

RENMUN VII

Peace in Permanence



March 5-6, 2022

Chair Report

Chair Introduction

Dear delegates of the Peacebuilding Commission,

We warmly welcome you to the UNPBC of the Renaissance College Model United Nations! Throughout these two days, we hope that you will all enjoy a fulfilling and thought-provoking experience as you engage in insightful debate, think of effective solutions and work together with your fellow delegates in order to address current, real-world issues.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an international advisory body to the United Nations, and is responsible for outlining and supporting peace efforts in countries affected by conflict and instability. As representatives of this committee, delegates will have to think of realistic, effective strategies to achieve post-conflict recovery, while laying the foundations for sustainable, long term developments in destabilized regions.

As chairs of the PC, we are looking forward to seeing how delegates tackle multifaceted, real-world issues while staying true to the stance of their represented countries. Each delegate is expected to do necessary preparation before the conference (using both the chair reports and individual research) in order to effectively participate in debate and unmoderated caucus.

Conflict continues to spread around the globe in the present day, so we hope that during this conference, all delegates can gain insightful perspective into how countries deal with the aftermath of these devastating situations. Most importantly, we hope that everyone can make experiences and have fun during the two days of RENMUN!

Warm regards,

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RENMUN 2021 Peacebuilding Committee

Social Reform in a Post-Conflict Afghanistan

On August 15th, 2021, Taliban forces took control of Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, marking their return to power in 25 years. The country then experienced a plummet in economic growth following the suspension of funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As of September 2021, the organization announced themselves as the interim government of Afghanistan, causing many concerns to be raised upon social rights, with women's rights being the main focal point of discussion. Furthermore, terrorism and drug (opium) trade originating from Afghanistan continue to be highly critical issues as the region continues to suffer from severe instability as a result of the unforeseen takeover.

While military conflict has mostly ceased following the takeover by the Taliban government, the aforementioned issues of human rights, terrorism and the drug trade continue to be prevalent in the region, and there is an increased threat of a humanitarian crisis as a result of lack of international relief and funding due to Taliban's lack of recognition on the international stage. Delegates of the UN Peacekeeping Commission must therefore devise strategies to build a sustainable peace in the region that addresses these concerns, while considering all the stakeholders of the extremely complex situation in Afghanistan.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
IMF	The International Monetary Fund is responsible for regulating financial stability of 190 member nations.
Kabul	Capital of Afghanistan, where the government resides.
Opiates	Chemical compounds (drugs) derived from natural plant matter (Opium, Morphine, Codeine, Heroin).
Illicit Trade	Trade of goods that are otherwise deemed as illegal by the respective governing body. Illicit goods can also be deemed to be morally unjust by the society (an extreme demerit good).
Opioids	"Artificially synthesized" drugs not made from natural plant matter.

Taliban	Political movement and military organization that has taken over the government of Afghanistan.
Doha Agreement	Signed on February 29th, 2020, the Doha Agreement was a 4 page document signed by both the United States and the Taliban, guaranteeing no interference in operations from both the USA and Taliban. The document stated that a full withdrawal of US troops will be enacted 14 months following the signing.
UNODC	The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been in operation for around 20 years aiming to prevent and facilitate drug use and acts under the UN's 17 sustainable development goals set for 2030.
Human Rights Watch	Human Rights Watch investigates and reports on abuses happening in all corners of the world. They consist of small groups of lawyers, journalists, etc.
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan: Multinational Military Mission for Afghanistan (2001-2014) following the Bonn Agreement in order to assist the re-establishment of a new government following the US takeover
RS	Resolute Support Mission: Non-combat mission aimed at advising and training Afghan security forces to provide long-term security to the country

Background Information

The Taliban and their takeover

Since 1994, the Taliban have established themselves following extremist Islam beliefs. They emerged from the effects of the Afghan war (1978-1992), after the Afghan government failed to establish civil order outside of Kabul. Seperatist warlords then exploited this weakness for their own benefit, as Kabul was vulnerable to extortion.

