



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2024

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-ninth session
Agenda item 36
The situation in Afghanistan

Security Council
Seventy-ninth year

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/9](#) and Security Council resolution [2727 \(2024\)](#), in which the Secretary-General was requested to report every three months on the situation in Afghanistan and the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), including at the subnational level.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan, including political, humanitarian and human rights efforts, since the issuance of the previous report, dated 9 September 2024 ([A/79/341-S/2024/664](#)).

II. Relevant developments

3. The Taliban leader, Haibatullah Akhundzada, reportedly increased public engagements, emphasizing the need for unity and obedience from the de facto officials, religious scholars and the wider population and stressing adherence to sharia law. The leadership of the de facto authorities in Kabul also continued their outreach to local communities, religious scholars, ethnic minorities and academia. Attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) continued, together with some lower-intensity attacks by the armed opposition. An estimated 23.7 million people in Afghanistan continue to face critical humanitarian challenges in 2024. As at 11 November, the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan had received only 37.5 per cent of its \$3.06 billion in funding.



A. Political developments

4. The Taliban leader reportedly undertook multiple public engagements, including an extensive tour to western, northern and north-eastern provinces. From the end of August to the beginning of September, he visited Badghis, Faryab, Jowzjan, Sar-e Pul, Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan and Herat Provinces. This was his first visit to those provinces and his longest absence from Kandahar since August 2021. Throughout the trip, he reportedly held meetings with local de facto officials, community leaders and religious scholars, calling for unity and adherence to sharia law. In Kandahar, he attended the graduation ceremony at the Islamic Police Training Centre on 17 September. He also engaged with the Kabul Provincial Ulema Council on 20 September and with the de facto Supreme Court on 26 September, reportedly emphasizing the need to preserve societal order and the Islamic system. The de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, and the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, Abdul Salam Hanafi, continued with outreach to local communities, religious scholars, ethnic minorities and academia in Kabul.

5. On 22 September, the de facto authorities concluded their annual accountability sessions. A total of 36 de facto entities, including 24 de facto ministries and 12 de facto independent institutions, presented their activities and achievements for the past year to the media. The total number of participating entities decreased from the previous year, when 41 de facto entities, including 23 de facto ministries and 18 de facto independent institutions, participated.

6. Following the publication of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in the Official Gazette on 21 August, the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice intensified its efforts to ensure compliance with the Law, including through training and increasing the deployment of de facto inspectors. From 17 to 26 August, the de facto Minister for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, conducted visits to Sar-e Pul, Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan Provinces, from 7 to 9 September to Zabul, Ghazni and Maidan Wardak Provinces and from 20 to 23 October to Nangarhar, Laghman and Logar Provinces. During those visits, he emphasized the imperative of fully implementing the Law to maintain social order and criticized the previous administration for promoting secularism. From 3 to 12 October, the de facto Ministry organized 23 seminars and workshops across 20 provinces, gathering de facto officials and community leaders to enhance their capacity and support for ensuring the implementation of the Law.

7. The Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice has drawn harsh criticism from the Afghan diaspora, including political opposition groups as well as women's groups and civil society organizations. Within Afghanistan, UNAMA continues to hear criticism and grievances in relation to the Law through its engagement with the population and conveys concerns to the de facto officials. However, public dissent is rarely heard or reported amid the Taliban leader's ban on public criticism of the de facto authorities' policies and practices. The international community has expressed deep concern over the implications of the Law. On 18 September, in a joint statement by the Security Council, signatories of the statement of shared commitments for the principles of women, peace and security (S/2023/1080, annex I) reiterated their condemnation of the issuance of more than 70 edicts and decrees by the Taliban restricting the enjoyment of the rights of women and girls.

8. The de facto authorities continued to appoint and reshuffle Taliban loyalists – all male – to leadership positions. At the national level, appointments included 6 de

facto deputy ministers, the de facto Director General for Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Authority, the Chief Executive Officer for the Afghanistan Electric Company and the Chief Executive Officer, Acting President, for Ariana Afghan Airlines, in addition to 11 directors within de facto ministries. Subnational appointments included 3 de facto provincial governors, 7 de facto provincial deputy governors, at least 13 subnational directors and at least 7 district governors.

9. At a press conference on 11 September, officials of the de facto Ministry of Education reported that a total of approximately 21,000 de facto authority-registered Islamic education centres existed in Afghanistan, comprising 19,669 madrassas (Islamic religious schools), 1,277 Qur'an memorization centres, 115 Darul Ulooms (advanced Islamic seminaries) and 39 orphanages. On 5 September, the de facto Ministry of Justice announced that a law on the establishment of jihadi madrassas had been sent to the Taliban leader for approval, although the proposed law was not made public. From 15 August to 24 October, seven de facto authority-run madrassas – all for males – were inaugurated in seven provinces, and 21 male and 155 female religious scholars graduated from de facto authority-registered madrassas. Girls over the age of 12 are reportedly able to study in de facto authority-registered madrassas in some provinces; however, precise information on the number of female students or the current curriculum remained unavailable.

10. From 15 August to 30 October, retirees from the military and civil service of the former Republic staged five protests, each comprising at least 150 individuals, outside the de facto Ministry of Finance. They appealed to receive their pensions, which had been suspended by the de facto authorities.

