UNDERSTANDING THE AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS. SUMMARY SHEET OCTOBER 2021

TORQAID

This summary sheet is produced by TorqAid – www.torqaid.com for people wanting to better understand the Afghanistan humanitarian crisis. It is regularly updated and can be accessed from http://www.torqaid.com/understanding-afghanistan

Key Websites

The BBC and Aljazeera provide a generalised overview of the overall political situation both on Afghanistan and across the Central Asian region. Relief Web, Humanitarian Response and ACAPS all provide comprehensive summaries of what the key UN agencies and international NGOs are doing, with ACAPS adding its own analysis. FEWS-NET focuses in on the food security situation throughout the country, whilst the International Crisis Group provides in-depth political and strategic analysis. .

- o BBC - https://www.bbc.co.uk/search?q=Afghanistan+
- o Aljazeera - https://www.aljazeera.com/where/afghanistan/
- o ACAPS Overview and Special Reports on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. https://www.acaps.org/country/afghanistan/crisis/complex-crisis
- o Humanitarian Response - www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/afghanistan
- o ReliefWeb - www.reliefweb.int/country/afg
- o FEWS-NET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network) - http://www.fews.net/central-asia/afghanistan
- o International Crisis Group - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan
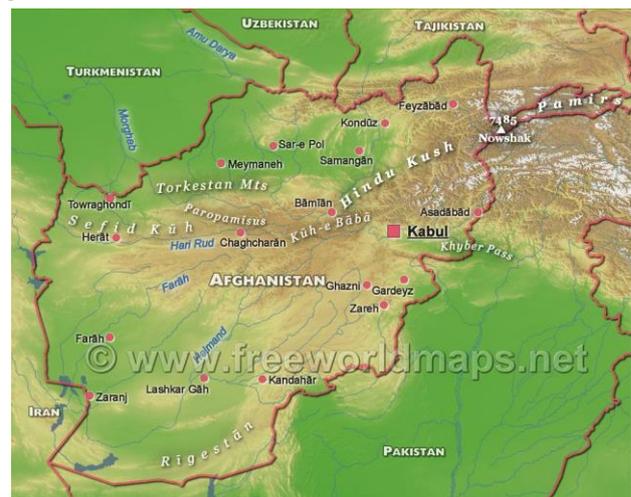
Key Facts and Figures for Afghanistan[1]

- o Population 40.4 million, of whom 37 million live on less than USD2 per day
- o Up to 18.4 million people in need, with 10.8 million targeted for international assistance

Overall Background & Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan

Background context

Afghanistan is a landlocked, multi-ethnic country, situated in south-central Asia. Britannica[2] gives a good overview of geography, climate, history, ethnic groups and languages, settlement patterns, and the economy and natural resources. Ahmed Rashid[3], in his seminal publication on the Taliban[4], provides a comprehensive account on the rise of the Taliban since the 1990's. The International Crisis Group provides an in-depth political and strategic analyses of the repercussions relating to the establishment of the new Taliban-run Islamic Emirate.

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[1] These figures reported in the UNOCHA's Flash Appeal (Sept 2021) – see Key References
[2] See Key References
[3] See also Key References for both this publication as well as recent (Aug 2021) interview
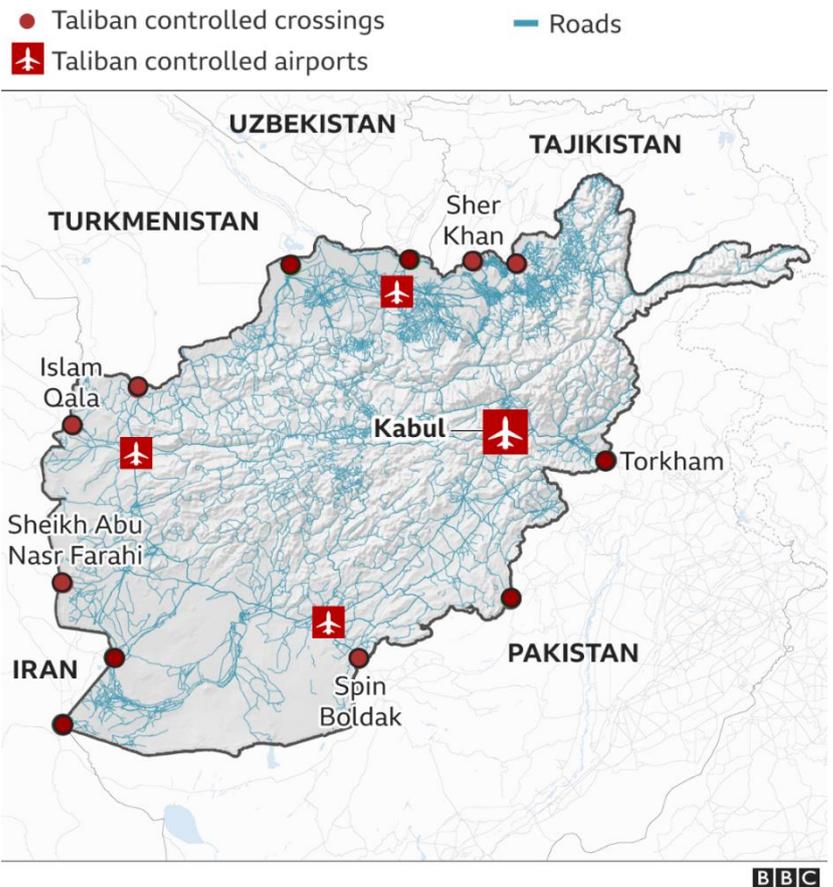[4] Taliban. Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia – see Key References

