

INAF 5203

International Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Conflict Risk Diagnostic

AFGHANISTAN

February 2022

## Executive Summary

The Taliban’s ascension to power in Afghanistan in August of 2021 has presented a fundamental shift in the trajectory of the future of the country’s political, economic, and humanitarian sectors. The lack of access to international assistance in the wake of the change in governance has led the country to near extreme poverty, impending famine, mass malnutrition, and a failing economy. Regional and environmental factors only exacerbate these negative effects. The Taliban’s history of violating the rights of women and ethnic minorities only furthers the current humanitarian crisis enveloping the country.

This conflict diagnostic uses data trends and risk assessment indicators from the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy Project (CIFP) to analyze the current status of the conflict in Afghanistan, as of 2022. This report draws on historical context, conflict risk assessment, and analysis of key stakeholders to come to three projected scenarios for the conflict in Afghanistan, based on current trajectories.

## Background

The Taliban were in charge of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. The original regime fell after the United States invaded post 9/11<sup>i</sup>. In February of 2020 the United States agreed to remove their troops from Afghanistan over a 15-month period<sup>ii</sup>. As the United State military retreated, the Taliban took over major cities<sup>iii</sup>. On August 15, 2021, the Taliban took over Kabul. Per the peace agreement the United States removed all of their military Presence in Afghanistan on August 30, 2021<sup>iv</sup>. Currently the Taliban oversees Afghanistan. Hasan Akhund is the acting prime minister and has been in charge since the Taliban takeover<sup>v</sup>.

## Indicators

<b>History of Armed Conflict: Medium risk, Worsening</b>	<b>(Primary Driver)</b>
<b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> There was a decline in civilian deaths in 2020 compared to 2019. Separate Islamic extremist groups such as Islamic State Khorasan have continued to initiate attacks on civilians throughout the country, however, they have slowed down slightly recently <sup>vi</sup> . This has been attributed to the cold weather and is expected to change when the weather shifts.	
<b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> Afghanistan has been at war with the United States since the attacks on 9/11. In the 20-year period over 78,000 civilians have been killed in Afghanistan and Pakistan <sup>vii</sup> . Despite the peace agreement with the US, the Taliban attacked Afghan and US civilians and security forces <sup>viii</sup> . In August of 2021, the Taliban took over Kabul in one day. At present, Taliban forces are threatening anyone who threatens their rule. Over 100 members of the previous government have been killed since the Taliban takeover, and many others have disappeared <sup>x</sup> . Of the 2.6 million refugees displaced from Afghanistan, Pakistan hosts 2.2 million. Meanwhile, 3.5 million Afghans have been internally displaced <sup>x</sup> .	
<b>Assessment:</b> The United States military removing their presence in Afghanistan directly correlated with the Taliban takeover of the country. While their involvement in the country caused a lot of conflict and deaths, their retreat is likely to increase conflict and human rights abuses in the country.	
<b>Governance and Political Instability: Very high risk, Worsening</b>	<b>(Primary Driver)</b>
<b>Stabilizing factors:</b> Certain states, including the U.S. and European countries, are willing to meet with the Taliban to discuss the possibility of humanitarian aid on the condition that the human rights situation in the country be markedly improved. <sup>xi</sup> Otherwise, there currently doesn’t appear to be any concrete stabilizing factors.	
<b>Destabilizing factors:</b> Between 2015 and 2020, Afghanistan exhibited a small but steady improvement in corruption perception scores. <sup>xii</sup> As of 2021, however, Afghanistan exhibits a corruption perception score of 16/100 (0 being highly corrupt and 100 being “very clean”). <sup>xiii</sup> This score represents a 3-point decrease from its previous annual score. <sup>xiv</sup> Afghanistan scores 0 on the regime durability scale. This is attributable to the Taliban takeover, as Afghanistan is in its first year under a new “polity”. <sup>xv</sup> There is continued international resistance to formally acknowledge the Taliban as the governing authority. <sup>xvi</sup> As of 2021, Afghanistan received a score of 11 (out of 14) for restrictions on civil and political rights. <sup>xvii</sup> This score and its associated status of “Not Free” has remained largely consistent over the past five years. <sup>xviii</sup> While data for 2021/2022 is currently unavailable, the Taliban did not come to power democratically. Additionally, the Taliban has taken steps to de-establish two election-related institutions: the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission. <sup>xix</sup> As of 2021, Reporters Without Borders ranks Afghanistan as 122 out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index. <sup>xx</sup> Its score of 40.19 presents a downward trend in freedom of the press over the past three years. <sup>xxi</sup> In 2022, early warning signs indicate that the situation may be deteriorating. For example, reports of media outlets having to close, harassment of journalists and journalists being unable to work, especially women journalists. <sup>xxii</sup>	
<b>Assessment:</b> Where current data is available, there is evidence of sharp drops in indicators of political stability in Afghanistan, a country that consistently ranked poorly on many of such indicators prior to the Taliban takeover. The dissolution of the previous government has thus exacerbated long-standing weaknesses in the governance and political stability of the country.	