11. On 12 September, the de facto Ministry of Justice announced that criticism of the de facto authorities' legislative texts was unacceptable and amounted to a criticism of sharia law. The Ministry noted that, in accordance with the Taliban leader's decree of October 2022 on developing legislative documents, a committee of religious scholars reviews all texts to ensure compliance with sharia law. On 12 October, the de facto Ministry of Justice published the tenth Official Gazette, containing the law on industrial areas, including provisions on land distribution and four decrees, including one that sets out how the de facto courts should address evidence obtained through forced confessions.

12. From 15 August to 30 October, UNAMA field offices facilitated 192 outreach activities involving a wide range of actors, including Afghan civil society, tribal elders, journalists, entrepreneurs and women activists. These actors stressed, among other issues: the need to preserve civic space, which has been shrinking further following the enactment of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice; the importance of education for men and women, including in modern sciences, as well as the need for employment opportunities for youth and former government employees; and the need for improved facilities in the areas of healthcare, water and agriculture. From 15 August to 30 October, 25 local conflicts, including disputes related to family and community issues and land and water rights, were reportedly resolved through mediation by local community elders, religious scholars and the de facto authorities in nine provinces. Local sources claimed that all parties involved were satisfied with the conduct of the conflict resolution process.

B. Security

13. From 1 August to 31 October, the United Nations recorded 2,510 security-related incident reports, marking a 39.6 per cent increase as compared with the same period in 2023. ISIL-K reportedly conducted six attacks, compared with four attacks

in the preceding three months. In addition, there were 156 robbery incidents, marking a 24.3 per cent decrease as compared with the same period in 2023.

14. From 1 August to 31 October, the armed opposition continued to pose no significant challenge to the Taliban's hold on territorial control. The verified overall number of attacks by the armed opposition was 81. The National Resistance Front conducted 56 attacks, the Afghanistan Freedom Front carried out 18 attacks, the People's Sovereignty Front carried out 1, and the Afghanistan Liberation Movement claimed responsibility for 1 alleged attack on Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan members on 21 August; Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan sources denied that the attack occurred. The perpetrators of five additional attacks remained unidentified. The Afghanistan Freedom Front claimed the mortar attack of 20 October on the north side of Kabul International Airport and the Khwaja Rawash residential area. A total of 31 attacks were carried out in the central region, 26 of which occurred in Kabul Province, followed by 26 attacks in the western region, 19 in the north-eastern region, 4 in the northern region and 1 in the south-eastern region.

15. From 1 August to 31 October, ISIL-K reportedly conducted six attacks. On 11 August, the group reportedly exploded a minibus in the Dasht-e Barchi area of Kabul City, followed by a reported attack in Nangarhar Province against the de facto Chief of Police of Nuristan Province on 22 August. On 2 September, ISIL-K reportedly conducted an improvised explosive device attack outside the de facto High Directorate of Supervision and Prosecution of Decrees and Edicts in Kabul. On 12 September, ISIL-K reportedly conducted an attack on Hazara civilians in Chaghcharan District in Ghor Province. On 14 September, a special unit of the de facto General Directorate of Intelligence arrested two of its personnel and five individuals from the de facto Ministry of Interior in Herat Province for their alleged ties to ISIL-K. On 5 October, ISIL-K reportedly caused an explosion in Kunar Province and then carried out an ambush on the de facto security forces on 12 October, killing three, including a member of the de facto General Directorate of Intelligence and one bodyguard to the former de facto Governor of Ghor Province in Chaghcharan District, Ghor Province.

16. From 1 August to 31 October, 28 armed incidents involving the de facto security and Pakistani border forces were reported – an increase from 16 incidents recorded in the previous reporting period, from 15 May to 31 July. The development of infrastructure, especially checkpoints, allegedly triggered clashes. These incidents resulted in the closure of trade routes and the displacement of civilians. On 12 August, clashes in Torkham, Nangarhar Province, displaced civilians and led to United Nations staff relocation and the suspension of activities at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) transit centre. Clashes occurred in Torkham and Jaji Maidan, Khost Province, respectively, on 6 and 7 September. On 17 September, the de facto security forces and Pakistani forces reportedly exchanged fire in the area of Kurram District in Pakistan, followed by an incident at Ghulam Khan, Khost Province, on 19 September. Another conflict was reported in Goshtah District, Nangarhar Province, on 25 and/or 26 September which subsequently extended to Khas Kunar, Kunar Province, on 30 September. Clashes were also reported in Shorabak, Kandahar Province, on 6 and 9 October, with shelling in Dangam, Kunar Province, on 7 October, causing displacement of the local population. In addition, on 30 October, a cross-border clash in Kang District, Nimroz Province, reportedly between de facto security forces and Iranian border forces, killed one civilian and two de facto officers.

17. Reportedly, an explosion killed a Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan member in Watapur District, Kunar Province, on 3 August, while a further two Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan members were shot dead in separate incidents in Barmal District, Paktika Province, on 20 and 29 September. On 31 October, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Pakistan stated that the “Afghan authorities have the primary responsibility to take action against the terror groups, primarily Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, that are based in Afghanistan”.

18. From 1 August to 31 October, the United Nations documented 67 safety and security incident reports directly affecting its personnel, including 2 robberies, 3 residential burglaries and 3 thefts, 6 arrests, 14 movement restrictions and 12 other forms of arrest threats. Fourteen safety incidents, including fires, flooding and road traffic accidents, affected United Nations compounds, offices and property.

