

Afghanistan – Facts and Figures

Recent history

- The US and allies begin air attacks on Afghanistan in October 2001 in response to the Taliban regime's refusal to hand over Osama Bin Laden after 9/11.
- Afghan groups meet in December 2001 in Germany and agree to an interim government until elections are held.
- The country adopts a new moderate Islamic Constitution and elects a President and National Assembly.

People

- Ethnic groups: Pashtu (42%), Tadjik (27%), Hazara (9%), Uzbek (9%), several smaller groups
- Languages: Mainly Dari, Pashtu
- Religions: Islam (99%, Sunni 84%, Shia 15%)

Development Facts and Figures

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|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Child mortality | Approx. 25% |
| Maternal mortality | 1,600 per 100,000 (>80% preventable) |
| Life expectancy | 43.1 |
| Adult literacy rate | 23.5% |
| Per capita GDP | \$1,490 |

- Afghanistan is ranked 174th out of 178 countries measured in the UN Human Development Index making it one of the world's poorest countries.
- 6.6 million Afghans (20 % of the population) do not meet their minimum food requirements. 50 % of Afghan children under five are underweight.
- Only 31 % of households nationwide have access to safe drinking water.
- Approximately 95 % of the population in Afghanistan has been psychologically affected by war and that one in five suffers from mental health illnesses. (National Human Development Report, 2004)

While there have been some improvements, these figures suggest troubling trends in child mortality increasing by 5% and life expectancy declining from an average of 46.4 in 2004.

* Unless otherwise indicated, all figures are taken from the Afghanistan National Human Development Report, 2007.

Security Facts and Figures

- 1.5 million people are estimated to have been killed during the two and half decade war. Of these, approximately 300 000 were children (Save The Children).
- Afghans rank 2nd globally for number of refugees and IDPs. Palestinians rank 1st. (National Human Development Report, 2004)
- 100,000 children are driven out of school in the four main southern provinces in 2006 (UNICEF).
- 150 000 people are displaced from their homes in the south due to drought and insecurity over the past five years. (UN)
- 5-7 million landmines and large quantities of unexploded ordinance remain and kill or wound up to 100 people monthly.

Diplomacy – Key agreements

- 1988 - Geneva Accords signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan after 6 years of talks. Relations between the two countries normalized, Soviet troops withdraw, refugees return. (UN auspices, US and Soviet Union guarantors).
- Accords fail to address the post-Soviet era need for peace-building within Afghanistan. Conflict continues between the Mujahideen and the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah. The US retains right to provide military assistance to parties in Afghanistan.
- 1990 - 1992, UN attempts negotiations to establish a transitional authority acceptable to Afghanistan and the five external powers aiding various groups: the United States, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran.
- Gulf War takes precedence.
- 2001 - Bonn Agreement establishes coalition of three Mujahideen groups and Afghans in exile with a plan for a transitional authority to replace the Taliban.
- Bonn Agreement sets conditions for state-building and a transition to democracy after years of harsh Taliban rule but does not address peace and reconciliation between the warring parties. Some criticize the agreement for excluding key political figures.
- 2006 – The Afghanistan Compact outlines a strategic framework for development around three interdependent pillar: 1) security, 2) governance and strengthening institutions, and 3) social and economic development. The Compact is endorsed by Security Council in Resolution 1659 on 15 February 2006.