Early warning signs concerning limits on the freedom of the press suggest that one of the key institutions helping to inform the public and hold authorities to account is being constrained in serious ways. <sup>xxxiii</sup>	
<b>Militarization: Very high risk, Worsening</b>	<b>(Primary Driver)</b>
<b>Stabilizing factors:</b> There are no evident stabilizing factors in this area, and the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, alleged rampant corruption within the ANDSF (Afghan National Defense and Security Forces) and the decrease in US funding to Afghan security forces has contributed to the destabilized power dynamic with the Taliban. Further, the takeover of the Taliban has left members of the ANDSF without a government or a budget line or international backing, which has crippled their capacity to respond to the Taliban and has allegedly put them at risk of reprisals. <sup>xxxiv</sup>	
<b>Destabilizing factors:</b> Afghanistan's military expenditure (% of GDP) has remained relatively constant over the past five years, at around 1% with a slight increase to 1.4% as of 2020 (omitting military aid from abroad). <sup>xxv</sup> Data for 2021 is not available. Given the Taliban takeover and the surrender of Afghan security forces, it is unclear how that budget line may be used at present, if it indeed exists anymore. Data on the number of ANDSF personnel in Afghanistan is unreliable. One source cites total armed force personnel as of 2018 at 272,900, a sharp decrease from previous years. <sup>xxvi</sup> A second source reports that, prior to the Taliban takeover, armed forces personnel numbered 300,000. <sup>xxvii</sup> However, a third source suggests that data on the number of personnel can be unreliable and is likely lower than official data suggests allegedly due to matters of lack of transparency and deeply entrenched corruption. <sup>xxviii</sup> Afghanistan's military spending amounts to 0.31% of regional military expenditures as of 2020, but this number has likely shifted dramatically given the events of 2021. <sup>xxix</sup>	
<b>Assessment:</b> Given the withdrawal of US forces, the surrender of the armed forces to the Taliban over a short window of time in 2021, and reports that former members of the ANSF have allegedly been detained, threatened or executed by the Taliban, it is evident that the ANSF no longer exists in its previous form and doesn't have the government budget line or the foreign funding it once had to support its operations. <sup>xxx</sup> It also means that a significant portion of men trained in combat are out of a job all at once, which presents potential security risks. This absence of functioning state security forces has been filled by armed Taliban members. Further, the shock created by the loss of the wartime economy built in part on militarization has severely destabilized the economy. <sup>xxxi</sup>	
<b>Population and Heterogeneity: Medium Risk, Worsening</b>	<b>(Secondary Driver)</b>
<b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> Afghanistan's religious composition was estimated in 2009 to be the following: 84.7-89.7% Sunni Muslim, 10-15% Shi'a Muslim, and <0.3% other religions. <sup>xxxii</sup>	
<b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> Afghanistan is made up of several ethnic groups. It has been estimated that the population's ethnic diversity is made up of the following groups: Pashtun (42%), Tajik (27%), Hazara (9%), Uzbek (9%), Turkmen (3%), and Baluchi (2%). All other ethnicities represent the last 8%. <sup>xxxiii</sup> 2021 data has indicated that conflicts surrounding self-determination in Afghanistan are classified as contained armed conflicts, major armed conflicts that threatened vulnerable populations were ongoing as of late 2020, and there has been one or more episodes of genocide since 1945. <sup>xxxiv</sup>	
<b>Assessment:</b> Cleavages within the sects of the Muslim religion may provoke conflict. However, as most of Afghanistan's population is Muslim, potential for tensions and cleavages stemming from the ethnic diversity of the country, rather than its religious diversity, is more prominent. There have been reports of conflict between the ethnic divisions of the Taliban itself, in which Uzbek Taliban forces "disarmed and expelled Pashtun Taliban" from the city of Maymana in the Faryab province during Uzbek Taliban-led protests. <sup>xxxv</sup> Additionally, ethnic divisions have been identified as strategic strongholds for the Taliban, as they have specifically targeted more diverse areas in their campaigns to emphasize their inclusion of the different ethnicities of Afghanistan. <sup>xxxvi</sup>	
<b>Demographic Stress: Medium Risk, Stable</b>	<b>(Secondary Driver)</b>
<b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> The total population of Afghanistan is growing, though it is doing so at a decreasing rate. Additionally, the country has become more densely populated in the past ten years.	
<b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> Afghanistan's urban population is growing, though it is also doing so at a decreasing rate. However, the percentage of the total population living in urban areas is significantly lower in comparison to the rest of the world. A considerable proportion of the population therefore lives in rural settings. Finally, the proportion of the population between the ages of 0 and 14 years is nearly equal to that of those between the ages of 15 and 64. <sup>xxxvii</sup>	
<b>Assessment:</b> The urban population growth rate of Afghanistan is much higher than that of the rest of the world. Along with its growing population and increasing population density, these indicate that Afghanistan is developing a more dense and urban population. As a humanitarian crisis has led to diminishing resources, the strain of a growing population compounds such problems <sup>xxxviii</sup> .	
<b>Economic Performance: High Risk, Worsening</b>	<b>(Primary Driver)</b>
<b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> Afghanistan's GDP per capita (PPP) has increased in recent years, stabilizing above \$2,000.00 per capita in 2020 <sup>xxxix</sup> . No data on GDP per capita (PPP) was available for 2021. In October of 2021, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) created ABADEI, an initiative aimed at bolstering communities through grants and cash-for-work	

