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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 [79/317](#) and Security Council resolution [2777 \(2025\)](#), 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 5 September 2025 ([A/80/366-S/2025/554](#)).

II. Relevant developments

3. The Taliban leader, Haibatullah Akhundzada, intensified his engagement, meeting with senior de facto officials and religious scholars in Kandahar and asserting his authority within the de facto authorities and to the broader population in the service of his vision of a pure Islamic society. He reportedly ordered a partial and then nationwide shutdown of the country's fibre-optic network, aimed at shutting down the Internet, which led to the widespread disruption of several telecommunications services and significant socioeconomic consequences. Communications were restored nearly 48 hours later, reportedly following a decision made by the de facto Prime Minister, Mohammad Hasan Akhund, in Kabul. Sporadic activities by armed opposition groups and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) persisted but posed no significant challenge to the de facto authorities' territorial control, while hostilities between de facto and Pakistani security forces in October caused extensive civilian casualties and led to high-level negotiations on their peaceful coexistence. The de facto authorities continued to implement restrictive policies and practices curtailing the rights of women and girls



in all spheres of public life, including by enforcing access restrictions on Afghan women personnel, including a ban on entering United Nations premises countrywide. The United Nations in Afghanistan subsequently suspended some operations. The country's economy remained fragile amid declining aid inflows, sluggish growth, mounting pressures from the mass return of 2.4 million Afghans from neighbouring countries in 2025 (as at 15 November), which strained already limited resources and services, and the impact of earthquakes in August and November. Humanitarian needs rose sharply as funding shortfalls forced cuts to food, health and protection assistance, affecting millions of Afghans amid rising malnutrition and disease outbreaks. As at 7 November, only 35.7 per cent of the \$2.42 billion required under the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, targeting 16.8 million people, had been received.

A. Political developments

4. The Taliban leader convened several meetings in Kandahar with senior de facto officials. On 28 August, he convened a "reform seminar" with the de facto Minister of Education, Habibullah Agha, senior religious scholars and de facto officials, where he underscored the value of faith-based education. From 4 to 6 October, he convened a three-day meeting gathering all de facto provincial and district governors from across the country as well as the de facto Ministers of the Interior, Education, the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, and Information and Culture, where he urged de facto officials to serve as trustworthy representatives, leading with piety, integrity and fairness, consulting scholars, avoiding corruption and appointing only capable individuals.

5. On 2 September, the Taliban leader issued a directive assigning the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice nationwide responsibility for identifying and transferring individuals with psychological disorders to the Afghan Red Crescent Society for treatment. That responsibility had previously been handled by the de facto Ministry of Public Health.

6. On 7 September, the de facto authorities started to strictly enforce restrictions on access to United Nations offices countrywide for Afghan women United Nations personnel, in line with a previous ban. The de facto authorities deployed personnel to prevent Afghan women staff members, consultants and visitors from entering United Nations premises. Despite the Mission's engagement with the leadership of the de facto authorities to urge for the immediate lifting of restrictions, they remain in effect at the time of writing.

7. On 15 September, the spokesperson for the Office of the de facto Provincial Governor of Balkh announced through social media that fibre-optic Internet services in the Province had been suspended by order of the Taliban leader. From 16 to 19 September, the shutdown was expanded to at least 15 provinces with varying levels of disruption reported. On 29 September, there was a nationwide communications blackout, which affected both fibre-optic and mobile networks. The outage affected all sectors in Afghanistan, including the public, the de facto authorities, diplomatic missions and the United Nations. Public and private sector services across the country, including international currency transfers, healthcare, customs posts and automatic teller machine (ATM) services, experienced severe disruptions, leading to significant social and economic hardship. Most commercial flights were cancelled. Nearly 48 hours later, on 1 October, communication services began to resume nationwide. The de facto authorities did not issue a public statement regarding the incident; however, multiple media outlets reported that the de facto Prime Minister decided to restore communications. Following the nationwide outage, the de facto Ministry of Communications and Information Technology introduced expanded social media

filtering. On 28 October, UNAMA published a briefing on the impact of the telecommunications shutdown on the Afghan people.¹

8. After cross-border clashes and air strikes from 10 to 18 October, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to declare and subsequently maintain a ceasefire at meetings held in Doha on 18 and 19 October and in Istanbul from 25 to 30 October, mediated by Qatar and Türkiye. According to a joint statement by Afghanistan, Pakistan, Qatar and Türkiye, the parties agreed to maintain the ceasefire and to establish a monitoring and verification mechanism with penalties for violations. Talks resumed in Istanbul on 6 November and were concluded on 7 November with no reported outcome.

