



Plenary sitting

B9-0199/2022

5.4.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the situation of women's rights (2022/2571(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the situation of women's rights (2022/2571(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan,
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001), 1373 (2001), 2210 (2015), 2344 (2017), 2513 (2020) and 2593 (2021),
- having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward on migration issues of 2 October 2016,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement of 18 February 2017 on Partnership and Development between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, of the other part¹,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 24 July 2017 entitled ‘Elements for an EU Strategy on Afghanistan’ (JOIN(2017)0031),
- having regard to the completion of the withdrawal of the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan on 30 August 2021,
- having regard to the Taliban’s announcement of the creation of the caretaker government of Afghanistan of 7 September 2021,
- having regard to the UN international donor conference on Afghanistan, which took place on 13 and 14 September 2021 in Geneva,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 September 2021 on Afghanistan,
- having regard to the Afghan Women Days high-level conference held at the European Parliament on 1 and 2 February 2022,
- having regard to UN Resolution 2626 (2022) of 17 March 2022 on the situation in Afghanistan, which extended the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan for one year,
- having regard to the declaration of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the European Union of 28 March 2022 calling for the immediate re-opening of secondary schools for girls in Afghanistan,

¹ OJ L 67, 14.3.2017, p. 3.

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas while under Taliban rule in the 1990s, Afghanistan was the main safe haven and operational headquarters of international terrorist organisations, in particular al-Qaeda, which was responsible for numerous barbaric terrorist attacks targeting civilians in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and the US, and for the deadliest terrorist attack in human history on 11 September 2001 in the United States, in which almost 3 000 people of more than 90 nationalities were killed;
 - B. whereas that barbaric attack on the United States 20 years ago triggered UN Security Council Resolution 1368 (2001) and the US-led intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, which resulted in the overthrow of the Taliban along with the dismantling and decline of al-Qaeda and other global jihadist organisations, the progress of which is now in grave peril;
 - C. whereas NATO and allied countries have had a presence in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001; whereas in April 2021, following three years of negotiations with the Taliban, the United States announced a withdrawal of troops to be completed by 11 September 2021; whereas the withdrawal of NATO and allied troops was concluded in August 2021;
 - D. whereas the Taliban then rapidly advanced on government-controlled territory; whereas the Afghan army and security forces were unable to mount an effective defence and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country; whereas the Taliban subsequently established full control over the country and re-established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan;
 - E. whereas the Taliban announced the formation of an all-male caretaker government on 7 September 2021 under the leadership of Muhammad Hassan Akhund, Head of the Taliban Leadership Council; whereas the Taliban's caretaker government was formed without keeping the Taliban's promise of an inclusive government;
 - F. whereas the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been dismantled; whereas the Taliban have restricted the participation of women in leadership roles in Afghanistan, are persecuting women leaders, officials and activists, and have dispersed women's rights protests; whereas female activities in public life have ceased to exist, reversing the achievements in women's rights of the period from 2001 to 2021;
 - G. whereas the EU supports the establishment of an Afghan women leaders forum as a first step in ensuring a structured and continuous platform for Afghan women from diverse backgrounds, which aims to facilitate an inclusive dialogue for Afghan women from various sectors to ensure that their views form part of a national dialogue about Afghanistan and are conveyed to the Taliban-appointed de facto government and the wider international community;
 - H. whereas the Taliban have indefinitely extended their ban on girls above the age of 12

