**Committee:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Country:** Afghanistan

**Agenda Item(s):** Promotion and protection of human rights in the situation of human trafficking

Afghanistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia. The country covers a total area of 252,000 square miles, has a population size of approximately 40 million, and many of these individuals live in the capital city of Kabul, which also has economic significance in the country’s economy. It is bordered by [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan), [Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran), [Turkmenistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkmenistan), [Uzbekistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzbekistan), [Tajikistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajikistan) and [China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China). The president of Afghanistan is Ashraf Ghani.  In 2021, there were nearly 10 million students and 220,000 teachers in [Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan). The nation still requires more [schools](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_schools_in_Afghanistan) and teachers. There are over 100 government-run and private or internationally-administered [hospitals in Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hospitals_in_Afghanistan). The most advanced medical treatments are available in [Kabul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabul). Various interventions have been devised to improve uptake of health care services, including the distribution of waiver cards to very poor and female-headed households and the introduction of community-based health insurance. The country’s economy is a very poor one, being the 103rd in the world. The main source of income and economy in the country is agriculture, and Afghanistan produces enough to provide for the people, as well as to create a surplus for export. Wars, terrorism, and political instability have left the country in a terrible place, with recovery seeming almost impossible.

After more than forty years of conflict and instability, natural disasters, poverty, food insecurity, [pandemic](https://www.unrefugees.org/news/covid-19-update-facts-about-the-novel-coronavirus-and-how-it-impacts-refugees/)s and a changeover in government authorities in Afghanistan, an estimated 24 million Afghans are in need of help. Of the more than 6 million Afghans who were forcibly displaced from their homes by the end of 2021, 3.5 million were displaced within Afghanistan while 2.6 million were hosted as refugees, accounting for one of the largest [protracted refugee situations](https://www.unrefugees.org/news/protracted-refugee-situations-explained/) in the world. The events leading up to the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul in August 2021 intensified instability and violence in Afghanistan – causing even more displacement. Today, more than 6 million Afghans have been driven out of their homes or their country by conflict, violence, and poverty. As the humanitarian crisis continues, the resilience of Afghans and their host communities is being stretched to the limit. The majority of Afghans fleeing are internally displaced within the country. In 2021, there were 777,400 new internal displacements and by the end of 2021, there were 3.5 million internally displaced Afghans—continuing a consecutive 15-year rising trend in internal displacements. Afghan refugees are the third-largest displaced population in the world after Syrian refugees and displaced Venezuelans. The vast majority of refugees from Afghanistan are living in Pakistan and Iran, which continue to host more than 1.3 million and 780,000 registered Afghan refugees respectively. With all of this, Afghanistan also currently faces a large-scale human trafficking crisis that is rooted in centuries of abuse. Children and women are sold or kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery or armed forces.  Although technically illegal, the centuries-old custom has been proven hard to get rid of, with many government and security officials being complicit with its continuation. Trafficking within Afghanistan is more prevalent than transnational trafficking, and the majority of victims are children. In 2005 the [Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_Independent_Human_Rights_Commission) (AIHRC) reported 150 child trafficking cases to other states. Afghan boys and girls are trafficked within the country and into Iran, Pakistan and India as well as Persian gulf Arab states, where they live as slaves and are forced to [prostitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_prostitution) and forced [labor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labor) in brick [kilns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiln), carpet-making factories, and [domestic service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_worker). In some cases, the boys and girls were used for [organ trafficking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organ_trafficking). Forced begging is a growing problem in Afghanistan. [Mafia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mafia) groups organize professional begging rings.

Despite challenging circumstances, the UN Refugee Agency is on the ground delivering lifesaving support to millions of displaced Afghans. The needs of those who have had to flee suddenly are acute, increasing demand for shelter, food, water and health services. Responding to the most critical priorities, UNHCR has provided food, shelter, cash, hygiene and sanitary kits and other lifesaving assistance together with partners. UNHCR has also undertaken protection monitoring covering 34 provinces. The Afghani Government has shown efforts to also end human trafficking within its borders. In 2019, it joined the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on a global [initiative to stop human trafficking](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2019/September/afghanistan-joins-unodc-global-initiative-against-human-trafficking-and-migrant-smuggling.html). This initiative aims to allocate resources to countries in the Middle East and Asia that need assistance in the battle against human trafficking. USAID reported that in 2019, Afghanistan increased the number of Child Protection Units within national police precincts, preventing the recruitment of 357 child soldiers. Furthermore, the National Child Protection Committee (NCPC) was created to respond to the practice of “bacha bazi”. USAID has worked to assist the Afghani by training government officials to prosecute human traffickers and abusers as well as giving assistance to shelter workers that give legal and social resources to victims. It assisted in the creation of the [Afghanistan Network in Combating Trafficking in Persons](https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/combatting-human-trafficking-afghanistan-project#:~:text=The%20Combating%20Human%20Trafficking%20in%20Afghanistan%20Project%2C%20a%20joint%20effort,prosecution%20of%20traffickers%2C%20and%20protection) (ANCTIP), a network of Afghan NGOs that work with victims of human trafficking. NGOs within the country have provided most of the assistance to victims of human trafficking. Approximately 27 women’s shelters in 20 provinces provided protection and care for female victims of trafficking. NGOs also operated two shelters for male victims under the age of 18.

Looking at the country’s current position, it is declared that urgent support from other countries is needed to solve both the poverty and refugee crisis. The Taliban issue we are still currently facing as a country is going nowhere good as well, so this must be acted upon as fast as possible. However, as a country ourselves, we strongly advice the laws against human trafficking to be much strict, with actions being taken faster and the punishments being much sterner. We also believe that police forces, soldiers and etc. should be much more educated. The country should be together in this situation, and any reported anomalies should be reported and should be handled the moment they are reported. The country is facing a situation like no other, so any help from the member states is and will be appreciated.

**References**

* <https://www.unhcr.org/>
* <https://www.afghanaid.org.uk/world-refugee-day>
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_refugees#:~:text=Afghanistan%20is%20one%20of%20the,after%20Syrian%20and%20Venezuelan%20refugees>.
* <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/trafficking_afghanistan.pdf>
* <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/afghanistan/>
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking_in_Afghanistan>