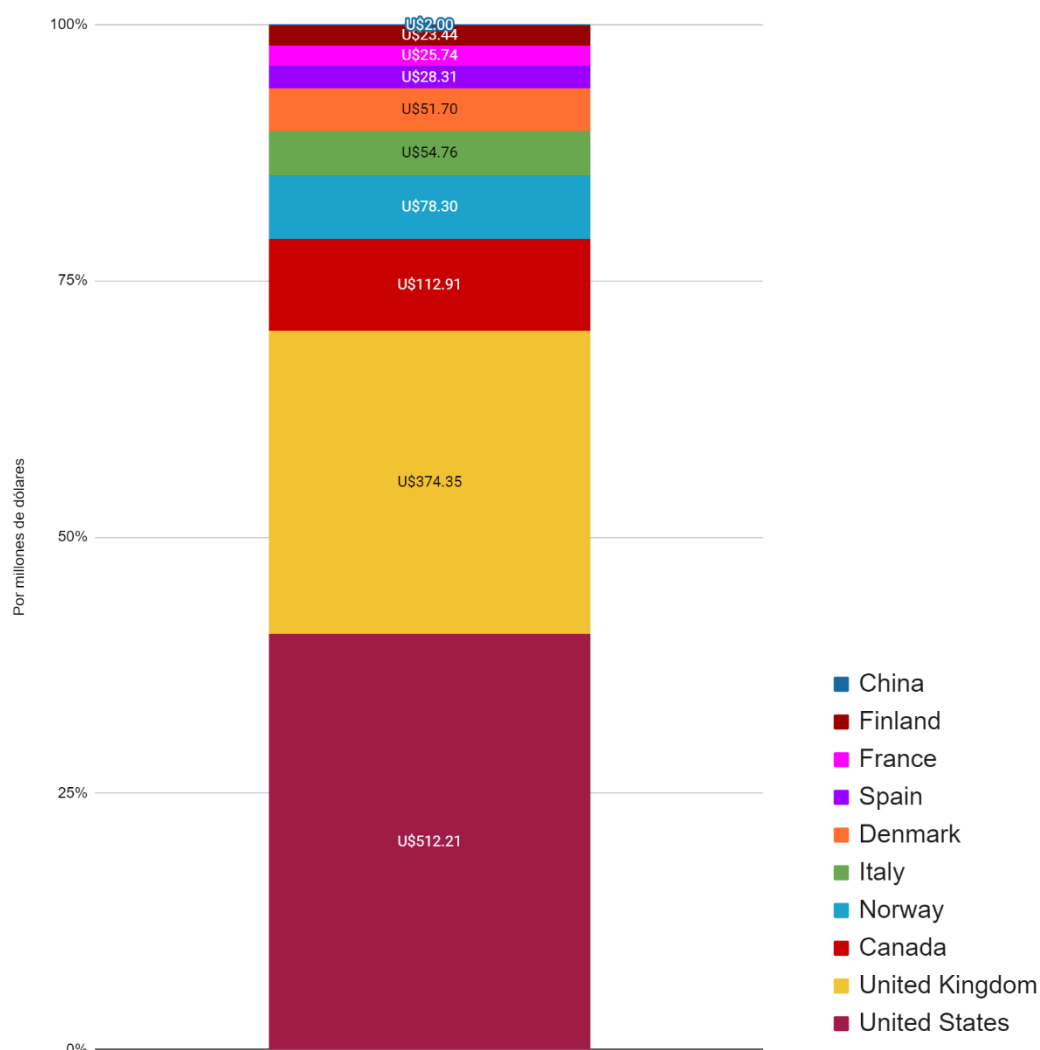


Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, 2022, p. 1-2.





Graphic 9 – Pledge for financing humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan per selected donor countries, 2022 (in millions of dollars)



Source: Elaborated by Antonia de Toledo da Conceição based on data retrieved from UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, 2022, p. 1-2.