9. The de facto authorities continued to appoint loyalists to leadership positions, including the de facto Minister of Information and Culture, nine de facto Deputy Ministers at the de facto Ministries of Borders and Tribal Affairs; Education; Hajj and Religious Affairs; Industry and Commerce; the Interior; Public Health; Public Works; Transport and Civil Aviation; and Urban Development and Housing, as well as de facto Directors. Subnational appointments included the de facto provincial governors for Badakhshan, Badghis, Farah, Helmand, Khost, Laghman, Nimroz, Uruzgan and Wardak, de facto deputy provincial governors for Ghazni, Jowzjan, Wardak and Zabul, 18 de facto district governors, 3 mayors for provincial capital city, two provincial chiefs of police and over 20 provincial heads of line departments. In addition, three de facto judges were appointed deputy heads of the de facto Supreme Court and two as heads of the de facto Supreme Court. During the reporting period, madrasa graduation ceremonies were held in Badakhshan and Ghor Provinces, with 53 male and 12 female religious scholars graduating. Eight madrasas were inaugurated in Badakhshan, Ghazni, Paktika, Paktiya and Wardak Provinces. The de facto authorities continue to use madrasa-related ceremonies to call for national unity and support for their rule and to highlight their achievements.

10. On 24 August, the de facto authorities announced pension disbursements for civilian and military retirees under a directive from the Taliban leader. On 18 October, the de facto Ministry of Finance announced that the payment of pensions to retirees from the de facto Ministries of Borders and Tribal Affairs, Hajj and Religious Affairs and Rural Rehabilitation and Development and to generals from the de facto Ministry of Defence would begin on 27 October. Despite coordination through the de facto General Directorate of Pension Rights, the implementation faced fiscal constraints and bureaucratic obstacles, which led to further delay and demonstrations by retirees.

11. UNAMA engaged with defence lawyers and other interlocutors, who expressed reservations over the legal system of the de facto authorities, calling it “inadequate”. Direct access for women to de facto courts continued to be hindered as de facto judges refer women’s cases for informal dispute settlement or instruct that representation by a *mahram* (male guardian) is needed in order to access de facto court services.

12. From 29 to 30 September, Afghan opposition leaders and activists gathered in Islamabad for a two-day conference on the theme “Towards unity and trust”, sponsored by the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute. It was the first meeting of Afghan opposition leaders held in Pakistan since the August 2021 takeover by the Taliban.

13. The de facto authorities publicly reported that, between 4 August and 26 October, 32 local conflicts in 17 provinces, including disputes related to family and community issues and to land and water rights, had been resolved through mediation by community elders, religious scholars and the de facto authorities.

¹ See <https://unama.unmissions.org/briefing-impact-telecommunications-shutdowns-afghan-people>.

14. Between 4 August and 26 October, UNAMA field offices facilitated a total of 148 outreach activities in 20 provinces involving civil society, tribal elders, journalists, entrepreneurs and women activists who stressed the need for civic space, education for the entire population, employment opportunities, inclusive participation and improved socioeconomic facilities. Thirty-three outreach meetings held specifically with young men and women in 13 provinces were focused on shrinking civic space, lack of education and employment opportunities, especially for women, and suppression of youth activities and freedom. In September, UNAMA held a round-table conference for young people from diverse backgrounds, with young women accounting for 50 per cent of participants, in an intergenerational dialogue with UNAMA leadership focused on skills, livelihoods, employment and climate resilience.

15. The United Nations continued to engage with the international community, the de facto authorities and Afghan stakeholders on the proposed comprehensive approach to Afghanistan, based on Security Council resolution 2721 (2023), seeking to maintain an international consensus on Afghanistan and provide a political pathway to address the complex issues affecting the country's reintegration into the international community, including human rights, especially the rights of women and girls, and governance.

B. Security

16. From 1 August to 31 October, the United Nations recorded 2,737 safety and security-related incident reports, marking a 14.7 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2024.

17. From 1 August to 31 October, armed opposition groups posed no significant challenge to the de facto authorities' control over the national territory. In Baghlan, Helmand, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nimroz, Panjshir and Takhar Provinces, the Afghanistan Freedom Front, the National Resistance Front, the National Battle Front, the National Mobilization Front, the Islamic Liberation Front of Afghan People and the Afghanistan Liberation Movement claimed responsibility for a total of 41 incidents, including sporadic hand grenade attacks and shootings on checkpoints and convoys, of which 19 were verified.