<p>programs, among other approaches<sup>xl</sup>. The primary goal of the programme is to help avoid impending economic failure in the country, using foreign aid money previously denied to the Taliban regime to aid the Afghan population directly<sup>xli</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> While Afghanistan's GDP growth slowed to between 1% - 3% per year between 2014 and 2018, GDP growth in 2019 increased to almost 4% before falling to -2.35% in 2020<sup>xlii</sup>. Following this negative turn, foreign countries blocked Afghanistan's access to external revenues and aid following the Taliban's takeover in 2021<sup>xliii</sup>. Over 40% of Afghanistan's GDP is comprised of foreign aid, with most public spending being funded by external sources<sup>xliv</sup>. The resulting illiquidity in the market has impacted both the Taliban and the Afghan population, impeding many from the ability to buy basic commodities and limiting the availability of public services<sup>xlv</sup>. Amid increasing job losses, many of those who continue to work thus fail to receive their wages<sup>xlvi</sup>. Furthermore, increasing inflation in 2021 was exacerbated after the Taliban takeover<sup>xlvii</sup>. Economic instability caused by increasing inflation is exacerbated in the context of cash shortages. World Bank data on the Afghan exchange rate dates to 2013, when the country's exchange rate had increased to over 55 AFN per USD<sup>xlviii</sup>. Since then, it has continued to increase, reaching a high of nearly 105 AFN per USD in January 2022<sup>xlix</sup>. Data on Afghanistan's overall trade was unavailable; trade in services, however, has decreased in recent years. While it accounted for 8.97% of GDP in 2020, the same measure accounted for over 20% of GDP ten years prior<sup>l</sup>. As with foreign aid, trade has decreased since the Taliban took power<sup>li</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> The economic stability of Afghanistan has been severely compromised under Taliban rule. High inflation, job losses, and cash shortages caused by the inability to access foreign funds and development aid have impeded a substantial portion of the population from the ability to buy necessary commodities and access core services. Low trade levels and a high exchange rate further limit access to goods, as well as hinder economic growth opportunities. While the ABADEI program aims to bolster the economy, lasting economic improvement must necessarily stem from improvement to the factors described above.</p>
<p><b>Human Development: Low Risk, Worsening</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>(Secondary Driver)</b></span></p>
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> In December 2021, the UN (United Nations) Security Council agreed to a resolution allowing for aid to reach the Afghan people without going through the government<sup>lii</sup>. This will allow for frozen aid to be re-introduced into programs aiming to help Afghan people in need.</p>
<p><b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> The two decade long, US-led effort failed to build a self-sustaining economy in Afghanistan. Prior to the Taliban takeover, 75 percent of the country's economy came from outside donor funding<sup>liii</sup>. Since the Taliban took power, donors have frozen billions of dollars in an effort to control the Taliban's actions<sup>liv</sup>. As a result, only 2 percent of Afghan's have enough food and over three million children are suffering from malnutrition<sup>lv</sup>. It is projected that by March 2022 the country will be experiencing famine<sup>lvi</sup>. More than 67% of the population has access to safe drinking water. Only 43 percent of people have safe toilets or latrines in their homes<sup>lvii</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> The UN Security Council resolution may have an impact on malnutrition and starvation within Afghanistan however the scope of food insecurity is so high it may not be enough to improve the situation significantly. The economy has not been stable or resilient enough to ensure food security for its citizens. The humanitarian crisis is escalating and may lead to more violent conflict than currently present but is more likely to cause worsening insecurity throughout the country.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Stress: High Risk, Worsening</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>(Secondary Driver)</b></span></p>
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> Afghanistan's forested area remains stable, occupying 1.85% of the total land area<sup>lviii</sup>. Deforestation does not contribute to the country's environmental concerns.</p>
<p><b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> With only 0.21 hectares of arable land available per person in 2018, Afghanistan has experienced a decline in this measure over the past few years<sup>lix</sup>. Moreover, water supply in Afghanistan is diminishing. Between 2012 and 2017, the country experienced a decrease of more than 200 cubic meters of renewable internal freshwater resources per capital<sup>lx</sup>. Contamination hazards further impact the water supply, with only one-fifth of drinking water being free of harmful pollutants<sup>lxi</sup>. Intensifying these problems, a drought in 2021 affected 80% of Afghanistan and resulted in 55% of its population being impacted by food shortages<sup>lxii</sup>. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced because of the conditions, which continue today<sup>lxiii</sup>. The threat of air pollution is also detrimental to the Afghan population's health, contributing to over 25 thousand deaths in 2017 alone<sup>lxiv</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> Vulnerable to both climate change and natural catastrophes such as earthquakes<sup>lxv</sup>, Afghanistan is currently facing a severe drought. Food shortages, a diminishing supply of water, and pollution affecting the air and water harm the population's health. Amid an economic crisis also limiting access to resources, malnutrition is intensified, and polluting practices are likely to continue.</p>