C. Regional cooperation

19. From 27 to 30 August, the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi, attended the fiftieth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Yaoundé. On the sidelines of the session, the OIC delegation, led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Afghanistan, Tarig Ali Bakhit, met with the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs and reportedly discussed girls’ education and women’s employment and their participation in public life. On 27 September, the foreign ministers of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the Russian Federation met in New York and issued a joint statement in which they reiterated their support for the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan while emphasizing the importance of building an inclusive and broad-based governance system, expressing concern over the security situation related to terrorism and stressing the need for women’s and girls’ access to education, economic opportunities and participation in public life.

20. On 4 October, the sixth meeting of the Moscow Format of Consultations on Afghanistan was held in Moscow, with the participation of special representatives and senior officials of China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs took part in the event as the main guest. The participants issued a joint statement in which they expressed deep concern over the security situation related to terrorism in Afghanistan, support for the active integration of Afghanistan into the regional environment and expectations for moderate, prudent and inclusive governance in Afghanistan.

21. De facto officials travelled to countries in the region to promote political and economic engagement. On 28 August, the de facto Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Hedayatullah Badri, led a delegation to Turkmenistan to discuss advancing bilateral cooperation. On 25 September, he also participated in the Russian Energy Week International Forum, held in Moscow. From 10 to 14 September, the de facto Minister of Information and Culture, Khairullah Khairkhwa, participated in the International United Cultures Forum, held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, where he also met with the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Olga Lyubimova, and the Minister of Culture of Uzbekistan, Ozodbek Nazarbekov, and discussed the importance of cultural diplomacy in strengthening ties.

22. Countries in the region continued to focus on trade and transit, involving high-level visits to Afghanistan. On 15 August, delegations led by the Deputy Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan, Sahib Mammadov, and the Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of Uzbekistan, Laziz Kudratov, met the de facto Minister of Commerce and Industry, Nooruddin Azizi, in Kabul to discuss trilateral engagement centred on trade, transit and natural resources. On 16 August, the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulla Aripov, and the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Abdul Ghani Baradar, attended a signing ceremony of 35 agreements on bilateral investment

projects valued at \$2.5 billion in Kabul. On 21 August, a delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, met a delegation led by the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs in Herat to discuss joint border management and infrastructure projects including the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India gas pipeline, railroads and electricity. On 10 October, the de facto Minister of Mines and Petroleum signed an agreement for the exploration and extraction of the Toti Maidan gas field in Jowzjan Province with an Uzbek company, in the presence of the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and the Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, Ismatulla Irgashev.

23. On 11 September, the inauguration ceremony for the Afghan portion of the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India gas pipeline construction was held in Mary, Turkmenistan. The de facto Prime Minister, Mohammad Hassan Akhund, the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs, together with the Chair of the Halk Maslahaty (People’s Council) of the Milli Gengesh (National Council) of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, attended the event. On the same day, Turkmenistan and the de facto authorities launched the first phase of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan power transmission line project.

24. UNAMA continued to facilitate regional cooperation efforts. The Mission organized regular meetings with Kabul-based diplomatic missions and engaged with diplomatic representatives in and outside Afghanistan, including to follow up on the meetings convened by the United Nations in Doha from 30 June to 2 July.

III. Human rights

25. Attacks using improvised explosive devices, including suicide attacks, were the leading cause of civilian casualties. During the reporting period, such attacks resulted in at least 87 civilian casualties, including 16 killed (8 men, 1 woman and 7 boys) and 71 wounded (57 men, 7 women, 6 boys and 1 girl).

26. Improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks, which were primarily claimed by ISIL-K and targeted the de facto authorities and the Shi’a community, resulted in civilian casualties as follows. The attack of 11 August claimed by ISIL-K in the Dasht-e Barchi area of Kabul killed 1 civilian man and wounded 13 other civilians, all Hazara. The improvised explosive device attack of 22 August in Nangarhar Province targeting the vehicle of the de facto Chief of Police of Nuristan Province killed 6 boys and wounded 4 civilian men. The body-borne improvised explosive device attack in Kabul on 2 September killed at least 6 civilian men and 1 woman and wounded more than 29 other civilians. The 12 September attack on the border between Ghor and Daykundi Provinces killed 14 civilian men and wounded 4 other civilians, all Hazara Shi’as.

27. Unexploded ordnance continued to result in civilian casualties, with children making up the majority of victims. For example, on 3 October, in Sar-e Pul Province, 4 boys were killed and 1 boy wounded by unexploded ordnance. During the reporting period, a total of 16 civilians were killed (15 boys and 1 girl) and 35 wounded (9 men, 4 women, 19 boys and 3 girls).

28. On 12 August, in Muhmand Dara District, Nangarhar Province, armed clashes between the de facto security forces and Pakistani security forces resulted in the killing of a civilian man, a woman and a boy and the wounding of two civilian men and a boy. On 7 September, in Jaji Maidan district, Khost Province, armed clashes

between the same parties resulted in the killing of a civilian woman and man and in the wounding of five civilian men.