18. From 1 August to 31 October, ISIL-K attacks decreased in both frequency and scale, while de facto security forces continued operations against the group. On 12 August, ISIL-K claimed that two of its fighters who were detained on theft charges were taken from a Kunduz prison and killed while in custody. On 13 August, de facto forces killed an ISIL-K commander, and on 15 August, ISIL-K claimed to have executed an individual accused of being a Taliban informant in Nangarhar Province.

19. From 1 August to 17 October, multiple border incidents occurred along the country's borders with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan. On 3 August, in Nangarhar Province, Pakistani and de facto security forces clashed over security posts being constructed by the latter, while in Kunar Province, Pakistani forces fired mortar shells into Afghanistan. On 6 August, in Badakhshan Province, de facto border police clashed with Pakistani security forces over the construction of a checkpoint in the border area. On 25 August and 24 October, de facto security forces and Tajik border police exchanged fire. On 29 August, in Kunar Province, two separate incidents occurred. In one, de facto and Pakistani security forces exchanged fire, causing material losses, and in the other, artillery rounds were fired from Pakistan. On 30 August, de facto security forces and Iranian border guards exchanged fire after Iranian officials reportedly beat Afghans who were attempting to cross, causing a brief border closure. On 5, 14 and 16 September, in Kunar Province, mortar

and small-arms fire from Pakistan damaged a private residence, killed livestock and impacted open areas.

20. Pakistan continued to maintain that Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP),² had carried out attacks in Pakistan and that the Taliban were harbouring the group, which the Taliban deny. From 1 August to 31 October, multiple air strikes and drone activities were reported across Afghanistan. Surveillance drones were observed over several districts in Ghazni, Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Logar, Nangarhar, Paktiya and Parwan Provinces. Air strikes targeted alleged TTP sites in Nuristan Province on 11 August and in Khost, Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces on 27 August, resulting in civilian casualties. Additional drone activity was reported in Khost on 14 September, in Paktika and Paktiya on 17 September, in Kandahar on 23 September and in Kunduz on 30 September. On 9 October, air strikes in Kabul city reportedly targeted TTP leader Noor Wali Mehsud, who survived the attack, and on 10 October, TTP and its affiliate, the Hafez Bahadur Gul group, were targeted in an air strike in Paktika Province. Following the launch of an operation by the de facto Ministry of Defence, several cross-border clashes and air strikes occurred between 10 and 18 October in provinces bordering Pakistan, including in Spin Boldak District in Kandahar Province, and in Kabul Province. Several of those incidents caused multiple casualties, including two rocket explosions in police district 4 in Kabul city on 15 October. On 21 October, according to media reports, the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan reiterated that any violation of the territorial integrity of Pakistan would be met with a firm and decisive response.

21. From 1 August to 31 October, the United Nations documented 63 safety and security incidents directly affecting its personnel, compared with 78 incidents documented during the same period in 2024. The number of movement restrictions affecting United Nations operations increased following the strict enforcement of the Taliban leader's directive banning Afghan women personnel from entering United Nations compounds for work. Officials from the de facto Ministry of Defence positioned themselves outside the United Nations Operations Centre in Afghanistan compound in Kabul to prevent female Afghan staff from entering, and similar actions were carried out at the Baron compound in Kabul. In several United Nations field offices, the de facto protection service also enforced the directive.

C. Regional cooperation

22. The five Central Asian countries established a Central Asia contact group on Afghanistan during a meeting of their special envoys in Tashkent on 26 August. The contact group seeks to promote regular coordination among capitals on humanitarian support, border security and economic integration initiatives involving Afghanistan. On 11 and 12 September, under the chairmanship of Tajikistan, the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization met in Dushanbe to hold consultations on Afghanistan. At the meeting, the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for regional stability were addressed, and avenues for cooperation under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization contact group on Afghanistan were reviewed. On 23 September, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation contact group on Afghanistan held its first meeting in New York on the sidelines of the General Assembly. On 25 September, the foreign ministers of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the Russian Federation held a quadrilateral meeting on Afghanistan in New York, at which they issued a joint statement reaffirming their support for a sovereign,

² On 29 July 2011, TTP was listed as being associated with Al-Qaida pursuant to paragraphs 4 and 5 of resolution 1989 (2011).

peaceful Afghanistan free from terrorism, narcotics and foreign interference and advocating enhanced regional economic engagement.

23. On 7 October, the seventh meeting of the Moscow format consultations on Afghanistan at the level of special representatives and senior officials from Afghanistan, China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan was held in Moscow. In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the participants reaffirmed their “support for the establishment of Afghanistan as an independent, united and peaceful State”. On the same day, the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi, met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, and reportedly discussed bilateral economic and political cooperation.