Current Humanitarian Situation

Detailed humanitarian data is included in the UNOCHA Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), both produced by the early part of 2021[5]. Key ongoing humanitarian information on Afghanistan is included in the three websites highlighted on page 1, namely ACAPS, Humanitarian Response and ReliefWeb. An already challenging humanitarian situation was then complicated by the Taliban capture of Kabul in August 2021. ACAPS subsequently prepared a Humanitarian Impact & Trends Analysis later that month which highlighted:

Afghans fleeing the Taliban have few options

- Taliban controlled crossings — Roads
- Taliban controlled airports

BBC

- o The humanitarian impact, sectoral priorities, humanitarian access constraints, and pre-existing crises.
- o An overview of recent developments
- o Key concerns of the affected population, these including lack of access to basic services; availability and access of basic commodities; insecurity; position and protection of women; and fear of ethnic retribution

The UN then prepared in September 2021 a Flash Appeal Immediate Humanitarian Response Needs Plan covering the period September-December 2021[6]. In addition to the USD 413 million already budgeted through the HRP over this period, it was seeking a further USD 193 million. The main areas of concern[7] were the following:

- o Up to 750,000 people displaced by conflict by the end of this year
- o Up to 1.2 million undocumented returnees from neighbouring countries by the end of 2021
- o 12.2 million people already in acute food insecurity
- o 50% of children under 5 years of age, and 25% of pregnant & lactating mothers, currently malnourished
- o 42% of households living within an 'Emergency' Livelihood Coping Strategy Index (LCSI) score
- o With winter approaching, up to 80% of Internally Displaced People (IDDs) having inadequate heating sources

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[5] See Key References for copies of these

[6] See Key References

[7] And these are summarised in the Flash Appeal Snapshot in the Key References

The UN Flash Appeal plan indicates that humanitarian priorities should focus on a combination of Education in Emergencies, Emergency Shelter and Non Food Items (NFIs), Food Security & Agriculture, Health, Nutrition, Protect, WASH, and Coordination and Communications Services.

Key References

Background Context

Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan

Rashid, A. (Aug 2021). *Democracy Now Interview: Journalist Ahmed Rashid on the Taliban's Return to Power, and What comes Next for Afghanistan.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkk2NMsxVkE

Rashid, A. (2002). *Taliban. Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia.* Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Taliban-Militant-Fundamentalism-Central-Second/dp/0300163681

International Crisis Group - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan

Humanitarian Situation

UNOCHA. (Sept 2021). *Flash Appeal Snapshot– Immediate Humanitarian Response Needs for Afghanistan Sept-Dec 2021.* Retrieved from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/document/flash-appeal-snapshot-immediate-humanitarian-response-needs-sept-%E2%80%93

UNOCHA. (Sept 2021). *Flash Appeal - Immediate Humanitarian Response Needs for Afghanistan Sept-Dec 2021.* Retrieved from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/document/afghanistan-immediate-humanitarian-response-gaps-september-%E2%80%93

ACAPS. (Aug 2021). *Afghanistan. Humanitarian Impact & Trends Analysis. Executive Summary.* Retrieved from https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/key-documents/files/20210823_acaps_afghanistan_humanitarian_impact_trends_analysis_summary.pdf

UNOCHA. (Jan 2021). *Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2018-2021.* Retrieved from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/document/afghanistan-humanitarian-response-plan-2018-2021-2021-revision

UNOCHA. (2020). *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021 (GHO).* Retrieved from https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2021

UNOCHA. (2020). *Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2021.* Retrieved from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/afghanistan_humanitarian_needs_overview_2021.pdf

Further Information
Note that Afghanistan is taught as an example of a complex emergency/crisis in both the TorqAid online, accredited, Participatory Disaster Risk Management (PDRM) program – www.torqaid.com/online-pdrm-program, and the Short Course (SC) program – www.torqaid.com/short-courses. For more information on either of these, contact Chris below.

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