29. Human rights violations against former government officials and former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces continued to be reported in violation of the general amnesty announced by the de facto authorities in August 2021. UNAMA documented at least 5 killings, 14 arbitrary arrests and detentions and 4 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former government officials and former Afghan National Defence and Security Forces members.

30. The de facto authorities continued to implement judicial corporal punishment in public. For example, on 7 September, in Ghor Province, seven persons, including three women, were publicly lashed. All had been convicted of crimes related to “illegal sexual acts” or adultery. During the reporting period, in total, at least 108 persons were subjected to judicial corporal punishment (81 men, 26 women and 1 girl).

31. The de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice has taken measures to implement the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in a variety of ways since its publication on 21 August, in particular through monitoring and guidance provided to the population during visits by inspectors to public and private places. On 2 October, the Taliban leader tasked provincial governors to establish local committees consisting of representatives of different provincial departments, to ensure the implementation of the Law. Barbers continued to be arrested for providing “un-Islamic” beard-trimming services and haircuts. The prohibition on drivers offering transport to women unaccompanied by a male guardian, even reportedly for short distances, further impeded women’s already limited access to public services, as well as their right to movement. UNAMA documented instances where drivers refused to provide transport to women travelling alone. Previous decrees had stipulated that they could travel alone within a 78 km radius. The de facto Deputy Minister for Policy and Vocational Affairs of the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice clarified in a media interview on 3 October that women were allowed to speak in public “when deemed necessary”, such as during shopping activities.

32. The Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice designates Hanafi jurisprudence as the interpretative source for defining virtue and vice, banning symbols, practices and celebrations that are considered “un-Islamic”. On 9 September, the de facto Ministry of Education instructed its provincial departments to remove books that contradicted Hanafi jurisprudence from educational institutions. The Law also prohibits the broadcasting of images of living beings, and in several provinces, the de facto authorities instructed journalists to stop broadcasting and publishing images of living beings. As a result, television stations in Badghis, Kandahar and Takhar Provinces ceased their operations.

33. Freedom of expression was further curtailed by two new sets of restrictions. On 20 September, the Office of the de facto Deputy Prime Minister issued an instruction restricting religious scholars from commenting on “controversial topics” in public statements or discussions, including, for example, topics that the de facto authorities consider could cause sedition among the population, or misunderstandings among the general public “for their lack of understanding of the topics”. On 21 September, during a meeting with media outlets, the de facto Ministry of Information and Culture required media outlets to pre-record all political talk shows and edit out content deemed sensitive. In addition, panellists can be invited only from a set list of pre-approved commentators, which includes only two women. Media workers who expressed criticism of the de facto authorities continued to be arbitrarily detained and imprisoned.

34. Restrictions on girls' and women's rights, including education beyond grade six and in various employment sectors, remained in place. In August 2024, radio stations in at least two provinces (Khost and Paktiya) were instructed to stop broadcasting educational programmes for girls beyond grade six. While women were allowed to operate in some markets and at some exhibitions, they continued to experience restrictions and discrimination by the de facto authorities. From 15 to 17 October, in Khost Province, women were not allowed by the de facto authorities to attend a national exhibition, either as vendors or as visitors. Products of female entrepreneurs were allowed to be showcased only by men.

35. On 8 October, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General met with the de facto Director General of the Office of Prison Administration, Mohammad Yousuf Mistry, who highlighted the Office's commitment to improving conditions for detainees. He also stressed persisting challenges and the need for greater assistance in the areas of healthcare, nutrition, education and vocational training to improve the livelihoods of prisoners. Detainees were also reported to endure harsh winters as many prisons lack electricity or generators and fuel to enable minimum heating, in addition to basics such as blankets. The de facto Director General expressed a commitment to continued cooperation with UNAMA, indicating continued access for the UNAMA human rights teams to all prison facilities across Afghanistan, including those housing female detainees.

36. The Special Representative visited Pul-e Charkhi Prison in Kabul on 8 October. Several issues are of concern: overadmission to prisons, including for petty crimes; absence of adequate legal aid for vulnerable detainees, especially women, to assist them before the de facto courts; and prolonged pretrial detention pending adjudication. The de facto Office of Prison Administration reported, as at 24 October, more than 26,000 persons in custody, indicating its highest population to date, including approximately 1,900 women, 1,400 juveniles and 100 foreign nationals.

37. In quarterly consultations conducted from 13 to 23 October by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), IOM and UNAMA countrywide information was collected on the effects of the de facto authorities' policies on women and men. Women consulted observed a regressive trend in marriage practices, driven by deepening patriarchal social norms, closure of secondary schools, economic hardship and a lack of job and educational opportunities for women. Women and men reported that, in their communities, forced marriages, including child marriages, and polygamy had become more common over the past three years. Women consulted noted that the fear of severe social and legal consequences and prevailing social norms often forced women and girls to comply with these marriage practices. Women and men reported that, in the past two months, in many locations, de facto officials had strictly enforced bans on women using public and private transportation without a mahram and full hijab and prohibited them from sitting in the front seat of any vehicle. Many respondents noted that they feared using smartphones in public, with de facto officials reportedly inspecting telephones at checkpoints for photographs and music and communication applications, deleting content and, in some cases, confiscating the devices.