(grade 6) continuing their education; whereas this denies secondary-level education to over one million Afghan girls and is a violation of the fundamental right to education for all children, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- I. whereas the new policies introduced by the Taliban Government have greatly affected the ability of women to make a living, pushing them further into poverty, with many women heads of household being hit especially hard; whereas this increases the risk of women being exploited and makes them vulnerable to being trafficked for the purposes of forced marriage, sexual exploitation and forced labour;
- J. whereas religious freedom conditions have severely deteriorated since the Taliban takeover of the country, and whereas the Taliban have intimidated, threatened and targeted members of religious minority communities and carried out terrorist attacks;
- K. whereas the externally held assets of Da Afghanistan Bank (Afghanistan's central bank) continue to be frozen and economic sanctions are in place; whereas the economy and banking sector require revitalisation; whereas the overall economic situation continues to be precarious, with Afghanistan being one of the most assistance-dependent countries in the world; whereas Afghanistan is currently experiencing its worst drought in decades;
- L. whereas the European Union held an in-person dialogue with the Taliban in November 2021 in Doha, Qatar; whereas in early 2022, the EU re-established a residual physical presence in Afghanistan for humanitarian purposes and to monitor the humanitarian situation; whereas the return of the EU to Kabul does not entail recognition of the Taliban regime;
- M. whereas the European Union has launched projects worth EUR 268.3 million focusing on maintaining education, sustaining livelihoods and protecting public health, including for refugees, migrants and internally displaced people, and whereas this funding is channelled via UN agencies; whereas EU development assistance continues to be suspended;
- N. whereas the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which is the primary international representation on the ground, will focus on several key activities, including coordinating the provision of humanitarian assistance, delivering essential goods, conducting outreach activities, providing nice offices for dialogues between Afghan stakeholders and the international community, promoting good governance, the rule of law and human rights, and supporting and promoting gender equality;
- O. whereas the human rights situation remains grave; whereas reports of reprisals against former government officials, summary killings and enforced disappearances of former members of security forces, acts which contradict the announced amnesty, are constantly surfacing; whereas attacks and intimidation against members of minority groups and civil society continue; whereas the number of child marriages has increased not only in rural areas but also in cities, in order to resolve economic matters or restore family ties;
- P. whereas the UN has issued an appeal for USD 4.4 billion to meet the critical needs of Afghans and stave off hunger, disease, malnutrition, death and displacement; whereas

an additional USD 3.6 billion is required to sustain essential social programmes; whereas the UN has estimated that 97 % of the population could plunge into poverty by mid-2022 and noted that the poverty rate in September 2021 was 72 %;

- Q. whereas there are credible reports warning that Afghanistan is once again becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups; whereas a large and growing contingent of internationally recognised terrorist organisations are currently operating in Afghanistan, including al-Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Katibat al-Imam al-Bukhari and the Turkestan Islamic Party, many of which are believed to be stepping up their recruitment of foreign fighters from the country; whereas ISIS-K controls some territory in eastern Afghanistan and appears to be receiving financial support from members in Syria and Iraq; whereas the ideological and political ties between the Taliban and global jihadist organisations such as al-Qaeda remain strong and are likely to be increasingly strengthened over time;
1. Deplores the violent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban and refuses to recognise their current government; expresses its serious concerns about the future of Afghanistan, as the Afghan people are being deprived of the basic rights and freedoms they have enjoyed over the past 20 years;
 2. Recalls that the EU approach towards Afghanistan since the Taliban took power is based on five guiding principles: the departure of all foreign nationals and Afghans who wish to leave the country, respect for human rights, the implementation of humanitarian operations, preventing Afghanistan from serving as a base for hosting or exporting terrorism, and the establishment of an inclusive and representative government;
 3. Concludes that nine months after the Taliban took power, all the concerns that the international community expressed towards the Taliban have unfortunately materialised and the benchmarks enshrined in the guiding principles have not been met; regrets that the achievements of democratic Afghanistan over the last two decades have been reversed;
 4. Expresses deep concern about the continuing humanitarian, economic and refugee crisis in Afghanistan; expresses grave concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in Afghanistan and the volatile security situation in the country;
 5. Underlines the sad fact that nowhere have women's and girls' rights been challenged to the extent they have been in Afghanistan; deplores the fact that the gains of the last 20 years with regard to women's and girls' rights have been reversed by the Taliban; welcomes the principled position of the EU that any future development assistance to Afghanistan will depend, among other things, on respect for the international normative and legal human rights' framework, including women's and girls' rights;
 6. Condemns the perpetration of female genital mutilation and gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as the proliferation of child marriages; hopes that attention will be focused on high-risk groups such as female MPs, journalists, judges and researchers;
 7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take responsibility for Afghan women and seek fast solutions for them consisting of humanitarian support and assistance, empowerment to enable them to have their voices heard in Afghanistan and

