

## Chaos and Consequences: Examining the impact of the Taliban's Kabul takeover

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August 2023

The second anniversary of the Taliban's Kabul takeover highlights ongoing security concerns in Afghanistan for all stakeholders in the region. The Taliban claim to have full control of the region and a firm hold on security – but it is reported that this is far from the truth.



The Taliban's seizure of control of Kabul on 15 August 2021 drew much criticism of the United States' withdrawal from the region. Despite the Taliban's claims of having secured the region, reports indicate that regional conflicts are still ongoing, including attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-KP) targeting Shia minorities. All these signs underscore the ongoing level of instability following the departure of the US.

### **Economic collapse**

Afghanistan is struggling to deal with its present economic decline. Following the Taliban takeover, the country experienced tremendous economic hardship. This has caused mass unemployment, a collapsed housing market and public health concerns, including malnutrition. The Afghani (local currency) has also crashed causing inflation, with many finding it difficult to even survive.

### **Failed governance**

The Taliban's governance is far from transparent and considered vague at best. They refer to themselves as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, with the supreme leader being the Emir. Aside from this, they have produced little detail as to their legal and political principles. They continue to enforce controversial rules on women's rights and attempt to find ways to establish a more secure permanently seated government.

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However, there remains a continued unwillingness to provide clear objectives on how they will rule, and this raises eyebrows as to rights and liberties of its people.

### **Humanitarian concerns**

The country now mostly survives on foreign aid, with its people said to be experiencing hunger levels more serious than any other country in the world. This escalating crisis also has repercussions for neighbouring countries. Pakistan has been at breaking point with the volume of refugees evacuating Afghanistan and is thus experiencing serious security and humanitarian issues.

The world is watching and becoming increasingly concerned with the Taliban's ideals, which include its unwillingness to separate itself from terror groups like al-Qaeda. The continuing oppression of women's rights and the failure to address the humanitarian situation is also fuelling tensions.

### **Summary**

Stakeholders must pay close attention to Afghanistan and contemplate the impact this crisis is having on the region's stability, livelihoods and counterterrorism defences. The world will no doubt be pressing the Taliban to improve all the above, while adhering to the profound cultural differences that come with negotiating with a group that has such extreme ideologies. The anniversary on 15 August is a chillingly significant date that serves to remind onlookers of the challenges that remain in solving Afghanistan's problems.

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