<b>International Linkages: Medium Risk, Worsening</b>	<b>(Secondary Driver)</b>
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors:</b> Prior to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the country was a member state or participating state in 50 international organizations, including the United Nations, UNESCO, UNHCR, the WTO, the WHO, the ICC, and the G-77.<sup>lxvi</sup></p>	
<p><b>Destabilizing Factors:</b> Since December 2021, Afghanistan, under the Taliban government, is not engaged in any international organizations. In the past, Afghanistan has had border disputes with Iran and Pakistan over the Helmand River and Durand Line, respectively.<sup>lxvii</sup></p>	
<p><b>Assessment:</b> The withdrawal from international organizations is concerning. This further isolates the country from international support. As the country depended on foreign aid prior to the Taliban takeover in 2021, the withdrawal of foreign financial support leaves the country more susceptible to poverty, famine, and collapse of the healthcare system.<sup>lxviii</sup></p>	

## Stakeholder Analysis

<b>United States: Primary Stakeholder, Aggravator</b>
<p>The United States ended its war with Afghanistan in 2021, completing their military exit in August<sup>lxix</sup>. In that same month, the Taliban gained control of the country, overturning the Afghan democratic government<sup>lxx</sup>. In response to the Taliban’s rule, the United States promptly withheld much of the financial aid that had previously provided, which had played a substantial role in supporting the Afghan government’s administration and provision of public services<sup>lxxi</sup>.</p>
<b>Taliban: Primary Stakeholder, Aggravator</b>
<p>With the surrender by the ANDSF and the collapse of the previous government, the Taliban have installed themselves as authorities and have proceeded to dissolve some of the government bodies associated with the previous regime and establish some of their own, including the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.<sup>lxxii</sup> Given the Taliban’s current stranglehold on power in the country and the limited internal resistance to its takeover from either the state security forces or other local power brokers<sup>lxxiii</sup>, it has asserted itself as the governing authority and has begun to make decisions that are directly affecting the lives of Afghan citizens. The Taliban’s creation of an interim government and particularly, the selection of officials, may be one indicator of their future goals.<sup>lxxiv</sup> With a predominantly Pashtun, all-male group of officials most of whom allegedly have a background as combatants and an association with the previous rule by the Taliban, it appears that the Taliban have a strong interest in formally consolidating their power and maintaining an insular system at the exclusion of other ethnic groups, previous government officials and women.<sup>lxxv</sup> The Taliban currently has the power and influence to engage internationally with other state representatives and has been doing so as the recent meetings in Oslo demonstrate.<sup>lxxvi</sup> These meetings seem to suggest that the Taliban is willing to engage diplomatically in order to try to secure funding. On the other hand, the Taliban are also alleged to be rolling back gains made in the areas of women’s and girls’ rights and media freedom, which contributes to conflict.<sup>lxxvii</sup> It is important to note that while the Taliban wield significant influence when it comes to the stability of the country, they are not immune to being affected by the positions and interests of regional actors.<sup>lxxviii</sup></p>
<b>Pakistan: Primary Stakeholder, Mixed</b>
<p>Pakistan has historically been a source of support for the Taliban<sup>lxxix</sup>. It has recently spoken up for the new government, calling international actors to change their approach towards the Taliban by seeking regime changes as requisites to access aid<sup>lxxx</sup>. In helping to promote the well-being of Afghanistan and international acceptance of the Taliban, Pakistan simultaneously promotes its own interests. These include gaining stability and influence in the region, as well as preventing refugees from entering its own borders<sup>lxxxi</sup>. As conflicts concerning border disputes and the Taliban’s refusal to intervene in TTP activity escalate, however, Pakistan’s support for the Taliban may begin to wane<sup>lxxxii</sup>.</p>
<b>Iran: Primary Stakeholder, Mixed</b>
<p>Iran has interests in the cessation of American involvement in the region and thus welcomes the departure of American troops from a neighbouring country despite the change in governance in Afghanistan. That being said, there are tensions between Iran and the Taliban on religious grounds: Iran is a majority Shi’a Muslim country, while the Taliban are Sunni Muslims. This religious distinction is one cause for tension but is exacerbated through the formation of other Sunni militant groups that have been forming in Afghanistan as well.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Additionally, Iran has taken refugees from Afghanistan in previous conflicts, but is less positioned to be able to do so in the present due to the pandemic and other reasons.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Iran is also a strong trade partner for Afghanistan, which causes the two countries to have closer relations as a result. These factors incentivize Iran to support a more stable governance structure in Afghanistan, regardless of religious denomination.</p>

### **Islamic State Khorasan Province: Secondary Stakeholder, Aggravator**

The Islamic State of Khorasan is a well-known jihadist militant group. They are also known as IS-K and are affiliated with ISIS. Some of the worst atrocities they have been blamed for are attacking girls' schools, hospitals and have been blamed for attacking pregnant women<sup>lxxxv</sup>. They consider members of Taliban apostates, making killing them legal in the IS-K interpretation of Islamic law<sup>lxxxvi</sup>. Have a history of fighting with the Taliban for turf, primarily in eastern Afghanistan. It is estimated that since 2017, the group has been responsible for about 250 clashes with Afghan and Pakistani security forces<sup>lxxxvii</sup>.