24. On 6 and 7 September, a delegation from the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies of Uzbekistan visited Kabul to participate in a conference on investments and the energy sector. From 14 to 17 September, a high-level economic and trade delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran, led by the Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade, Seyed Mohammad Atabak, visited Kabul, reportedly to explore the expansion of commercial ties, address trade barriers and identify opportunities for joint investment.

25. From 9 to 16 October, the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs visited New Delhi, where he met with the Minister of External Affairs of India and other senior officials. This marked the first high-level visit by a de facto Foreign Minister to India since August 2021. During the visit, the Government of India announced the upgrading of the existing technical mission in Kabul to full embassy status and the appointment of a Chargé d'affaires.

26. UNAMA continued to support regional cooperation by organizing briefings with Kabul-based diplomatic missions, assisting with visits by regional delegations and promoting the participation of Afghanistan in multilateral initiatives related to transport, trade and access to humanitarian corridors.

III. Human rights

27. Clashes between de facto and Pakistani security forces caused at least 503 civilian casualties (50 killed and 453 injured) in Afghanistan between 10 and 17 October. Most of the civilian casualties were caused by air strikes and cross-border shelling in Spin Boldak and Kabul. The de facto General Directorate of Intelligence informed UNAMA in writing that the 15 October attacks had caused “numerous civilian casualties” and violated a previous agreement by Pakistan to not conduct further attacks.

28. Unexploded ordnance continued to cause harm to civilians, mostly children. During the reporting period, a total of 8 civilians were killed (2 men and 6 boys) and 29 were injured (3 men, 1 woman, 6 girls and 19 boys). Afghanistan reports one of the highest casualty rates from explosive ordnance worldwide, with at least one person killed or injured daily. Response activities, including surveys, assessments, mine clearance, explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance, decreased by 42 per cent compared with the same period in 2024 due to funding cuts.

29. Human rights violations against former government officials and former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces continued to be reported. UNAMA documented at least 6 extrajudicial killings, 24 arbitrary arrests and detentions, and 6 instances of torture and ill-treatment of former government officials and former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

30. During the reporting period, UNAMA documented 215 instances of corporal punishment carried out by the de facto authorities (against 42 women, 170 men, 2 girls and 1 boy) for a range of offences, including adultery, running away from home, homosexuality, alcohol consumption and gambling.

31. On 16 October in Badghis Province, there was a public execution of a man who had been convicted of murdering a woman and a man and whose sentence had been upheld by all three de facto courts (Primary, Appeal and Supreme). Local residents, the de facto Provincial Governor and other de facto officials attended the execution, which was the eleventh judicially sanctioned public execution carried out in Afghanistan since 15 August 2021.

32. Between 1 July and 30 September, the Afghanistan country task force on monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict documented some 160 grave violations affecting at least 90 children, including 17 girls. The most prevalent violations included killing and maiming, denial of humanitarian assistance and attacks on schools and hospitals, which together accounted for at least 90 per cent of all documented violations.

33. On 20 September, the de facto Ministry of Justice published a procedure requiring enforcement committees in each province to implement the law on the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice by holding meetings and awareness-raising sessions with representatives of the de facto authorities and local communities. In some cases, failure to comply with the law led to severe punishment, including arbitrary arrests and prolonged prison sentences. For example, on 12 September, at a public trial at the Khas Kunar District Court in Kunar Province, two barbershop owners were sentenced to three to five months imprisonment each for trimming beards and giving “Western-style” haircuts.

34. On 29 August, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) released an analysis entitled “Four years of Taliban rule: Afghan women resist as restrictions tighten”, based on door-to-door surveys conducted by UN-Women. According to its findings, 9 out of 10 Afghans oppose the ban on education for girls, and 43 per cent of Afghan women and men report that they speak less in public than they did prior to August 2021.

35. In late August, de facto officials in several provinces took steps to close several madrasas for girls beyond grade six. For example, on 23 August in Kabul, inspectors from the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, accompanied by de facto police, shut down three madrasas for girls for allegedly violating hijab rules, admitting students beyond grade six and teaching “modern secular subjects” such as mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology. Similarly, around 26 August in Zaybak district, Badakhshan Province, the district-level inspectors of the Ministry ordered that girls over age 13 be barred from attending madrasas.

