



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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Honorable Chairperson,

Distinguished members of the Committee,

It is my honor to be here today to speak on behalf of the people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to earnestly plead our very clear and legitimate case for exemptions under Article 19 of the United Nations Charter.

Our inability to make necessary payments had been attributable to conditions beyond our control, shaped by a complex web of political, social, economic and security challenges and uncertainty facing our people and nation. I will elaborate on these challenges which has hampered Afghanistan's payment of its financial contributions to the UN.

Since the Taliban's forced and military takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, the UN and the international community have not recognized the Taliban regime as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. This is largely due to the Taliban's failure and unwillingness to address the current crisis, break the impasse and engage constructively to meet national and international calls for:

- fair, responsible, inclusive system of governance,
- policies that respect human rights and dignity,
- rightful inclusion of women in all aspects of society and
- counter-terrorism efforts—all things that they promised to the world and to the people of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is now nearing the three-year mark under the Taliban's repressive and unilateral rule and the economic and humanitarian crises have deepened. Ninety-seven percent of the population is now living in poverty, and two-thirds struggling for basic survival.

Hunger has affected 20 million people; unemployment has increased, and migration continues despite grave risks. A staggering 29 million people need humanitarian aid. A substantial reduction in international aid in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover has severely impacted Afghanistan's economy.

In addition, currently, Afghanistan is facing severe challenges from climate change and the country is experiencing its third consecutive year of drought. In October 2023, four magnitude 6.3 earthquakes struck Herat Province, Afghanistan. It caused significant devastation with over 1,500 fatalities and 2,600 injuries. The earthquake struck communities which were already extremely vulnerable and had lived with decades of conflict, poverty and food insecurity.

Beyond that, floods in the northeastern and northwestern provinces in recent months have affected over 80,000 people. The floods in Ghor province killed at least 50 people and damaged more than 4,000 houses and shops. Floods on May 10 and 11 in Badakhshan, Takhar, and Baghlan provinces resulted in 347 deaths, 1,651 injuries, the destruction of 7,800 houses, the loss of nearly 14,000 livestock, and damage to 24,000 hectares of land.

We are grateful to the international community for funding the UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan and to the national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for staying and delivering the emergency and life-saving assistance and support to the people of Afghanistan.

Under Taliban rule, social conditions in Afghanistan continue to regress significantly. The Taliban have reversed and undone the hard-won achievements of Afghanistan in the past two decades. They have:

- nullified Afghanistan Constitution and national laws; and
- disassembled Afghanistan Parliament and key institutions established to promote and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of Afghan citizens.

Afghanistan's women and girls faced with a gender apartheid and gender persecution. It has been more than 1000 days the girls beyond six grades are deprived of educations. Women and girls are required to adhere to a strict dress code and are not permitted to travel more than 75 km without a male guardian.

The Taliban is systemically violating the rights of women and young girls while regressing with time and resorting to using draconian, cruel, and inhumane practices and policies of 1990s. Female employees of non-governmental organizations and the United Nations face restrictions on their ability to work, while female protesters are subjected to daily detention and torture. \

Additionally, the rights and freedoms of marginalized communities have been severely curtailed and targeted killings of Shia scholars and our fellow Hazara compatriots persist.

Cultural and artistic expressions are being suppressed, stifling the rich cultural heritage of Afghanistan. The population lives in constant fear of retribution for any perceived violations of the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Mr. Chair,

The Taliban's grave human rights violations and abuses, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, and torture, especially among former security forces and civilians accused of being associated groups opposed to the Taliban continue to happen across Afghanistan despite their leader's decree of Amnesty. These acts along with brutal punishments, and suppression of media and civil society have made crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law commonplace. Reports from UNAMA, Amnesty International, and the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan's human rights paint a grim picture.

The Taliban who hosted the Al-Qaida leader in 1990s and have been the cause of conflict, destruction, and bloodshed in Afghanistan in the past three decades, have been ruling the country through fear and intimidation. They have not changed at all and they have established thousands of Jehadi Madrasas across Afghanistan to promote their fundamental and extremist ideologies among the youth.

In the same token, Taliban have broken their promises of trying to break with terrorist groups, respect universal human rights, and take measures that prevent Afghanistan from posing a security threat to other countries. As the UN Security Council Monitoring Team reports confirmed, the Taliban continues to maintain links to Al-Qaida in addition to nearly 20 other terrorist entities, including Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ETIM, IMU etc. are extremely alarming.