IV. Economic development, donor coordination and aid effectiveness

38. The Afghan economy showed some signs of recovery, amid continued challenges such as unemployment, poverty and low human capital. Deflation, reflecting weak demand, continued for the sixteenth consecutive month. In August 2024, headline and core inflation dropped by 6.7 and 1.4 per cent, respectively, as compared with the same period in 2023, largely owing to improved agricultural output, the appreciation of the domestic currency, and persistent weak aggregate demand. In the first eight months of 2024, the merchandise trade deficit widened to \$5.6 billion, or 28 per cent of the annual gross domestic product (GDP), a 39 per cent increase compared with \$4 billion (23 per cent of GDP) in the same period in 2023. Year-on-year exports for January to August 2024 declined by 14 per cent to about \$920.5 million, driven primarily by trade dynamics with Pakistan. Imports surged to \$6.5 billion from January to August 2024, a 28 per cent increase as compared with the same period in 2023. Trends in import composition point to growing momentum in capital goods. Despite the widening trade deficit and amid modest gains against major currencies in September 2024, the Afghani remained 25.7 per cent stronger against the United States dollar than in August 2021. State revenue collection for the first six months of the current fiscal year that began on 22 March 2024 reached approximately \$1.6 billion (110.9 billion Afghanis), reflecting a year-on-year growth of 10 per cent, driven by increases in inland revenue, especially non-tax-revenue.

39. On 6 October, senior de facto officials inaugurated a six-day trade exhibition in Kabul, organized by the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, which reportedly included 700 companies, including 200 from the broader region, to support the private sector and calls to invest in Afghanistan. Booths were allocated to female entrepreneurs to showcase their products; however, hurdles for and restrictions on businesswomen since the enactment of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice increased. Private sector interlocutors at the national and subnational levels continued to report challenges with visas, banking transactions and access to markets, including in meetings with UNAMA on 14, 20 and 28 October.

40. The de facto authorities reported the signing of three contracts for the generation of 240 megawatts of electricity around Kabul on 30 September and launched the construction of two solar plants in Kabul on 8 and 19 October, respectively. On 10 October, the de facto authorities also announced the signing of a contract with an Uzbek company for the exploration and extraction of the Toti Maidan gas reserves in Faryab and Jowzjan Provinces, said to provide for investments of \$100 million within a year and \$1 billion over a period of 10 years. The de facto authorities also announced the signing of a 30-year large-scale cement contract in Jowzjan Province with a Turkish company, reportedly amounting to \$163 million, on 29 October. Prior to this, on 21 September, the de facto Ministry of Mines and Petroleum stated that 167 small-scale and 12 large-scale mining projects were currently active and that 80 small-scale and 13 large-scale contracts had been signed over the previous year; they stated that mining revenue had reached approximately \$154 million (10.4 billion Afghanis) in the previous fiscal year and \$65.2 million (4.4 billion Afghanis) to that point in the current fiscal year, some earmarked to finance infrastructure. These figures were not subject to independent verification.

41. The de facto Central Bank reported on meetings related to anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, including the eighth meeting of the high-level coordination commission on 20 August and the tenth meeting of the compliance coordination committee on 17 September. On 29 September, the de facto Central Bank issued a statement on the duties of citizens against money-laundering, encouraging them to report suspicious transactions to the Bank. Subsequently, on

4 October, the de facto Central Bank announced that it had re-signed a memorandum of understanding with the de facto Ministry of Interior aimed at enhancing cooperation in combating money-laundering and financial crimes. Meanwhile, on 6 September, the Switzerland-based Fund for the Afghan People reported the renewal of its four-member board for an additional two years.¹

42. The Afghanistan Coordination Group, comprising donors and international aid partners, held its plenary meetings on 2 and 3 October in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. While expressing concerns over the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice and its potential impact on aid delivery, in particular regarding women's participation, the Group reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the ongoing strategic transition from humanitarian aid to more sustainable basic human needs assistance to strengthen the resilience of the Afghan population. Thematic discussions covered health, education, livelihoods, gender programming and climate resilience.

43. On 30 September, the United Nations and the World Bank held a one-day risk management workshop in Dubai. The workshop provided the members of the Afghanistan Coordination Group with an update on the United Nations common risk-management approach, highlighting strategies to mitigate risks in the challenging operational environment in Afghanistan, as well as a presentation on anti-aid diversion efforts in Afghanistan, emphasizing transparency in the use of donor funds and accountability in aid distribution.

44. On 1 October, the Steering Committee of the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan convened in Dubai to discuss the reorientation of the fund to focus on displacement solutions to enable the sustainable reintegration of internally displaced people and returnees. A crowdfunding campaign was also launched by the Trust Fund to support displaced Afghans in establishing local businesses, thus contributing to sustainable livelihoods.

45. In response to the ongoing challenges faced by rural communities, including those affected by the poppy cultivation ban, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IOM launched the Afghanistan Community Resilience Programme in September 2024. Implemented through 2026 with funding of \$16.2 million, this initiative is focused on increasing agricultural productivity, diversifying livelihoods and strengthening market linkages in provinces including Kandahar, Helmand and Badghis Provinces.