The Taliban faction then slowly began expanding in rural areas of Afghanistan, seizing Kabul in 1996.

Once in power, the Taliban strived to impose Sharia (Islam) law to “restore peace and security in Afghanistan”. By imposing Sharia Law, the Taliban were infamous for oppression inflicted upon women—prohibiting education, work, and publicity.

In 2001, the United States seized Afghanistan by conducting attacks following the September 11 incident. A few years later, a western-backed Hamid Karzai government was established. This would remain the case until 2020, when the Doha agreement instated the removal of US troops.

In May of 2021, US troops began withdrawing from the middle eastern country, which was followed by the Taliban setting up temporary checkpoints. The Taliban then proceeded to launch waves of attacks against rural areas. Ground combat was prominent in Helmand (the country’s south), which would ultimately be captured in less than 3 months. In the following months, the Taliban would continue to take over rural areas and provincial capitals, while US president Joe Biden was adamant on continuing the withdrawal of US troops.

The Taliban finally took Kabul on August 15th, 2021, with the exception of the “Green Zone”. The new taliban rule caused mass controversy, coupled with bombing attacks later that month.

The Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-KP) claimed responsibility for the 2021 Kabul Airport Attacks. Amidst a frantic rush to leave the nation, thousands of civilians huddled in airports, clinging onto departing planes in fear of the new Taliban regime. At this instant, IS-KP suicide bombers detonated their explosive belts as gunmen fired at unarmed civilians, resulting in 182 total deaths. The IS-KP have been considered enemies of the Taliban ever since 2015, making them important stakeholders in this topic.

Opium addiction and production in Afghanistan

As of 2021, the UNODC reports that 1 million (8%, twice the global average) of the Afghan population suffered from drug addiction. Such results are believed to be a direct cause from decades of conflict and inaccessibility to cheap narcotics/treatment methods. Likewise, opium users have increased 53% since 2005, while heroin users have increased by 140%. Afghanistan’s economy has also centered around opium production, being responsible for approximately 80% of the global opium yield. For citizens, the symptom of this drug results in lower productivity in the workforce. Drugs as a demerit good alters the mind and well-being of individuals, leading to higher probabilities of crime and conflict.

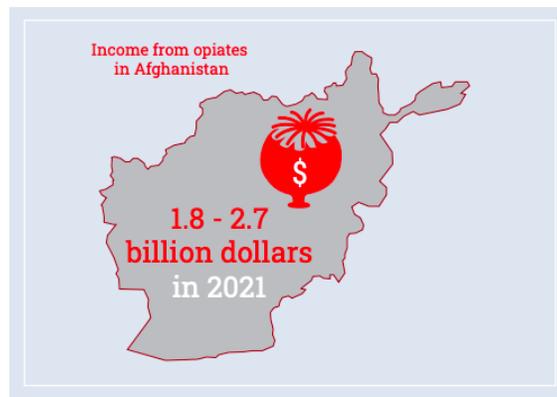


Figure 1 (Source: UNODC)

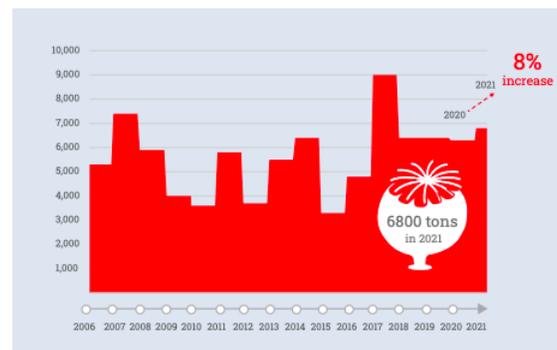


Figure 2 (Source: UNODC)

Following the Taliban rule, trade has only increased with the introduction of crystal meth into the drug market. Most recently, Afghanistan discovered a local herb “oman” used to produce meth, further incentivizing trade. Though the new reformed Taliban government did ensure a tax imposition on such goods, meth labs are still fully functional to this day.

