

Monthly Analysis

November 2021

Monthly Analytical Report on the Situation in Afghanistan



QASED Strategic Research Center

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the political, economic and security situation in Afghanistan during November 2021. November 23 marks the first 100th day of Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, in which Afghans faced many challenges. During this period, the Taliban failed to gain legitimacy from the international community. That is why Afghanistan's assets in the United States were still frozen because of which the economic crisis in the country is spreading and many Afghans are still trying to leave the country. In terms of security, however, the month has seen a spate of ISIS attacks, raising concerns about the country's security situation. In this report, beside these topics, you would read details and analysis of the important events of this month.



Political Situation

In the political arena, no significant progress has been made this month to improve the country's political situation. November 23 marks the 100th day of Taliban's rule in the country, which is often seen as a crucial period for evaluating governments' commitments and actions. If we look at the situation in the country in these 100 days, we can see some achievements and challenges. The biggest achievement was that hundreds of Afghans were not killed every day during this period, except for a few attacks by ISIS, and the war did not disrupt daily life in any part of the country. But on the other hand, the Taliban government has not been able to gain domestic and international legitimacy due to which Afghanistan's assets are still frozen and the economic challenges and problems in the country are increasing day by day. In the last 100 days, not only a large proportion of female workers been out of work, but also the education process of girls above middle school has come to a halt, which is also the focus of the international community. Besides that, during these 100 days, the caretaker government of the Taliban was unable to start public universities.

Politically, the Taliban government's biggest problem is the lack of international recognition of the new caretaker government. However, Taliban officials have continued their efforts to reach out to the international community. On November 13, a delegation led by Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mottaqi visited Pakistan and met with Prime Minister Imran Khan besides other Pakistani officials. He also led a delegation to Doha in late November, where he held two days of talks with US representatives until November 30. At the meeting, which was attended by U.S. Special Representative Thomas West and his accompanying delegation, the two sides made their demands in which the main demand of the Taliban was the release of frozen assets of Afghanistan.

The Taliban also continued its efforts by sending an open letter to the US Congress on November 17, in which, according to Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mottaqi, members of the US Congress were asked to help unfreeze Afghanistan's assets. He described the current economic crisis in Afghanistan as a result of US policies, particularly freezing of Afghanistan's assets. However, U.S. Special Representative



Thomas West, said in response to the Taliban's letter that the Taliban had misrepresented the facts regarding Afghanistan's economic and humanitarian crisis, adding that Afghanistan was already suffering a terrible humanitarian crisis before mid-August. According to Thomas West, the United States had made it clear to the Taliban that if they pursued a military takeover rather than a negotiated settlement, “then critical non-humanitarian aid provided by the international community would all but cease, and that is what occurred.”

The Taliban appear to be unwilling to share power with their political opponents, and this is one of the main reasons why the Taliban have not been recognized by the international community. The UN Credentials Committee decided that Afghanistan's seat in the General Assembly should not be given to a Taliban government representative for now. The committee was made up of representatives from the United States, Russia, China, Sweden, the Bahamas, Bhutan, Chile, Namibia and Sierra Leone. The committee's decision means that Ghulam Mohammad Ishaqzai, the representative of Afghanistan's ousted government, will retain his seat at the United Nations for now.



Economic Situation

The deteriorating economic situation in Afghanistan was one of the biggest and most significant effects of the Taliban takeover in the country. Over the past three months, Afghanistan has been facing increasing economic challenges and problems, the effects of which are being felt both at the state level and at the level of the daily life of the people. The month of November also saw no improvement in the economy, rather the economic situation continued to deteriorate during the month.

Due to the international sanctions imposed on the Islamic Emirate, particularly by the United States, the assets of Afghanistan remained frozen during November, due to which the value of the Afghani currency was declining day by day and the prices of commodities in the markets were increasing respectively. At the end of November, one dollar was exchanged for 96 Afghanis, which is unprecedented in the last 20 years. Concerns have also been raised that if the Afghani continue to lose its value, commodity prices will rise further and ordinary Afghans will face even greater economic hardship. The Taliban also banned foreign currencies' transactions a few weeks ago to prevent the Afghani from depreciating, but this did not have much effect on stabilizing its value. Prior to the fall of the Taliban, the Central Bank of Afghanistan (CBA) regularly tried to prevent the devaluation of the Afghani by supplying US Dollar to the market, but now the central bank is facing a shortage of dollars and is unable to do so.

Currently, the only way to maintain the value of the Afghani and improve the economic situation is through international financial assistance and the release of frozen assets of Afghanistan by the World Bank and the United States, because, according to economic analysts, another alternative is increase in Afghanistan's exports, which seems unlikely at this stage.

On the other hand, since the Taliban came to power, the unemployment rate in the country has risen dramatically, forcing thousands of people to move to neighboring and other countries in search of better living conditions. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has predicted that as many as 97 percent of

Afghanistan's population is likely to live in poverty as the current economic crisis continues.

However, since the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, there have been repeated attempts to deliver humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. In early November, UN officials said that about one-third of aid to Afghanistan had provided to humanitarian assistance agencies. Currently, the distribution of this aid is underway in some provinces in the form of both commodity and cash.

Due to economic sanctions on Afghanistan, the government is currently struggling to pay the salaries of government employees. At the same time, efforts are being made to ensure that at least the salaries of education workers are paid directly by some countries or international organizations. On November 3, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced that it is working on a system that would allow Afghan teachers to receive their monthly salaries directly. Problems with the payment of teachers' salaries are also one of the reasons why girls' schools have remain closed, as the Taliban have repeatedly insisted that they are not opposed to girls' education, but they are working on solving technical problems.



Security Situation

In November, again, the most serious security concerns were ISIS attacks across the country. In early November, a bloody attack by the group took place in Kabul. On November 2, Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan military hospital was attacked by a group of armed assailants, which ISIS claimed responsibility for, killing at least 23 people and injuring more than 50 others. Among those killed was Mawlawi Hamdullah Noorzai, a senior Taliban official who was commander of the Kabul Corps. Noorzai was the first person to enter the presidential palace and sit behind the president's desk after entering Kabul on August 15. According to Taliban officials, four militants were also killed and one was captured alive.

Currently, the focus of ISIS attacks is on Shiite-populated areas and people. On November 13, a civilian car was targeted with a magnetic bomb in Dasht-e-Barchi, a Shiite area in the west of Kabul, killing and injuring several people. Four days later, on November 17, another explosion in the same area killed two people and injured five others. Earlier last month, Shia mosques in Kandahar and Kunduz provinces were attacked during Friday prayers, causing massive casualties.

It is now thought that it will be very difficult for the Taliban government to prevent ISIS attacks, as the group is using exactly the same tactics that the Taliban used against the previous government. The biggest concerns are bombings and mass attacks on civilian areas. However, it is said that the number of murders is high especially in the eastern provinces of the country and no report has been published. The Reuters news agency released a report in the first week of November depicting similar incidents in the east, in which Taliban officials and other civilians were mysteriously killed. Thus, there are analyses and claims that the Taliban's claims of security across the country do not correspond to objective facts.

The United Nations also said on November 18 that the Islamic State militant group had expanded its operations in Afghanistan and seems the group now had militants in all provinces of the country. But the Taliban still deny ISIS's such presence in the country. A Taliban spokesman said there are some problems in Kabul and Nangarhar



but the Taliban are working to eliminate them and they are "eliminated every day". But he told the BBC the group "does not and cannot have such a large structure and presence" in Afghanistan.

The end