46. The Afghanistan Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network has enabled the active collaboration of its 315 member organizations and focal points from the United Nations, non-governmental and civil society organizations and donors, in order to adapt to the environment after the promulgation of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. This included consultations with network members, inputs from technical specialists and engagement with the de facto Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to ensure access by women to and the safety and relevance of the Network's efforts at preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. The United Nations country team organized sessions on standard operating procedures for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse,

¹ The Fund for the Afghan People was established in September 2022 as a not-for-profit foundation in Geneva, to protect, preserve and, on a targeted basis, disburse its assets for the benefit of the Afghan people. The Fund is governed by the Board of Trustees, currently constituted of representatives from the Governments of the United States of America and Switzerland and two Afghan economic experts. The United States announced the establishment of the Fund on 14 September 2022.

focusing on ensuring safe intake and reporting and feedback mechanisms for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment cases.

V. Humanitarian assistance

47. An estimated 23.7 million people in Afghanistan continue to face a critical humanitarian crisis, marked by severe food insecurity, malnutrition, widespread displacement and contamination from explosive ordnance. Recurrent natural hazards, disease outbreaks and climate change are compounding the situation. The Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice tightened restrictions on the Afghan people, especially women and minority groups. Humanitarian actors are closely monitoring its impact, especially on the participation of Afghan women in aid programmes, while reinforcing mitigation measures to ensure the continued delivery of life-saving assistance.

48. On 28 October, the Special Representative conducted a joint visit with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to observe the ongoing water crisis in Kabul. The delegation witnessed persistent challenges in water access, notably impacting women's and children's vulnerability to diseases and social challenges. They also noted severe groundwater depletion amid climate pressures, a situation reflective of countrywide scarcity trends.

49. In September, the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group and the Humanitarian Access Working Group conducted their ninth survey on the continued impact of the bans on Afghan women working for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations and other restrictions, including the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. The findings revealed that 60 per cent of humanitarian organizations reported that the Law hindered access to women and girls, citing issues such as movement restrictions, enforced dress codes and mahram requirements impacting operations.

50. From January to September 2024, humanitarian partners reached 15.3 million people – 88 per cent of the 17.3 million overall target – with at least one form of humanitarian assistance, and up to 2.8 million people with three different types of sectoral support. In total, 9.9 million people received food and livelihood support, 5.8 million people healthcare, 3.8 million children and pregnant and lactating women nutrition assistance, 4.6 million people protection assistance, 3.7 million people water, sanitation and hygiene, 789,188 people emergency shelter and non-food items and 553,769 children education. As at 11 November, the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan had received only 37.5 per cent (\$1.15 billion) of its \$3.06 billion requirements.

51. An estimated 12.4 million people face crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 3 and above) – as compared with the same period in 2023, with 15.25 million people in phase 3 and above – showing slight improvements attributed to high levels of humanitarian food assistance, emergency agricultural assistance and livelihood support, among other factors. Favourable rainfall in March and April 2024 alleviated drought conditions to yield better than expected harvests, in particular for wheat, boosting food availability and stabilizing food prices. However, women and girls remained disproportionately impacted owing to restrictive social norms and restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities, including the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. Monthly emergency food and nutrition assistance, previously reaching 7 million people during the winter months, was scaled down to 1.2 million, from June to October, owing to funding shortfalls. From November, the World Food Programme

scaled assistance back up to reach 6 million to 7 million people, still fewer than half of those in need.

52. Humanitarian agencies are pre-positioning 62,000 metric tons of food to support up to 6 million vulnerable people over the winter. However, 45 per cent of children under five suffer from stunting, and 14 per cent experience acute malnutrition. UNICEF, through community-based nutrition programmes, has screened more than 2.1 million children for wasting, with 133,080 treated for severe wasting.

53. From July to September, FAO supported 409,997 beneficiaries through a wide range of interventions, including emergency livelihood assistance for 2,118 people. It also vaccinated 649,391 cattle against lumpy skin disease. Natural resource management efforts collected 3,856 kg of local grass seeds for reseeded, rehabilitated 257 hectares of degraded rangelands and supported 275,970 hectares of forests and rangelands. A locust egg bed survey covered 51,663 hectares in 11 provinces and an FAO soybean research and extension programme operated in 10 provinces.

54. The public health situation remains dire, with 155,383 cases of acute watery diarrhoea with dehydration reported from 1 January to 26 October. In addition, 3,263 dengue fever cases and 51,229 measles cases were reported, along with 1,148 suspected Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever cases. During the reporting period, 71,794 confirmed malaria cases were reported. The number of conflict-induced trauma cases, both treated and referred, increased by 18 per cent, reaching 41,345 cases in the period from January to September, compared with the same period in 2023. UNICEF supported more than 2,400 health facilities, reaching 1.4 million children with outpatient services and providing antenatal care to more than 330,000 pregnant women. The United Nations Population Fund supported more than 2,800 female service providers to scale up the integrated delivery of maternal health and gender-based violence services.

55. From 15 September 2023 to 21 October 2024, more than 750,000 Afghan returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan were assisted by humanitarian partners in IOM reception centres and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) encashment centres. Refugees continued to return to Afghanistan, with UNHCR having assisted 50,337 registered refugees returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan in 2024, of whom 78 per cent were women and children. UNHCR community-based protection monitoring, surveying displaced, returnees and host community members from 1 September to 19 October, found that 43 per cent of respondents had no access to healthcare and 57 per cent were unable to access psychosocial support. Many women and girls avoid marketplaces, healthcare facilities and water points owing to harassment, lack of documentation and sociocultural barriers. UNICEF provided water, sanitation and hygiene supplies to 193,293 Afghan returnees from Pakistan.