During its original rule in the 1990s, the Taliban involved Afghanistan in the drug economy in order to consolidate its political power. Due to drug production being Anti-Islamic in nature, the original ruling government was strict on the production of opiates. When the Taliban moved from Kandahar west to the Helmand Valley in the mid-1990s, drug trade was banned. The government would also impose harsh punishments of drug abusers at the time, involving torture methods such as imprisonment, beating, and freezing. However, in the following year, the government allowed production of certain opiates given that they were not consumed locally and exclusively utilized for trade.

Delegates have to consider the implications of including opiate trade in the Afghan economy when devising resolutions, as well as the impact of trade with other involved member nations.

Women's rights and the Taliban-led government

When the Taliban previously took control of Afghanistan territory in 1996, women were prohibited from school, work, speaking in public and even from leaving their homes unless escorted by a male, and they were forced to cover themselves in the burqa, a one-piece garment that covers the entire head and body. More importantly, such harsh restrictions on women's rights led to an increase in suicide rates and created a separation in both genders. Even after the US takeover in 2011 following the events of 9/11, problems regarding women's rights still arose.

Afghanistan, now lacking a central government to facilitate/mandate laws, saw a mortality rate at 90% with rape, abuse, and non-consensual sexual acts being common amongst rural populations. Rights groups also say the practice of exchanging girls and young women to settle feuds or to repay debts continued in these areas, as have high rates of early and forced marriage. The Human Rights Watch seemingly ignored a 2009 law that deemed 22 acts against women (rape, forced marriage, etc.) criminal offenses. Though urban areas saw a relatively greater impact in social change, rural areas saw little to no change (see Figure 3 for Afghanistan population map). Women were still required to wear burqa, and civil rights movements were restricted.

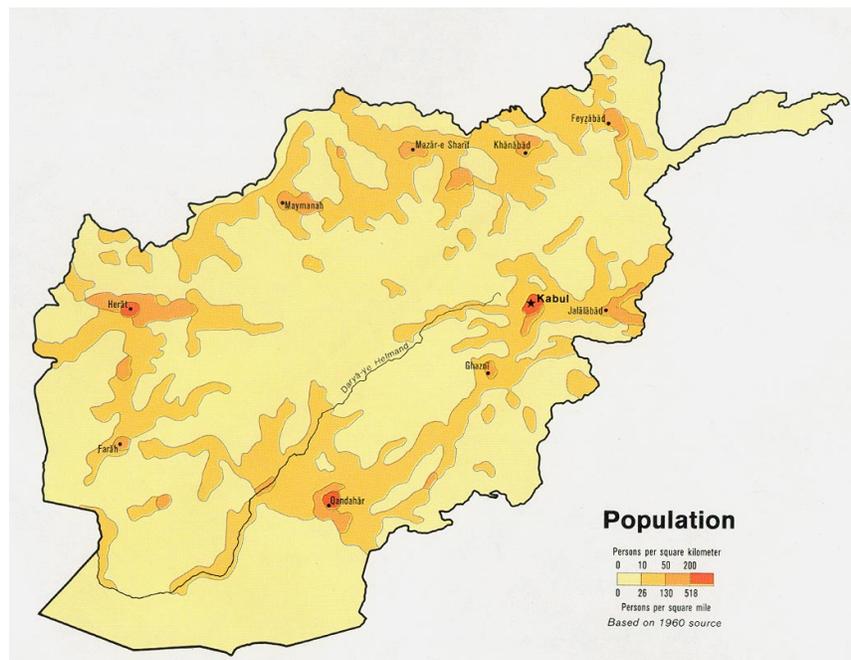


Figure 3

Though the new Taliban regime has seemingly promised a more refined policy regarding women's rights, their intentions have seemingly been more or less the same. After the establishment of a new government in August, reports of forced marriage have been recognized along with gender partition in the establishment of

girl schools. In the northern regions, there have been reports about women being forced to leave their jobs and “go home”. Simple daily tasks such as transportation has also been restricted for women, requiring them to be accompanied by a male accomplice when traveling greater distances.