36. In September, the de facto authorities reportedly further reviewed the education sector. On 12 September, media sources reported that 51 topics, including civic values, human rights, Shia Islam and references to international institutions, were removed from school curricula for grades 1 to 12. In addition, 18 topics were eliminated from higher education programmes, including 6 topics related to women’s studies, and 201 others were flagged for revision to align with the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic principles. On 19 September, further reports indicated that universities were instructed to remove books authored by women, regardless of content or the author’s nationality, and 140 other titles tagged as “against Sharia” from their curricula. The teaching of human rights and sexual harassment was prohibited.

37. Women's access to healthcare continued to be severely limited by the enforcement of discriminatory restrictions. The continued suspension of women's health education programmes, such as midwifery education programmes, has contributed to increasing rates of maternal mortality. On 22 September in Kandahar, officials from the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice ordered male dentists not to treat female patients and instructed clinics to hire female dentists. Women have been barred from studying medical disciplines, including dentistry, since 2 December 2024.

38. The de facto Office of Prison Administration reported that the prison population stood at almost 29,500 in mid-July, the highest since the Taliban takeover. In late August, the Taliban leader instructed a new delegation led by the de facto Supreme Court to visit prisons and identify prisoners eligible for possible release or sentence reduction. As at 30 October, the de facto Office of Prison Administration reported that over 2,260 prisoners who had completed two thirds of their sentences had been released and that sentences had been reduced for almost 2,600 other prisoners who had completed one third of their sentences. Despite these efforts, as at 1 November, the de facto Office of Prison Administration reported that its prison population was between 30,000 to 32,000. Judicial efforts to release prisoners have not kept pace with the arrest and detention rates.

39. According to consultations and data collected in August by UN-Women, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNAMA, Afghan women and men indicated that the Internet was their preferred information source, albeit a limited one. For many women, connectivity is a crucial means of communication and gaining access to education. Trust in private messaging apps has declined sharply since August 2021, as increased monitoring and physical phone searches deter women and men from using these means of communication. The women consulted reported that smartphone use is explicitly banned in at least nine provinces and that social norms and family pressures curtail access elsewhere. Although these consultations preceded the shutdown of fibre-optic services in September and October, the findings were indicative of a tightening of the digital space.

40. Media freedom in Afghanistan continued to face significant challenges during the reporting period. On 17 October, the de facto General Directorate of Intelligence ordered the shutdown of a private media outlet, which was allowed to resume operation on 19 October. The de facto authorities have intensified pressure on the media, expanding such restrictions as the ban on publishing images of living beings, which has affected outlets to varying degrees in over half of the country's provinces.

41. On 6 October, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on Afghanistan, extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for one year and establishing an independent investigative mechanism. On 8 October, the people's tribunal for the women of Afghanistan, comprising Afghan civil society representatives, international jurists, prosecutors and victims, began public hearings in Madrid to symbolically try Taliban leaders for alleged crimes against humanity, including the systematic repression of women and girls in Afghanistan.

IV. Economic development, donor coordination and aid effectiveness

42. According to the economic monitor released by the World Bank in October, the country outlook is shaped by exogenous shocks, including reduced humanitarian aid, the influx of returnees from both the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and climate-related disruptions. These shocks exacerbate vulnerabilities, constrain economic activity and increase risks to livelihoods and food security. The economic

growth rate remained close to the annual population growth rate of 2.4 per cent, which indicates minimal gains in per capita income in 2025. The afghani appreciated against the United States dollar by 3 per cent month-on-month, from 68.4 in September to 66.3 in October, primarily driven by macroeconomic resilience.

43. As at 15 November, some 2.46 million people had returned to Afghanistan, including 1.76 million from the Islamic Republic of Iran and over 707,678 from Pakistan, in both cases largely involuntarily. That influx of returnees represents a population increase of approximately 6 per cent in 2025 (in addition to the year-on-year natural population growth of 2.4 per cent). The surge in returns was fuelled by ongoing regional tensions and two key policy changes: the decision by the Islamic Republic of Iran not to extend headcount slips for over 2.6 million Afghans and the decision by Pakistan not to extend the validity of expired proof of registration cards beyond 30 June for nearly 1.4 million Afghan refugees.

44. The influx created additional aid needs among vulnerable returnees. Lack of Afghan civil documentation remains a serious challenge, with 61 per cent of returnee households reporting that at least one member lacked documentation, which obstructs access to essential services. As of October, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had supported 1,231,963 vulnerable individuals across the country, prioritizing protection, improved access to shelter and the fostering of durable solutions for sustainable reintegration. Partners of the IOM-led border consortium assisted 886,590 returnees at reception and transit centres, including 142,500 documented and undocumented returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to whom the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed a total of \$1.7 million in cash for food and close to 300 metric tons of fortified biscuits and nutritious commodities.

