

# 1. Situation of the general population

## 1.1. Political context and international relations

The Taliban came to power on 15 August 2021 after ousting the previous US-backed government after 20 years of war.<sup>[26](#)</sup> They declared the reestablishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA),<sup>[27](#)</sup> previously in power in 1996–2001,<sup>[28](#)</sup> and soon claimed to control the entire Afghan territory.<sup>[29](#)</sup> Although they have met armed opposition by resistance groups and the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP),<sup>[30](#)</sup> the Taliban maintain territorial<sup>[31](#)</sup> and effective control over Afghanistan<sup>[32](#)</sup> – which brings responsibilities under international law.<sup>[33](#)</sup>

Soon after the takeover, the Taliban announced an all-male<sup>[34](#)</sup> interim government<sup>[35](#)</sup> which predominantly consisted of Pashtun Taliban members.<sup>[36](#)</sup> The de facto government has largely remained in place,<sup>[37](#)</sup> although there have been some reshuffles of de facto ministers.<sup>[38](#)</sup> As the de facto head of state,<sup>[39](#)</sup> the Taliban Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada enjoys absolute power and controls Afghanistan's political, administrative and religious structures,<sup>[40](#)</sup> although this has been disputed by multiple de facto cabinet members.<sup>[41](#)</sup> During a speech at the fourth anniversary of the Taliban takeover, on 15 August 2025, Akhundzada indicated that the de facto government had become permanent.<sup>[42](#)</sup>

In July 2025, Russia became the first and only country to recognise the Taliban's de facto government.<sup>[43](#)</sup> Other countries have indicated that recognition is conditional,<sup>[44](#)</sup> calling on the de facto government to be more 'inclusive' and respect women's and girls' rights.<sup>[45](#)</sup> Over 100 persons within the de facto administration are under UN sanctions,<sup>[46](#)</sup> and some are part of the Haqqani network<sup>[47](#)</sup> (designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK,<sup>[48](#)</sup> the US<sup>[49](#)</sup> and the UN<sup>[50](#)</sup>). This complicates Afghanistan's international relations,<sup>[51](#)</sup> and protracts its isolation.<sup>[52](#)</sup> On 8 July 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for the Taliban Supreme Leader and the de facto Chief Justice, Abdul Hakim Haqqani, on charges of 'gender persecution'.<sup>[53](#)</sup>

Several states and international organisations have engaged with the de facto government, despite not recognising it,<sup>[54](#)</sup> and diplomatic engagement has been increasing over the years.<sup>[55](#)</sup> Some countries have been reopening their embassies in Kabul City,<sup>[56](#)</sup> and many countries in the region have accepted Taliban-appointed attachés at Afghan embassies<sup>[57](#)</sup> and have been conducting formal visits to Afghanistan.<sup>[58](#)</sup> The UN<sup>[59](#)</sup> and the EU have physical presence in the country, mainly to provide humanitarian aid.<sup>[60](#)</sup> The US do not have diplomatic presence, but its interests in Afghanistan are formally represented by Qatar.<sup>[61](#)</sup> In March 2025, Switzerland reopened an office in Kabul City for humanitarian aid<sup>[62](#)</sup> and thus became the 'first Western country to re-establish on-the-ground presence' since the Taliban takeover.<sup>[63](#)</sup> Some European countries, including Norway and Germany, allow envoys of the de facto government to work at Afghan embassies and consulates.<sup>[64](#)</sup> Germany has also been communicating with the de facto authorities 'on a technical level' to facilitate deportations of rejected asylum seekers.<sup>[65](#)</sup>

De facto officials have moreover been travelling to attend regional<sup>[66](#)</sup> and international meetings.<sup>[67](#)</sup> Despite being under sanctions, some individuals have been granted exceptions to travel for personal and official reasons, in more than 'five dozen' instances since August 2022, according to the American policy organisation George W. Bush Institute.<sup>[68](#)</sup> The de facto authorities have also been invited to UN meetings on

Afghanistan ('Doha 3' in 2024<sup>69</sup> and 'Doha 4' in 2025<sup>70</sup>) and the UN climate meeting COP29 (with observer status).<sup>71</sup> The former government has however continued to represent Afghanistan at the UN,<sup>72</sup> although the seat might be handed over to the de facto authorities under the UN 'Mosaic plan' for engagement with Afghanistan.<sup>73</sup>

26

Kluijver, R., Is it time to recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan?, The Conversation, 29 December 2024, [url](#); CFR, The Taliban in Afghanistan, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

27

WSJ, Taliban unveil new Afghan government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

28

BBC News, Hardliners get key posts in new Taliban government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

29

VOA, Taliban order Afghan media to use group's official name, 1 October 2021, [url](#)

30

Rubin, B. R., Afghanistan Under the Taliban: Findings on the Current Situation, 20 October 2022, Stimson Center, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Afghanistan's Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), pp. I, 11;

31

UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for

32

HRW, An Avenue to Justice for Afghan Women, 13 May 2024, [url](#); ICRC, The legal protection of persons living under the control of non-State armed groups, January 2022, [url](#)

33

HRW, An Avenue to Justice for Afghan Women, 13 May 2024, [url](#)