Potential Clashes

Recognition of the Taliban government

Despite the cessation of military conflict following the Doha agreement, American military withdrawal and Taliban takeover of the capital, the Taliban state remains unrecognized as legitimate by the global community, with Afghanistan’s current UN seat being occupied by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (government in exile). Due to this lack of international recognition, the Taliban government lacks crucial access to it’s frozen international funds and foreign aid, which threatens to plunge the region into an economic and humanitarian crisis. Different countries have taken different approaches towards the new Taliban regime: Nations like China and Pakistan have met and negotiated with the Taliban, while many western countries like the US have condemned the Taliban’s approach to human rights. Members of the PC must therefore collectively decide if the Taliban should be recognized, and how the Taliban should be worked with in order to build a sustainable peace within Afghanistan.

Amount of humanitarian/financial aid distributed to Afghanistan

Due to the instability caused by the sudden Taliban takeover and freezing of external funding, Afghanistan currently teeters on the edge of a humanitarian crisis. Members of the PC must decide on how funds should be used to help address these humanitarian issues. There may be clashes on how much each member of the PC should contribute, especially between MEDCs (More economically developed countries) and LEDCs (Less economically developed countries). Furthermore, there may be further clashes on how to distribute funds: Some nations may argue that the Taliban cannot be trusted with UN financial aid and that the UN should work independently from the Taliban to ease the crisis, while others may propose handing funds to the Taliban with varying methods of monitoring and regulations. Delegates of the PC must work together to decide on the most effective ways to distribute aid in order to address the humanitarian issues of Afghanistan.

Extent of UN intervention

Different countries may have different opinions on how much UN intervention is needed to build a sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Currently, UN humanitarian personnel continue to remain in the area to provide impartial assistance, with the World Bank redirecting some of Afghanistan’s frozen assets towards humanitarian aid. These efforts have had limited success however, with the current UN presence

being insufficient to deal with the extent of the crisis and sanctions hindering the effect of World Bank funds.

Some countries may argue that the UN should continue to only use indirect methods such as financial aid to address the crisis in order to help the Taliban government begin sustainable development while avoiding further destabilization from outside forces. Other nations may argue that some direct UN presence is necessary in the region in order to protect human rights or help address a possible humanitarian crisis while keeping the Taliban in check. Delegates of the PC must decide upon the most appropriate level of UN intervention in order to help build sustainable reform and peace within Afghanistan.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
USA	Takes a firm stance against the Taliban government due to alleged human rights abuses
IS-KP	With the Taliban now in control, the IS-KP vows to continue attacks. IS-K considers Taliban militants "apostates", making their killing lawful under their interpretation of Islamic law.
Afghanistan	The Taliban would like to adhere with their extremist beliefs of society, however are open to relations which can strengthen their economy. Being forced to depend on illicit drug trade as a main source of income while having drug abuse being against their beliefs, it is in the nation's best interest to facilitate operations.
Panjshir Separatists	The Panjshir region in Afghanistan is infamously known as a residing area for the National Resistance Front. Conflict arose amidst the new Taliban takeover in 2021. Though the area has seemingly been cleared by the new government, the conflict is still prominent as two members of the Taliban have been killed by the resistance on 2nd January 2022.
Pakistan	Pakistan shares a nearly 3000km border with

	Afghanistan and is now Afghanistan's major transit country for drug trade.
China	With its agricultural power, China could pose a crucial role in providing economic substitutes for income when farming alternative crops to opium. China has intervened in the illegal drug trade recently with enhanced security.
Iran	The Islamic Republic of Iran reportedly spends millions of dollars annually on border control, including for the construction of expensive barriers along its borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, it is now the world's largest illicit opium producer.
Russia	In late december 2021, the Taliban released imposing severe restrictions on women's daily lives that has invited criticism and condemnation from the international community including opposing world powers, including Russia.