### **United Nations: Secondary Stakeholder, De-escalator**

The United Nations has been actively aiding Afghanistan for over a decade. In response to recent crises, the organization called for an additional \$4.4 billion USD in aid on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022<sup>lxxxviii</sup>. Working with over 150 humanitarian organizations and targeting needs in a variety of sectors<sup>lxxxix</sup>, they aim to optimize the impact of available resources and streamline the delivery of aid<sup>xc</sup>. A lack of funding has hindered their ability to facilitate aid in the past<sup>xc1</sup>.

## **Scenarios**

### **Best Case**

To improve the humanitarian and economic crises of the country, allies continue to support Afghanistan and encourage cooperation between international actors and the Taliban. Commitments for international aid are made expeditiously. Contributions meet or exceed the requested amount by UNOCHA. Humanitarian organizations are able to safely reinstate operations, delivering water and food to populations impacted by the drought and economic crisis. International financial assistance is made available, resulting in increased market liquidity and stabilizing inflation. Access to foreign funds is reinstated, allowing increased access to and improved functioning of public services. In exchange for access to aid and foreign funds, the Taliban concedes to further the inclusion and rights of women and minority groups, civil rights, and freedom of the press. Militarization does not expand further. Attacks against civilians by ISIS-K and other extremist groups remain infrequent despite the warmer weather. The drought currently impacting Afghanistan decreases in severity. The targeted forms of international cooperation and assistance help to provide some temporary improvements in human security in the country and mitigate the risk of famine and the destabilizing effects of potential external shocks, such as natural disasters.