34

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 13

35

BBC News, Hardliners get key posts in new Taliban government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

### 36

International Crisis Group, The Taliban's Neighbourhood: Regional Diplomacy with Afghanistan, 30 January 2024, [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 10, 13; Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 46–47

### 37

UK, House of Commons Library, Recent developments in Afghanistan, 18 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 7

### 38

Amu TV, Taliban reassign six officials in latest reshuffle, 12 February 2025, [url](#); MEI, Taliban Leadership Tracker, 2025, [url](#)

### 39

BBC News, Afghanistan country profile, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

### 40

Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan, Situasjonen for afghanske menn, 20 January 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Clark, K., Co-director and Senior Analyst at the AAN, in USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 1:06:40–1:07:01; Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 12

### 41

Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 12

### 42

Bakhtar News Agency [X], posted on: 15 August 2025, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Taliban Officials Are No Longer 'Acting', 19 August 2025, [url](#)

### 43

BBC News, Russia becomes first state to recognise Afghanistan's Taliban government, 4 July 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Russia recognises the Taliban: Which other countries may follow?, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

### 44

Brookings, Recognition and the Taliban, 30 September 2022, [url](#); Weiss, S., One year into the Taliban's second rule, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 18 August 2022, [url](#)

### 45

VOA, UN talks in Doha end; recognition remains distant dream for Taliban, 1 July 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, Which Countries Have Relations With The Taliban's Unrecognized Government?, 30 May 2024, [url](#)

[46](#)

VOA, UN talks in Doha end; recognition remains distant dream for Taliban, 1 July 2024, [url](#)

[47](#)

UK, House of Commons Library, Afghanistan: One year under a Taliban government, 10 October 2022, [url](#), p. 5

[48](#)

UK, Home Office, Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

[49](#)

USDOS, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d., [url](#)

[50](#)

UN, United Nations Security Council Consolidated List, [url](#), section TAe.012

[51](#)

UK, House of Commons Library, Afghanistan: One year under a Taliban government, 10 October 2022, [url](#), p. 6

[52](#)

Diplomat (The), Are Taliban-Iran Relations Moving on a Positive Trajectory?, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

[53](#)

ICC, Situation in Afghanistan: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II issues arrest warrants for Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

[54](#)

UN, Afghanistan's Future Depends on Taliban's Engagement with World, But Restrictions on Women Signal Lack of International Commitments, Briefer Warns Security Council, 27 September 2022, [url](#); Washington Institute (The), Turkey Calls for Recognition of the Taliban's Islamic Emirate, 17 March 2022, [url](#)

[55](#)

IISS, Towards the Reintegration of Afghanistan into the International Community, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

[56](#)

TOLOnews, Muttaqi Says More Embassies Will Reopen in Kabul, 30 March 2023, [url](#); RFE/RL, Which Countries

[57](#)

RFE/RL, Which Countries Have Relations With The Taliban's Unrecognized Government?, 30 May 2024, [url](#); ORF, Taliban's diplomatic advances in Central Asia, 12 August 2024, [url](#); TOLOnews, Spokesman: Islamic Emirate

[58](#)

UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for

[59](#)

Kluijver, R., Is it time to recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan?, The Conversation, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

[60](#)

Reuters, European Union re-establishes physical presence in Afghanistan -spokesman, 21 January 2022, [url](#)

[61](#)

USDOS, U.S. Relations With Afghanistan, 15 August 2022, [url](#)

[62](#)

Switzerland, Swiss Federal Authorities, Switzerland re-establishes presence in Kabul with humanitarian office, 31 March 2024, [url](#)

[63](#)

Afghanistan International, Swiss Development Agency Resumes Operations In Kabul After Four-Year Absence, 27 August 2025, [url](#)

[64](#)

DW, Germany allows Taliban envoys to facilitate deportations, 21 July 2025, [url](#); Roy-Chaudhury, R., Will Russia's diplomatic recognition of the Afghan Taliban government have a domino effect?, IISS, 8 August 2025, [url](#)

[65](#)

DW, Afghanistan: Are the Taliban still isolated after 4 years?, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

[66](#)

UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for

[67](#)

Afghanistan International, Taliban Delegation Attends 15th Session Of OIC In Gambia, 5 May 2024, [url](#)

[68](#)

George W. Busch Institute, Taliban Travel Tracker, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

[69](#)

Watkins, A., What's Next for the U.N.'s Doha Process on Afghanistan?, USIP, 16 July 2024, [url](#)

[70](#)

UNAMA, UN convenes working group meetings on counter-narcotics, private sector, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

[71](#)

Ruttig, T., No Climate Change Deniers: The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan goes to COP29, as an observer, AAN, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

[72](#)

Kluijver, R., Is it time to recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan?, The Conversation, 29 December 2024, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Taliban Accuses UN Of Bias, Says Group Deserves Afghanistan's UN Representation, 30 July 2025, [url](#)

[73](#)

Khaama Press, Rights Activists slam UN's 'Mosaic' Plan for undermining Legal and Moral Legitimacy in Afghanistan, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: [info@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:info@euaa.europa.eu)