Possible Solutions

Direct UN Occupation

Social reform has previously occurred in Afghanistan with the direct and large-scale involvement of outside forces, with the most notable example being the recent US involvement in the region. Under American occupation between 2001 to 2021, which involved a peak of 110,000 troops and investment ranging in the billions of dollars, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was able to vastly increase gender representation, education, infrastructure and economic output. However, this type of solution has notable drawbacks: it requires massive amounts of investment and a large amount of direct military force that many UN countries may not be able to supply. Furthermore, it may be argued that this type of long-term outside intervention is unviable and unsustainable in the long term, as seen by the rapid fall of the government merely months after the American military withdrawal.

Recognition and Cooperation with the Taliban

Some countries may instead advocate for a recognition of the Taliban government, with varied levels of UN monitoring: This would allow for foreign funds to be unfrozen and international aid to resume, which would help address the humanitarian crisis

and begin sustainable development within the region. Many nations, however, are doubtful if the Taliban should be recognized due to their track record regarding women's rights and other issues, as the new Taliban regime could mismanage funds. Because of this, some nations may advocate for a UN effort separate from the Taliban, with direct UN aid to refugees and others affected by the conflict - this, however, would require some level of direct UN involvement and may destabilize the precarious situation even further.

Delegates of the PC must weigh the benefits and drawbacks of each possible solution regarding the topic of social reform in Afghanistan, and decide on a strategy that most effectively addresses the current issues while fitting with their countries stance.

Past Actions

2008 interdiction policy

The Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act of 2008 was established by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), ISAF, and the RS. In aims to tighten operations of drug trade, the 5 page document was split into two titles; Civil and Criminal Prohibition. Criminal Prohibition aimed to tighten and specify consequences/sentences for any ventures of submersible vessels without nationality in international waters. Civil Prohibition also further specified the limits of an individual while clearly defining the constituents of submersibles and semi-submersibles.

However, this policy neither bankrupted nor weakened the Taliban and the poppy economy. In 2009, after seeing the failed attempts by the interdiction policy to halt the production of narcotics in Afghanistan, sought to push back funding for poppy eradication in Afghanistan.

Doha Agreement and IMF intervention

The Doha Agreement, though establishing a temporary truce between the US and Afghanistan, limited US intervention when regulating drug production and trade within Afghanistan. Specifically, the deal precluded the US from mounting aerial bombing of opiate/opioid transportation trucks. Many rural development policies also failed to address poppy cultivation. The Doha Agreement has also threatened women's rights in Afghanistan, opening up more political jurisdiction in favor of the Taliban by leaving the future of Afghan women completely up to the outcomes of intra-Taliban negotiations/battlefield developments.

Following the Taliban takeover in August, the IMF has decided to freeze all aid/assets to Afghanistan, causing the morass of its economy and security to deepen. As the

eradication of drug crops will further worsen the Afghan economic situation, it is not in the best interest of the Taliban to cease operations. As of December 2021, both the United States and the United Kingdom have funded Afghanistan's Humanitarian Aid programs, incentivizing the protection of basic human rights.

Guiding Questions

- Is direct UN intervention necessary in order to build a sustainable peace within the region?
- Are the Taliban's past and current actions conducive to forming a secure Afghanistan where human rights are protected?
- How/to what extent should the UN cooperate with the new Taliban government in order to develop the region of Afghanistan?
- How can Afghanistan resort to new sources of licit income to evade narcotic production?
- What amount of UN funds are necessary to ensure the sustainable development of Afghanistan, and how should they be utilized?

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