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2023, S/2023/151. Available at: <https://undocs.org/S/2023/151>. Accessed on: 3 April 2023.

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OFFICIAL POSITION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Below we present a summary of the statements made by the current members of the Security Council. All the speeches delivered at the meetings are summarized in the following documents: [S/PV.8853 \(2021\)](#), [S/PV.9277 \(2023 a\)](#), and [S/PV.9283 \(2023 b\)](#). You must consult these documents to study the official position of all Council members regarding the situation in Afghanistan.

Permanent Members

China

China, throughout 2021 and 2023, defended without substantive changes its position of prioritizing the coordination of humanitarian action carried out by UNAMA. The country also appealed to the Taliban to fulfill its commitment to respecting human rights, with a special focus on the rights of women and children, who are the most affected by social and economic insecurity. However, China recognized that the current situation in Afghanistan is largely due to foreign military interventions and unilateral sanctions, measures that provoked the political instability and social and economic crises that the country is experiencing at the moment. In this sense, China defended an approach based on humanitarian assistance and the promotion of development in Afghanistan, through the donation of vaccines and food, and projects that guarantee education and jobs for women (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2021, p. 18-20; UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 18-19).

France

In 2021, France highlighted the importance of guaranteeing free and unimpeded access to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, expressing its concern about the safety of humanitarian workers and UN staff. In addition, the country expressed its concern about the link between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY, 2021, p. 14-15). In 2023, France focused on the violations of human rights and, in particular, women's and children's rights in Afghanistan, advocating that the situation of women must be central in all discussions and that those violations must be punished (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY, 2023 a, p. 16). In this sense, France defended that UNAMA should strengthen its role in monitoring human rights violations in Afghanistan since the Taliban did not comply with the international commitments agreed on the matter (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY, 2023 b, p. 6).

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation is aligned with China in the sense that both countries agree that the current situation in Afghanistan is due to foreign military interventions. More specifically, the Russian Federation highlighted that the US military intervention that followed the events of 11 September 2001 had great





implications for the current situation in the country. In this sense, the Russian statement questioned the real purpose of the humanitarian aid offered by the US and other Western countries to the Afghan people. Whether this aid is based on offering real support for the reconstruction of Afghan society or is based on a method of blackmail and control of the Afghan population (UNITED SECURITY COUNCIL, 2021, p.14). As an alternative, the Russian Federation defended that the Council should address the dangerous relationship between drug trafficking and the escalation of national violence and urged Council members to dedicate their attention to the economic reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, which have been forgotten during the last 20 years as a result of unilateral economic sanctions against the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 13-14).

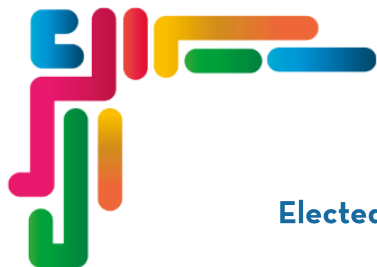
United Kingdom of Great Britain and North Ireland

The statements of the United Kingdom (UK) changed between 2021 and 2023. In 2021, the UK called for the Taliban to detach itself from terrorism and fulfill the international commitment to the protection of human rights, allowing the free exit of people of the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY, 2021, p. 11). However, in 2023, the UK criticized the Taliban for its lack of commitment to international agreements, especially considering the severe restrictions against the political, economic, and social rights of women and girls. For the UK, UNAMA must expand its work towards the promotion and protection of human rights and the construction of inclusive and representative governance. The British delegation expressed its concern with the Taliban decree prohibiting women from working with non-governmental organizations and the UN in Afghanistan. Besides being a violation of human rights, this decision affected the efficiency of humanitarian assistance in the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 b, p. 3).