45. The returns have placed immense strain on the country's already limited resources and overstretched services, which are insufficient to meet the current scale of needs, especially in view of the significant reduction in aid inflows. This pressure is compounded by the loss of remittances, as well as pre-existing vulnerabilities resulting from recurring natural disasters, including the impact of severe earthquakes in late August and early November, and ongoing climate crises. Initial reports indicate growing discontent among returnees, who are frustrated with the de facto authorities over unmet promises regarding land allocation, and tensions within host communities in areas of return due to increased competition for scarce resources and a sharp rise in rental and land prices.

46. Exports continue to be dominated by agriculture, which results in a seasonal surge towards the end of the harvest season in September. This trend was evident in August, when exports rose sharply to \$176 million, up from \$90 million in July and \$66 million in June, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development data system. Meanwhile, imports declined from \$1.13 billion in July to \$1.1 billion in August.

47. The recent border clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan and closures of border crossings have also had a severe humanitarian and economic impact, displacing hundreds of families within Afghanistan, disrupting vital trade, causing financial distress and widespread losses for farmers during the critical fruit harvest season and threatening the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands on both sides of the border.

48. On 1 September, in response to climate-related shocks and the growing influx of returnees, the United Nations country team approved a composite vulnerabilities index to help to optimize the allocation of limited resources. The index is aimed at directing assistance programming towards areas facing severe pressures from climate impacts, food insecurity and return-related vulnerabilities. In 2025, funding for the

United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan amounted to \$1.55 billion, covering 54 per cent) of the \$2.88 billion required to maintain essential services and advance priorities related to resilience and basic human needs programming.

49. As of October, the credit guarantee facility of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had released \$20 million in loans to 7,444 micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including 2,225 loans to women entrepreneurs, supporting 18,791 jobs, including 4,701 held by women. In addition, UNDP provided assistance to 1,085 returnee-owned micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, supporting 2,303 jobs.

50. The United Nations continued to operate the cash shipment facility. Between 1 January and 15 October 2025, it brought \$520 million for United Nations entities, donors and approved non-governmental organizations.

51. The Afghanistan Coordination Group, co-chaired by UNAMA, the World Bank Group and the European Union, met in Tashkent on 8 and 9 October. The meeting, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, brought together key international partners involved in the financing of support to address the basic human needs of the Afghan people. Participants addressed persistent challenges, including the restrictions by the de facto authorities that were preventing progress in the country. They explored pathways for fostering resilience and supporting durable solutions for the Afghan people through enhanced humanitarian-development-peace coordination and the prioritization of responses amid significantly reduced aid budgets.

52. On 7 October, the Steering Committee of the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan endorsed a joint project for four districts in Herat and Farah Provinces and approved two joint initiatives valued at approximately \$17 million. The initiatives are aimed at supporting the reintegration of returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and individuals rehabilitated from drug use disorders in Ghazni, Logar and Paktiya Provinces. On 3 October, the Steering Committee held a strategic dialogue in Dubai focused on private sector engagement, bringing together prominent Afghan business leaders.

53. Within the framework of the private sector working group under the comprehensive approach, UNAMA continued to collaborate with a number of Member States, the de facto authorities, Afghan technical experts, including women, and international partners to strengthen the country's private and banking sectors. Recent efforts included a nationwide survey on industrial parks; the development of internship programmes with financial institutions, prioritizing women candidates; initiatives aimed at aligning Afghan products with international standards; improvement of access to finance for women entrepreneurs through tailored banking products; measures to strengthen payment systems and financial infrastructure; capacity-building for newly licensed microfinance institutions; and engagement with anti-money-laundering/countering the financing of terrorism bodies and the de facto Central Bank to explore opportunities to enhance the country's compliance with global financial standards.

54. The European Union and the Japan International Cooperation Agency signed contracts totalling approximately \$16 million with UNDP to support two initiatives, one on the economic empowerment of women through local enterprise development, funded by the European Union, and one on the improvement of women's livelihoods through the promotion of economic activity in border areas, funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency. These renewed partnerships are aimed at enhancing access for Afghan women to inclusive enterprise development and financial services.

55. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in partnership with WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through a United Nations joint programme, mobilized approximately \$8 million. The funding will be used to address the underlying drivers of malnutrition.

V. Humanitarian assistance

56. The population of Afghanistan faces a multidimensional crisis characterized by vulnerability to natural hazards and climate shocks, an unprecedented volume of cross-border returns, limited access to essential services and a fragile economy, which leads to acute food insecurity, malnutrition and chronic poverty. Women and children are particularly at risk in this environment.

