

Background Information

The Taliban is an Islamic extremist group with an overwhelming presence in Afghanistan. They originated in the Pashtun area, between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the mid-1990s, later coming to Afghanistan as “religious seminaries”, hoping to spread their extreme version of Islamic Law. Their law was hinged around Islamic punishments - such as public executions and amputations. They also believe that women should be completely covered in a burka and that men should have large beards.

Before the September 11 attacks in the United States, the event that started their on-going civil war, Afghanistan was slowly being overrun by the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In 1991, early extremist forces seized Kabul and instituted their harsh Islamic law over the entire country, including banning female education and placing women under full house-arrest, forcing them to vacate their jobs as teachers and workers, creating an entirely different humanitarian crisis in and of itself. They also instituted censorship, to an extent, by banning television, films, and music. The Taliban government rule lasted through December 2001, when the “Northern Alliance” re-took the government with the help of a US military invasion in hopes to dismantle al-Qaeda after 9/11.

More recently, the Taliban have gained control of the majority of Afghanistan, causing the current crisis. The extremist group has complete control of at least 14 districts in the Afghan government, and presence in over 260 others. There are a total of 399 districts in their entire system, so the Taliban has access to close to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Afghan government.

In having a presence in the majority of the country, the Taliban have killed thousands of civilians just this year (2019) in terrorist acts. The civilians are being killed by suicide bombers and blunt-force attacks. It is estimated that in the last 18 years of fighting, at least 32,000 civilians have been killed, and some estimates put that number at over 100,000. This presents a massive humanitarian crisis to surrounding nations and the UN.

The Taliban's funding is also controversial: opium. Afghanistan is the largest opium producer in the world, and the Taliban controls that market. The money that they make from selling opium goes directly towards the war effort.

Their other source of funding is the Pakistani government, as the group originated from there and push similar ideals as them. Pakistan was the only country fighting with the Taliban in the early 2000s and has been supporting them financially since they were in complete control of Afghanistan in 1996.

UN Involvement

1. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (March 2002)

- a. The Afghan government requested assistance to help lay foundations for “sustainable peace and development” for the future.

2. Resolution 1386 (December 2001)

- a. This resolution authorized the formation of an international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan.

3. Resolution 1401 (March 2002)

- a. This resolution established the UN's Assistance Mission to Afghanistan.

4. Resolution 1833 (September 2008)

- a. This resolution mainly condemned the Taliban's relentless killing of civilians.
- b. They chastised this and the fact that it does not seem as if the Taliban wants to have peace and security in Afghanistan

Questions to Consider

- Where does your country stand on the Afghanistan crisis?
- Is your country allied with Afghanistan or the Taliban?
- Is your country allied with main peacekeepers in the area like India, Russia, or the United States?

- Does your country currently have military stationed in Afghanistan?
- Does your country send aid to Afghanistan or to the UN in support of the UNAMA?
- How could the UN mediate this conflict?
- Would the Taliban be open to peace talks with your country?
- Would sanctions be effective?
- How could the UN help control the opium flowing out of Afghanistan's borders?
- What is the best way, if any, to shut down the Taliban? Is that even possible?

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