The Taliban's association with terror groups have created serious concerns and threats to the people of Afghanistan, neighboring countries and the international community. The people of Afghanistan have been the prime victim of terrorism in the past two decades. Terrorism is the antithesis of human rights, independence, and development.

The Taliban's failure to comply with their international obligations and commitments under the Doha agreement for bringing peace and stability in Afghanistan resulted in a political stalemate at the international level. The group's hardline stance on human rights and women's rights has drawn widespread condemnation, further isolated Afghanistan globally.

It has been almost three years that the international community has collectively engaged with the Taliban in dialogue and discussion, hoping for a positive response on the shared demands of the people of Afghanistan and international community. However, they not only have not met those demands, but are in complete denial, trying to justify and cover their actions under the guise of a distorted and self-interpreted version of religion and culture.

Mr. Chair,

Despite these challenges, the people of Afghanistan remain resolute, with diverse groups working tirelessly to defend their rights and national values. Civil society, women, youth, and political movements have mobilized to form a united national agenda. The people of Afghanistan are tired of conflict and determined to overcome the crisis and achieve a permanent peace, stability and prosperity.

We know that bringing peace to our country is a responsibility that primarily belongs to us - the people of Afghanistan. Over the past two years, Afghans from all walks of life and age groups - inside and outside Afghanistan - are tirelessly working and raising their voices in defending their rights, hard-earned achievements of past two decades and national values. This will not be realized without urgent and concerted efforts by the international community. We admire the UN Security Council for adopting the Independent Assessment report and its forward-looking recommendation for a coordinated, coherent and structured international approach for Afghanistan.

We are grateful to the UN Secretary-General's efforts for convening two rounds of the Special Envoys and Representatives meetings in Doha last year and last May. We look forward to the Third Doha meeting with a tangible outcome at the end of this month.

Mr. Chair,

Against this backdrop, Afghanistan Missions to the United Nations along with most of Afghan diplomatic and consular missions abroad have continued to represent the State and the people of Afghanistan. We will continue to defend the rights and voices of the people of Afghanistan and constructively contribute to the international efforts to find a political settlement and to achieve a long-lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Despite all challenges including suspension of all communications with and financial support from the capital or other sources, we are committed to uphold Afghanistan's international obligations under international law. We are hopeful that an inclusive, accountable broad-based and legitimate administration that is able to reflect the will and national aspirations of the people of Afghanistan is established through a national dialogue and puts an end to the suffering and misery of the people of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been an active and committed member of the United Nations since its membership in 1946. We will continue to uphold the principles and objectives of the UN Charter.

Afghanistan Mission to the UN has been unable to secure the necessary resources to fulfill our financial obligations to the United Nations. Attempts to leverage diplomatic channels, including our embassies abroad, have been thwarted by a lack of sufficient revenue and the absence of a legitimate government structure capable of facilitating payments.

Our embassies, while representing the Afghan people, are operating under severe financial constraints. The revenue generated by these diplomatic missions falls far short of the funds required to meet our obligations to the United Nations. This financial shortfall underscores the broader economic challenges facing Afghanistan in the absence of a functioning government.

Mr. Chair,

The profound political, social, economic, security and other challenges facing Afghanistan has made it unfeasible for Afghanistan to meet its financial obligations to the United Nations at this time. The current social and political impasse in Afghanistan and the urgent need to address the economic and humanitarian crisis necessitate our plea for an exemption under Article 19.

However, we acknowledge our obligation to meet our financial responsibilities to the organization and based on our historic and longstanding commitment to the principles of the Charter, we will continue to seek all measures to find a practical and legitimate solution to make our payments as soon as possible. We know that this situation is temporary, and we are certain that we will overcome it.

We respectfully request that the Committee on Contributions consider our extraordinary circumstances and grant us an exemption from Article 19. Reinstating our right to vote at the UN General Assembly would provide significant moral support and send a strong message of solidarity from the UN during these tumultuous times, particularly to the people of Afghanistan, especially Afghan women and girls.

Moreover, as the UN hosts the Summit of the Future and many high-level meetings this year, and as we endeavor to revitalize and reform the UN to address current global conflicts and crises and foster a rules-based international system and international law, Afghanistan's voice and vote are more crucial than ever. As a conflict-affected, least-developed, and landlocked country, our participation is vital. Your understanding and support are crucial for the survival and future stability of Afghanistan.

Thank you.