### **Most Likely Case**

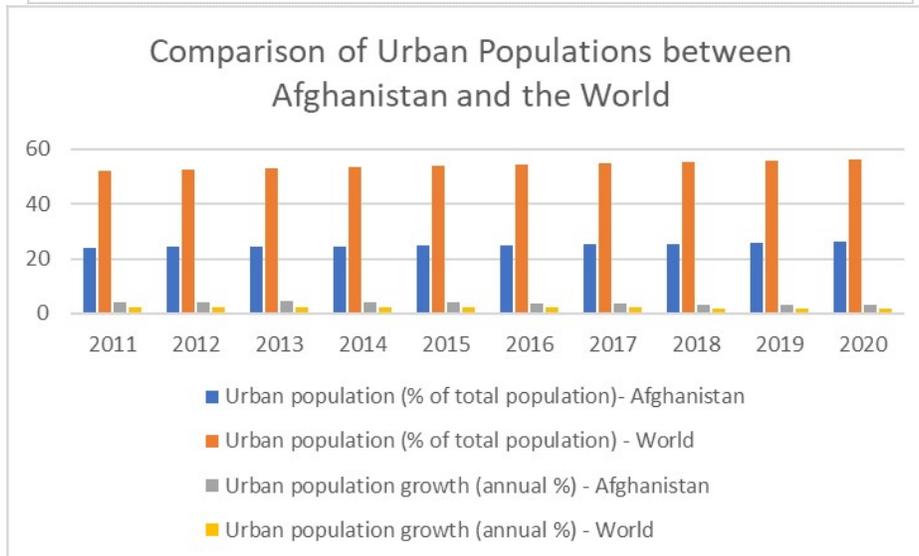
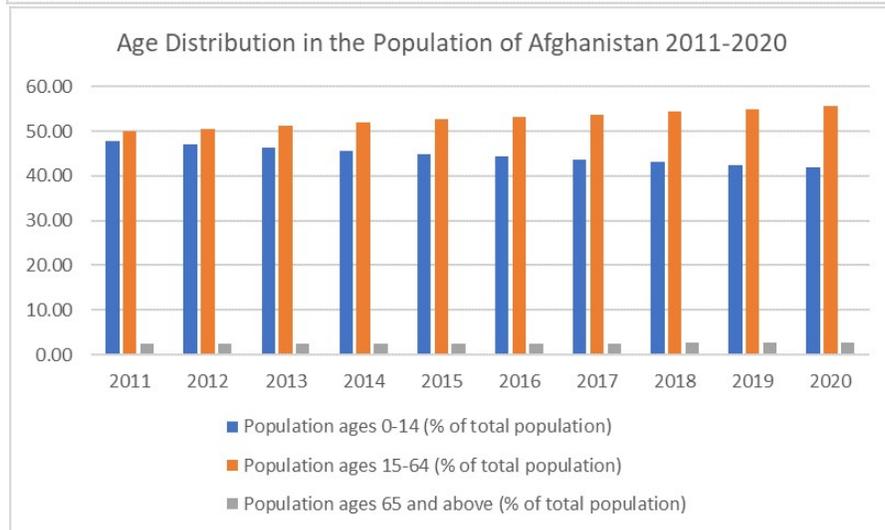
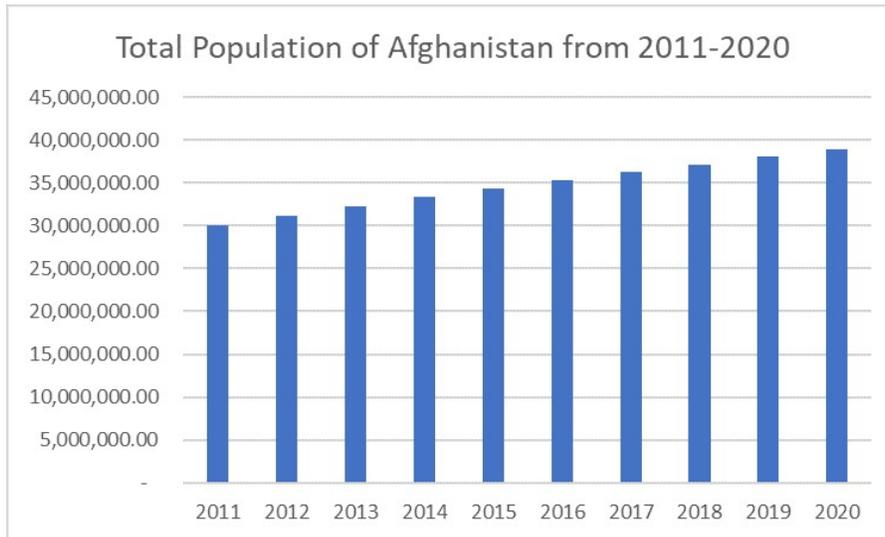
International aid contributions are made; however, they fall short of UNOCHA requests. Delays in the receipt of aid hinder the ability of humanitarian organizations to help all vulnerable populations. While financial assistance for development and humanitarian relief is granted with caution and conditions, foreign funds remain largely inaccessible. Small improvements in liquidity occur as financial assistance is given. The economy continues to struggle. Aid organizations are allowed to operate by the Taliban, but they face considerable challenges in negotiating access to populations and deterring corrupt practices, including nepotism. The Taliban accepts terms associated with the provision of humanitarian aid, but the negotiation process is protracted, and the humanitarian crisis deepens. Their commitment to the terms is rendered questionable by their uneven implementation across the country. Reports of disappearances, unlawful arrests, and harassment of journalists continue. No significant changes occur in the positions or interests of regional actors. No dramatic changes occur in the internal balance of power between the Taliban and other non-state armed actors.