57. On 31 August, a 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, affecting nearly half a million people. Over 2,100 people were killed and 3,600 people were injured in the earthquake and subsequent aftershocks, and roads were destroyed, making access to mountainous villages particularly difficult. Women and girls accounted for 52 per cent of those killed and 54 per cent of those injured, which underscores their heightened exposure to risks during and after the disaster. In response, humanitarian partners have targeted 204,000 people for life-saving humanitarian assistance, which will require \$111.5 million. The priority is to sustain the response as temperatures drop, focusing on winterization, camp management and strengthening water and sanitation facilities in displacement sites. On 3 November, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck northern Afghanistan. Initial assessments indicate that at least 26 people were killed, over 1,172 were injured and over 874 houses were damaged or destroyed. Emergency shelter, warm clothing, cash for heating and fuel, and repair kits for damaged houses have been identified as immediate priorities.

58. As at 7 November, the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan was 35.7 per cent funded, as \$863.9 million of the required \$2.42 billion had been received. The secured funding represents 53 per cent of the \$1.62 billion required for urgent priorities. International support for the associated Regional Refugee Response Plan for Afghanistan has been precariously low, with only \$59.1 million (9.5 per cent) of the required \$622 million secured.

59. From January to August, humanitarian partners provided 13.2 million people with at least one form of assistance, including 2.7 million people who received at least three different types of support. This included 9.2 million people who received food and livelihood support, 5.7 million who received healthcare, 13.2 million who received water, sanitation and hygiene support, 4.2 million people who received protection services, 3.9 million children and pregnant and lactating women who received nutrition assistance, 702,000 children who received education support and 418,000 people who received emergency shelter and non-food items.

60. Food insecurity remains acute. The health sector reported a sharp rise in malnourished women and children – nearly 15 per cent higher than the same period in 2024. During the reporting period, WFP provided assistance to 3.4 million people, distributing over 17,000 metric tons of food and \$11 million in cash; nevertheless, millions have been left without support for the upcoming winter season. FAO delivered essential humanitarian assistance and basic needs support to 235,740 people, including vulnerable smallholder farmers and herders across Afghanistan, emphasizing women-centred interventions, safeguards for animal health and prevention of yield losses.

61. From July to September, the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded 65,179 cases of acute watery diarrhoea, 909 suspected cases of dengue fever and

about 577 suspected cases of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever. Mobile health and nutrition teams provided over 1.3 million consultations in remote areas. However, due to the funding shortfall, 422 health facilities were closed, affecting 3.08 million people in 30 provinces.

62. From 1 August to 15 October 2025, UNICEF supported the provision of essential healthcare at 2,400 health facilities. Nearly 153,000 children received measles vaccinations, and 157,823 children received their third dose of pentavalent vaccines. Over 1.21 million children were screened for wasting, and 62,360 were admitted for treatment.

63. Women and girls continue to face structural barriers and gender-related restrictions undermining access to essential services and aid. The suspension of women's medical education since December 2024 has resulted in a growing shortage of skilled women health professionals who can deliver life-saving sexual, reproductive and maternal health services, while Afghanistan already has one of the highest maternal mortality rates globally, with 521 deaths per 100,000 births. The United Nations Population Fund deployed 2,515 Afghan women healthcare workers, including doctors, midwives and counsellors, countrywide to mitigate the gap.

64. On 4 November, United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners suspended operations at the Islam Qala reception centre in Herat Province temporarily following the new restrictions issued by the provincial de facto authorities on 30 October, under which female national staff were barred from providing assistance at the border. Engagement by humanitarian leadership and partners resulted in the resumption of life-saving health services for returnees supported by the presence of a small number of female health staff and gender-segregated clinical arrangements. UNAMA and the humanitarian community continue to advocate in support of the lifting of the restrictions, stressing that Afghan women personnel are essential for safe, principled and dignified aid delivery – in particular to women and children, who account for over 60 per cent of the returnees. United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners have maintained that operations will resume in full only once conditions permit.

65. As a result of the ban on Afghan women entering United Nations premises, the most recent survey of the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group and the Humanitarian Access Working Group, conducted in October, found that 74 per cent of women United Nations staff work from home, compared with 32 per cent in June, and that respondents report increased anxiety, isolation and psychological stress. Nearly 40 per cent of humanitarian and development partners reported having difficulty covering the costs associated with the participation of women, such as those related to the *mahram* requirement, owing to limited resources. Assessments by the protection cluster indicate that 38 per cent of women and men struggle to obtain access to aid due to the lack of women aid workers.