internationally, and unrestricted access to healthcare and basic hygiene supplies; underscores that issues regarding women's political participation, eradicating illiteracy and ensuring access for girls and women to education and economic means continue to constitute a fundamental pillar of the EU's policy towards Afghanistan;

8. Deplores the decision of the Taliban to indefinitely extend the education ban on girls above the age of 12 (grade 6) continuing their education; underscores that education is a fundamental right of every human being; underscores that the Taliban's ban on women engaging in professional activities is a deliberate attempt to prevent them from having any meaningful role in society;
9. Strongly condemns the policies introduced by the Taliban Government that limit women and girls in their most basic rights and needs, such as their ability to work and their ability to travel inside or outside the country without being accompanied by a male relative; demands that these policies are reversed without delay;
10. Calls for a guarantee that EU funding for education will only be provided to provinces or districts in which women and girls are not barred from attending school; stresses that in areas where women and girls are excluded from schools, previously allocated funds must be redistributed to groups working to defend the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, including those providing alternative education options for girls barred from attending school;
11. Condemns all reprisals against human rights defenders, including those defending the rights of women and girls, and hopes that EU diplomatic efforts will protect protesters and other rights defenders while pressing the Taliban to stop violating rights; calls on Afghanistan to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders, women protesters, prisoners of conscience, journalists, academics and former government and security employees detained and sentenced merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
12. Condemns the growing number of reports of killings, harassment and intimidation of Christians, Hazaras and other minorities and the fact that the Christian and Hazara communities are now dissolving due to persecution; stresses that freedom of religion and belief must be guaranteed and protected at all times;
13. Stresses that every effort must be made to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups in Afghan society in a non-discriminatory fashion, in line with all international rules and standards;
14. Insists that the Taliban must fulfil their counterterrorism commitments, including preventing al-Qaeda, Daesh, ISIS-K and other terrorist groups and individuals from using Afghan soil to threaten or violate the security of any other country, refusing to host members of these groups and preventing them from carrying out recruitment, training or fundraising activities; expresses concern that these commitments are not being met;
15. Urges all relevant partners to step up their efforts to dismantle all terrorist financing networks, including ending the misuse of *hawala* money transfer networks and international donations for this purpose, in order to fight radicalisation, extremism and

the recruitment tools that Afghan terrorist organisations continue to rely on;

16. Takes note of the re-established presence on the ground of the European Union in Kabul for the purpose of coordinating humanitarian aid and monitoring the humanitarian situation; strongly underlines that this does not constitute recognition of the Taliban regime by the EU;
17. Recognises that the current situation in Afghanistan is not conducive to regional stability; highlights that more responsibility now lies with neighbouring and regional powers for the situation in Afghanistan, which need to prevent any outpour of instability beyond the borders of the country; reaffirms the need for the EU to strengthen cooperation with Central Asian countries in this regard, in particular Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; underlines the important and possibly constructive role that can be played by China and Pakistan in promoting regional stability and denying safe havens to extremist and terrorist groups in Afghanistan;
18. Reiterates its call for the establishment of a representative and elected government in which women and minority groups can meaningfully participate, thus reflecting the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the country; recalls that the long-term development of Afghanistan will depend on accountability, good governance, the sustainable provision of human security, including the reduction of poverty and the creation of job opportunities, access to social and health services, education, and the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights;
19. Expresses concern that the current Russian war of aggression on Ukraine might further contribute to food shortages and malnutrition, as it might lead to substantial grain shortages;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan, the national parliaments of the Member States and the US Congress.