

Resolution on the situation of Afghani nationals in Afghanistan with the focus on Afghan women and girls



Following the 9/11 attacks in New York, U.S. troops and their NATO allies ousted the Taliban from power in November 2001. The Taliban group had been harbouring Osama Bin Laden and other al-Qaeda figures linked to the 9/11 attacks. Over the last two decades, the U.S. and its allies have fought terrorism and pushed back al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Despite all the training and funding, that was provided by the western militaries to the Afghan national security forces, the Taliban managed to seize power in the country two weeks before the U.S. was set to complete its troop withdrawal. Trump's agreement regarding the withdrawal of troops leaves us Europeans with a notion that it was more important to abide by the date rather than securing an intra-Afghan political agreement. As a consequence, this radical Islamist group that ran the country in the late 1990s, have again taken control by capturing all major cities, including Kabul, in a matter of weeks. As a consequence, the Western-backed government and its national security forces collapsed.

The EU has funded humanitarian operations in Afghanistan since 1994, providing over 1 billion EUR. Moreover, during the course of the past decade, the EU has had an active presence in this country to support social and economic development. Many EU Member States, NATO partners and allied countries have contributed military and civilian resources to the stabilization and development of Afghanistan. It is essential to preserve the progress of the past two decades, in particular regarding human rights, women's rights, and fundamental freedoms.

We emphasize the consistent support of EPP for women's rights, EPP in particular underlines the statement of UN Secretary-General, in which he describes it as horrible and heart-breaking to see that the rights of Afghan girls and women are about to be taken away. We greatly welcome and give our full support to the statement of the European Union and the United States and 18 other states ¹, in which they express their deep concern for women and girls in Afghanistan, for their rights to education, employment and freedom of movement. Afghan women and girls, as all Afghan people, deserve to live in safety, security and dignity.

Apart from the Taliban, al-Qaeda is still present in Afghanistan, and this presents another major threat not only to the rights and fundamental freedoms of the Afghan people, but also to the region itself – and to Europe. The Afghan crisis is one of the top generators of displacement worldwide. A new influx into Pakistan and Iran, but also into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, is to be expected. Since 2015, around 570.000 Afghans have requested asylum in the EU, 44.000 in 2020 alone – thus making Afghanistan the second most important country of origin last year. At the same time the EPP wants to prevent a replay of Europe's migration crisis in 2015 when more than a million people fleeing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan landed on Europe's soil. As we all have seen during the past years, illegal migration can be a source of social tension and can destabilise our societies.

Therefore, the EPP:

- Condemns in the strongest terms the alarming increase in violence in Afghanistan; condemns atrocities and violation of rights and freedoms committed by the Taliban towards the Afghan population;
- Expresses its deep concern about the humanitarian and security crisis this has brought about;
- Calls for the immediate evacuation of EU and allied nationals; as well as those Afghani nationals and their families who have previously worked and supported the Western allies and who wish to depart in accordance with international law and human rights; roads, airports and border crossings must remain open in order to ensure the safe departure of foreign personnel;
- Calls for thorough security screenings at the EU external borders to make sure that no al-Qaeda members or any jihadi group affiliated members are evacuated to Europe;
- Calls for EU countries to protect those Afghani citizens who are most in danger of Taliban reprisals;

1 Including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Senegal, Norway, Argentina and New Zealand.

- Calls upon the European Commission and the EU Member States to increase cooperation and support for Afghanistan's neighbouring countries so that refugees, above all women and girls, can get protection close to their home country – particularly groups of women that are at unique risk including MPs, journalists, judges, researchers and activists, among others;
- Reminds the Taliban that it is now their duty and responsibility to ensure security in Afghanistan and we urge them to abide by international law – to guarantee the protection of ethnic and religious minorities, women and children;
- Urgently calls upon the European Commission and the EU Member States in particular to take responsibility for Afghan women and seek acute solutions, consisting of:
 - providing women in Afghanistan with all humanitarian support and assistance, including financial assistance, to empower them to have their voices heard;
 - Making the greatest possible financial and political commitment to organizations fighting for women's and girls' rights in Afghanistan;
 - Ensuring that issues regarding women's political participation, eradicating illiteracy and ensuring access for girls and women to education and to economic resources (i.e. Millennium Development Goals) are an integrated part of the policy of the EU and its Member States towards Afghanistan; to ensure that women and girls who have left Afghanistan can continue their education in other countries;
- Calls for the creation of an EU investigation committee that will investigate crimes committed by the Taliban; the latter need to be held accountable for all their acts;
- Calls for urgent EU investigations into the role Pakistan has played – via official channels as well as via clandestine support – in undermining security in Afghanistan and/or in abetting terrorist activity;
- The EU investigation committee should also investigate Iran's implication in this conflict, as well as Qatar's implication, as the country has had cordial relations with the militants; high ranking Taliban members have settled in Qatar with their families during the last decade;
- Reiterates and calls for increased security and defence capacity on the part of both EU Member States and the EU as a whole, as a complement to NATO; the EU must be able to protect its vital interests – including, in such an emergency, the capacity to evacuate EU personnel; we call on the European Commission urgently to put forward plans for how the EU in future can be better prepared for such an exigency;
- Acknowledges — in an increasingly interconnected world and in light of the current destabilisation of Afghanistan — the renewed strategic significance of Central and South Asia for EU interests; we therefore call on the European Council, European Commission and External Action Service urgently to put forward a comprehensive, updated strategy for Central Asia, complementary to the forthcoming comprehensive strategy for the Indo-Pacific and to the EU's other external policies.

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**If you have any question you
would like to ask please contact us.**