56. Humanitarian access remains challenging, with 413 access-related incidents reported from July to September 2024, marking a 12 per cent increase compared with 368 incidents during the previous three months and no major change from 411 incidents during the same period in 2023. The main obstacles included interference in humanitarian activities, which accounted for 78 per cent of incidents. Other challenges included movement restrictions (32 incidents), violence against humanitarian workers (29 incidents) – including 38 detentions, physical environment (22 incidents), denial of the existence of humanitarian needs (4 incidents), ongoing military operations (2 incidents) and the detonation of two improvised explosive devices (2 incidents). These incidents led to the temporary suspension of 212 activities across various regions, marking an 86 per cent increase as compared with

the previous reporting period. However, the overall number of gender-related access incidents has decreased by 34 per cent, as compared with the same period in 2023.

57. Mine Action partners cleared 28 square km of land of explosive ordnance from August to October, paving safe pathways for schoolchildren travelling to educational facilities, enabling the return of displaced families and returnees, supporting the resumption of agricultural activities and clearing areas for road construction, residential development and grazing. The United Nations-led Mine Action Technical Cell conducted 460 quality management visits to ensure that mine action activities met national and international standards, mediated on issues concerning the de facto authorities on behalf of mine action sector NGO partners and processed and verified 12,000 mine action reports into the international management system. The Central Emergency Response Fund funded clearance activities through the Mine Action Service in Faryab, Baghlan and Kunduz Provinces that concluded in October, clearing contaminated areas of explosive ordnance in the vicinity of 28 schools and enabling four districts in Kunduz Province to be declared free from explosive ordnance contamination. More than 416,000 people, including women, children and people with disabilities, received explosive ordnance risk education. Funding challenges remain critical, with many national implementing partners at risk of closure owing to a lack of funding for operations, despite the continuing need for mine action across the country.

VI. Counter-narcotics

58. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) opium survey report released on 6 November, the area under opium cultivation in Afghanistan in 2024 was estimated at 12,800 ha, a 19 per cent increase from 2023 (10,800 ha) but still far below the level in the period before the implementation of the opium ban in April 2022 (232,000 ha). While the southern provinces had long been the centre of opium cultivation up until 2023, 59 per cent of all cultivation was recorded in the north-eastern provinces, in particular Badakhshan, in 2024. As at the end of October, the national average prices of opium remained high but stable, at approximately \$700 per kg, almost seven times higher than the pre-ban prices of \$110 per kg. The rise in opium prices has created an incentive for farmers to resume opium cultivation, while farmers who lack sustainable alternatives face a more precarious financial and economic situation. Reports by UNODC indicate the continued trafficking and manufacturing of methamphetamine in Afghanistan, although the scale of production remains unclear.

59. From 15 August to 15 November, the UNODC alternative development programme benefited more than 866 households with immediate income-generating support through the provision of improved inputs for vegetable and cereal crops production, animal husbandry and poultry farming and training on good agricultural practices and integrated pest management. UNODC provided support to 10 drug treatment centres, 2 opioid agonist therapy centres, 4 drop-in-centres and 4 vocational training centres in 13 provinces, which benefited more than 7,000 beneficiaries, including men and women with drug use disorders and women prisoners.

60. From July to September, UNDP supported 3,840 households affected by the poppy ban in six provinces, distributing agricultural inputs and value-addition tool packages, rehabilitating greenhouses and constructing irrigation canals. Three post-harvest facilities became operational, benefiting 292 farmers.

61. On 9 September and 6 November, the working group on counter-narcotics, co-chaired by UNAMA and UNODC, convened its sixth and seventh meetings, gathering Kabul-based representatives of Member States and international

organizations, with the participation of the de facto Deputy Minister of Interior for Counter-Narcotics, Haji Abdul Haq Hamkar, and other de facto officials. In these meetings, participants presented their efforts to address the drug-related challenges faced by the Afghan people and discussed the way to further advance them, including the United Nations presentation on its support for alternative livelihoods to drug cultivation and drug demand reduction. The de facto authorities provided an update on the recently launched High Commission on Counternarcotics.

VII. Mission support

62. As at 30 September 2024, vacancy rates in UNAMA were 12 per cent for international staff, 4 per cent for United Nations Volunteers, 21 per cent for National Professional Officers and 16 per cent for national staff, compared with approved rates of 9.5 per cent, 12 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 9.5 per cent, respectively. The proportion of women staff was 34 per cent for international staff, 40 per cent for United Nations Volunteers, 9 per cent for National Professional Officers and 10 per cent for national staff. The national United Nations Volunteers programme remains a critical pipeline for young Afghan women wishing to join the United Nations workforce.

VIII. Observations

63. Multiple challenges, including a fragile economy, widespread poverty, severe restrictions of human rights and freedoms – especially for women – and the effects of climate change, continue to mar the lives of people in Afghanistan. The country’s humanitarian situation remains dire, with millions of people dependent on life-saving assistance. Funding shortfalls, restrictions on women aid workers and operational impediments threaten the ongoing provision of essential services. International funding for both humanitarian response and basic human needs remains far below the amounts requested, which risks leaving vulnerable populations – especially women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons – without critical support. While the challenges facing Afghanistan are long-standing, and funding constraints are partly impacted by the global situation, the de facto authorities’ restrictive policies and practices have contributed to further limiting the international community’s engagement and funding.