### **Worst Case**

Slow response and minimal commitments by international actors render humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan insufficient. Rates of malnutrition and other health-related concerns continue to rise among the population and outpace the limited humanitarian supplies available. Illiquidity and inflation continue to cause economic stress, further hindering access to basic commodities. States refuse Afghanistan access to its foreign funds, limiting the extent to which public services can function. The UN and other humanitarian organizations are actively limited in their movements outside of Kabul, affecting the provision of assistance. Humanitarian aid is subject to corrupt practices further aggravating effective delivery. The Taliban refuses to comply with conditions attached to aid that would increase the rights, inclusion, and equality of the Afghan population. Worsening drought and other natural catastrophes compound the humanitarian emergency. Afghan refugees in neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, increase significantly. The interests of outside actors aggravate political dynamics and ethnic divisions within the country. This instigates internal armed conflict and militarization, decreasing civilian security. ISIS-K increases its activity, actively targeting minorities within the country and contributing to the instability of the Taliban regime. The resulting insecurity negatively impacts the general population, including increasing internal displacements and movements of refugees.

**Annex 1:**

Data from the World Bank Development Indicators<sup>xcii</sup>. Graphs created by the authors.



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- <sup>i</sup> Maizeland, Lindsay. "The Taliban in Afghanistan." *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed February 4, 2022 <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Comprehensive peace agreement: Agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America; signed in Doha, Qatar on February 29, 2020, which corresponds to rajab 5, 1441 on the hijri lunar calendar and hoot 10, 1398 on the Hijri Solar Calendar. accessed February 4, 2022 <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf>
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- <sup>iv</sup> Maizeland, Lindsay. "The Taliban in Afghanistan." *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed February 4, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan>.
- <sup>v</sup> Al Jazeera, "Who Is Mohammad Hasan Akhund, the Head of New Taliban Gov't?," *T Al Jazeera* accessed February 4, 2022 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/7/profile-mohammad-hassan-akhund-the-head-of-taliban-government>.
- <sup>vi</sup> "Crisiswatch: February Alerts and January Trends 2022." Crisis Group, February 3, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/february-alerts-and-january-trends#afghanistan>.
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- <sup>viii</sup> "War in Afghanistan | Global Conflict Tracker." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed February 4, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-afghanistan>.
- <sup>ix</sup> Associated Press. "Afghanistan: More than 100 Believed Killed despite Taliban Amnesty Offer, Says UN." *The Guardian*, January 31, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/31/afghanistan-more-than-100-believed-killed-despite-taliban-amnesty-offer-says-un>.
- <sup>x</sup> UNHCR. "Afghanistan ." Accessed February 4, 2022. <https://www.unhcr.org/afghanistan.html>.
- <sup>xi</sup> Asad Hashim and Mohsin Khan Momand, "After Oslo talks, what's next for Afghanistan?," *Aljazeera*, accessed 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/31/after-oslo-what-next-for-afghanistan>.
- <sup>xii</sup> "Corruption Perceptions Index", *Transparency International*, accessed February 6, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/afg>.
- <sup>xiii</sup> "Corruption Perceptions Index", *Transparency International*, accessed February 6, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/afg>.
- <sup>xiv</sup> "Corruption Perceptions Index", *Transparency International*, accessed February 6, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/afg>.
- <sup>xv</sup> CIFP, "CIFP Methodology, Data Descriptions, Data Sources", Carleton University, accessed January 31, 2022, [https://carleton.ca/cifp/wp-content/uploads/CIFPCompareMEthods\\_AllIndicatorDescriptions.pdf](https://carleton.ca/cifp/wp-content/uploads/CIFPCompareMEthods_AllIndicatorDescriptions.pdf).
- <sup>xvi</sup> Asad Hashim and Mohsin Khan Momand, "After Oslo talks, what's next for Afghanistan?," *Aljazeera*, accessed 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/31/after-oslo-what-next-for-afghanistan>.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Freedom House, "Freedom in the World", *Freedom House*, accessed on 4 February 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>.
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- <sup>xix</sup> International Crisis Group, "CrisisWatch", *International Crisis Group*, accessed on February 3, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/february-alerts-and-january-trends#afghanistan>.
- <sup>xx</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "2021 World Press Freedom Index", *Reporters Without Borders*, accessed on February 2, 2022, <https://rsf.org/en/ranking?#>.
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