United States of America

The position of the US is centered on humanitarian assistance. In 2021, this Council member defended the importance of humanitarian aid, highlighting that the US is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, helping with access to health, food, sanitation, and water. The US also expressed its concern about the safety of humanitarian workers, especially women, and condemned the Taliban for harassing UN staff. Another issue for the US is the international recognition of the Taliban as the legitimate government in Afghanistan. According to the US delegation, this recognition will not happen until the de facto authorities follow international law, and respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights, especially of women and children (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY, 2021, p. 17-18). In 2023, after the Taliban decree prohibiting women from working with non-governmental organizations and the UN in Afghanistan, the US demanded that the Taliban stop its attacks against UN personnel and guarantee the safety and free access of humanitarian workers of all sexes (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY, 2023 a, p.16-17).





Elected Members

Brazil and Ecuador

Brazil and Ecuador, as elected Council members from Latin America, expressed their support to UNAMA's mandate and defended that the Mission has a key role in providing humanitarian assistance. Both countries condemned Taliban practices and rulings that violate the human rights of women and girls, as well as their freedom and access to basic services, education, and humanitarian assistance. Ecuador expressed its concern with the violations against Afghan children and defended the need for a peaceful and inclusive political transition, following the norms of international law (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 12). Brazil emphasized that, in order to guarantee lasting peace and stability in the country, it is necessary to focus on economic reconstruction and that everyone, including women and girls, have access to education and participation in this process. Brazil also highlighted its humanitarian efforts to assist Afghan refugees, saying it had issued more than 8000 humanitarian visas to people affected by the Afghan crisis so far (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 15).

Gabon, Ghana, and Mozambique

The three elected African members of the Security Council (known as A3) delivered a joint statement on 8 March 2023, when they highlighted the importance of an intra-Afghan dialogue, which would be a process of political dialogue between different parties and ethnical and social groups, including women. This dialogue would guarantee the fair representation of the diversity of Afghans inside the political scenario, which will, in turn, lead to a more stable Afghanistan. Additionally, they condemned all security incidents reported by UNAMA and urged the de facto authorities to combat and prevent all forms of terrorism, considering that the violent action of the Islamic State is a problem both in Afghanistan and in Africa. Regarding the economic situation, the A3 argued that the economic and social crises are in part because of the negative effect of international sanctions and the freezing of Afghan assets. The decrease in development assistance and mistrust on behalf of donors and banks, likewise, is adding another layer of difficulty in the reconstruction of the country. Therefore, the A3 called on donors to persist in sending help and reiterated that the international community must remain invested in Afghanistan (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 8-9).

Albania, Malta, Switzerland

Albania, Switzerland, and Malta, as elected Council members from Europe, condemned the restrictions imposed by the Taliban against women and children. They all strongly support UNAMA's mandate and presented their views on the Mission's priority areas. For Albania, the Taliban must be accountable for the human rights violations that irreparably harmed women and girls and undermined the country's social and economic development (UNITED NATIONS





SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 11). Malta emphasized that Afghanistan's economic recovery and development cannot be done without women's full, equal, and meaningful participation, since they are critical leaders for changing the future of the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 14). Switzerland drew attention to the humanitarian crisis and proposed sustainable solutions to the chronic food insecurity in Afghanistan, such as adapting Afghan agriculture and making natural-resource management more sustainable to better respond to the challenges imposed by climate change (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 11).

Japan and the United Arab Emirates

As co-penholders (Council members responsible for drafting the resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan), the representatives of Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been politically aligned during the Security Council meetings on the matter. The co-penholders concentrated their focus on the case of Afghan women and children and the mandate of UNAMA. Despite their agreement on most of the topics in this discussion, Japan and UAE also have their particular concerns. Japan accused the Taliban as responsible for the humanitarian situation in the country, as the de facto authority did not fulfill its international commitments (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 6). The UAE reassured the international community that the Taliban's conduct must not be associated with the Islamic culture and religion, but rather with its own political approach. This Council member also highlighted the need for a long-term action plan for Afghanistan as a way to promote political unity in the country (UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 2023 a, p. 7).

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