64. The introduction of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice shortly after meetings convened by the United Nations in Doha, from 30 June to 2 July, has made the building of a constructive engagement framework between the de facto authorities and the international community more difficult. The primary goal of such an engagement framework is to alleviate challenges faced by people in Afghanistan and ultimately, as stated in the independent assessment pursuant to Security Council resolution [2679 \(2023\)](#) (S/2023/856, annex), to work towards a future in which Afghanistan is fully reintegrated into the international system without experiencing another cycle of violence and respecting all its international legal obligations. The United Nations remains committed to taking forward the results of the meetings of the Special Envoys and the recommendations in the report of the independent assessment.

65. The implementation of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice has impacted people in Afghanistan, both women and men. Evidence shows that women and men have faced further constraints owing to the obligation to comply with requirements on “Islamic” appearance, while a more severe implementation of the restrictions towards women has further compromised their livelihoods and

physical and mental health. The Law has also impacted aid delivery by constraining the activities of Afghan women engaged in aid provision and access to women and girls in need of assistance. I strongly urge the de facto authorities to rescind all the restrictive measures under the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice.

66. I am profoundly troubled by the fact that the ban on girls' and women's education beyond grade six remains in place, which is contrary to the human rights obligations of Afghanistan and to the de facto authorities' stated goal of self-reliance. Education is a fundamental right that enables both men and women to be empowered and lifted out of poverty, reducing inequality and promoting sustainable development. I continue to strongly urge the de facto authorities to remove all restrictions on girls' and women's education and all discriminatory restrictions against women and girls.

67. The closure of television stations owing to the prohibition of images of living beings under the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice impedes the public's access to information and jeopardizes the survival of the media sector. Freedom of expression is essential for accountability and good governance. The continued use of arbitrary arrests and detentions of media workers, aimed at stifling opposing voices, is unacceptable. I call upon the de facto authorities to revoke all restrictive measures that limit free speech and access to information and undermine the independence of the media sector.

68. Utmost efforts must be made to ensure the protection of civilian life and civilian objects, in particular the Hazara Shi'a community. The persistent targeting of former government officials and Afghan National Defence and Security Forces members, despite the de facto authorities' publicly stated commitment to their general amnesty, is deeply concerning. It is critical to ensure the protection of these individuals and, when violations of the amnesty occur, to carry out thorough and transparent investigations leading to accountability for perpetrators.

69. The continued loss of children's lives and their suffering from life-changing injuries as a result of unexploded ordnance is both unacceptable and preventable. There is an urgent need for the international community to increase its support for mine clearance efforts and awareness-raising to prevent further harm.

70. I call upon the de facto authorities to cease the implementation of corporal punishment, which constitutes a form of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under international law and remind them that Afghanistan is a party to numerous international human rights treaties, which strictly prohibit all forms of torture and ill-treatment.

71. The de facto authorities and other actors must also address systemic challenges in the criminal justice system. These challenges include: addressing the root causes of overincarceration, in particular for minor offences such as petty crimes; addressing the shortage of lawyers and legal aid for vulnerable populations; and reducing prolonged pretrial detention periods. These issues negatively impact detainees and their families. The continued commitment of the de facto Office of Prison Administration to grant the United Nations access to all prisons countrywide is encouraging. I reiterate my call to the international community to scale up its support for meeting the basic needs of the incarcerated population. This support should encompass the provision of adequate food and medical care, vocational and educational training for detainees, supplies to address the lack of heating and the deployment of health and education personnel to detention facilities.

72. Humanitarian access continues to be obstructed by movement restrictions, interference in aid activities and violence against aid workers. I urge the de facto authorities to take immediate action to ensure the safety of aid workers, refrain from

interfering with humanitarian operations and provide unimpeded access to those in need. Increased donor support is urgently needed to meet the immense needs in Afghanistan. I urge the international community to remain committed to funding humanitarian efforts, while emphasizing that the de facto authorities must cooperate to enable these interventions. Without coordinated efforts, millions of Afghans – in particular women and children – will continue to face extreme hardships.

73. The growing number of returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan adds further strain to the already overstretched capacity of Afghanistan to absorb them. Returnees face immense challenges in reintegration, in particular in securing housing, employment and access to basic services. Strengthening Afghanistan's absorption capacities is critical to mitigate the risks of further destabilization.

74. The United Nations and its partners remain committed to delivering on the basic human needs of the Afghan population by navigating the country's complex operational environment. The key areas of focus include improving risk management strategies, supporting alternative livelihoods, enhancing climate resilience and strengthening mechanisms to prevent exploitation and abuse. I call upon the international community to continue its support for ensuring the delivery of vital services.

75. The United Nations presence in Afghanistan is critical to maintaining international attention and engagement, as well as delivering on humanitarian and basic human needs as the people of Afghanistan continue to experience enormous suffering. I extend my deep appreciation to all United Nations personnel in Afghanistan under the leadership of my Special Representative, Roza Otunbayeva, and to NGO partners for their continued dedication and service to the people of Afghanistan in an extremely challenging environment.