66. Humanitarian partners reported 832 access incidents across Afghanistan between 1 January and 1 September, which resulted in the temporary suspension of 456 humanitarian activities. The incidents included the detention of 124 staff, including 12 United Nations personnel. While the total number of incidents is 38 per cent lower than in the same period in 2024, that decrease is attributed to the reduction in humanitarian activities due to the funding shortfall.

VI. Counter-narcotics

67. The opium economy in Afghanistan experienced a historic contraction following the cultivation ban imposed by the de facto authorities in 2022. According to a new survey released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

on 6 November, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2025 decreased by 20 per cent compared with 2024, and opium production and trafficking have undergone major shifts in the region. Farmers' income from opium sales plunged from an estimated \$1.7 billion–\$2.5 billion in 2021 to approximately \$134 million in 2025.³ This coincides with emerging risks in the illicit drug landscape, including the increased production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, such as methamphetamine; localized unrest linked to eradication campaigns; and signs of regional spillover in opium cultivation. The sustainability of this contraction remains fragile amid severe drought, declining aid flows and mass returns, which heighten the vulnerability of rural areas.

68. From June to October, the number of United Nations counter-narcotics projects decreased from 40 to 22, with budgets falling from \$151 million to \$49 million. UNODC supported 10,994 farming households, 21 per cent of which were women-led, through licit crop distribution and diversification, animal husbandry, irrigation infrastructure and market access initiatives. UNDP launched 18 sub-projects to improve water management infrastructure on 8,026 ha in key poppy-growing provinces – Badghis, Balkh, Helmand and Kandahar – benefiting over 65,000 households. In collaboration with FAO, IOM and UNODC, UNDP supported livelihood diversification through greenhouse construction, enterprise grants, agribusiness development and water management planning. UNDP facilitated access to loans for Afghan agribusinesses and their participation in international and national exhibitions. A total of 11,519 beneficiaries received drug use prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration services, including through vocational training centres in 14 provinces. WHO supported 16 centres and six clinics, including the country's first treatment service specifically for women. Harm reduction services reached over 21,000 individuals, including prisoners and users of injection drugs.

69. Within the framework of the working group on counter-narcotics under the comprehensive approach, the United Nations, Member States, the de facto authorities, Afghan technical experts, including women, and international partners continued to address the issues of alternative livelihoods for former poppy farmers, drug use prevention and treatment for people who use drugs, and law enforcement and criminal justice responses to drug trafficking. Efforts included consultations to promote internal coordination within the de facto ministries and cooperation and collective efforts between Member States and the de facto authorities on these three areas, giving special consideration to women.

VII. Mission support

70. As at 31 October 2025, vacancy rates in UNAMA were 20 per cent for international staff, 24 per cent for international United Nations Volunteers, 15 per cent for national United Nations Volunteers, 19 per cent for National Professional Officers and 13 per cent for national General Service staff, compared with approved rates of 8.3 per cent, 9.3 per cent, 5 per cent, 15.5 per cent and 11.2 per cent, respectively. The proportion of women staff was 34 per cent among international staff, 39 per cent among international United Nations Volunteers, 10 per cent among national United Nations Volunteers, 9 per cent among National Professional Officers and 11 per cent among national General Service staff.

³ UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2025* (Vienna 2025). See https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2025.pdf.

VIII. Observations

71. Despite relative security and current macroeconomic stability, Afghanistan faces deepening poverty, mounting humanitarian needs and the continuing erosion of fundamental rights. The de facto authorities' restrictive policies, particularly with respect to women and girls, remain a major obstacle to the protection and promotion of human rights and sustainable development and further deepen the impasse in the country's relations with the international community. The country continues to face the most pressing women's rights crisis globally. The cumulative impact of reduced external aid, large-scale natural disasters and widespread displacement has exacerbated socioeconomic fragility and tested the coping capacities of Afghan communities.

72. I remain gravely concerned by the continued imposition of restrictions on the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan, particularly in the areas of education, employment, freedom of movement and participation in public life. The closure of educational institutions for girls, the prohibition of materials written by women in universities and the ban on Afghan women United Nations staff's access to United Nations compounds constitute clear violations of the country's international human rights obligations, including those under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Afghanistan is a State Party. These measures further undermine the rights of Afghan women and girls, hinder the delivery of essential services and severely compromise the future development of the country. The implementation of the law on the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice continues to restrict the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Afghan people. I am also concerned by the arbitrariness, severity and disproportionality of the punishments attached to non-compliance with that law. I again urge the de facto authorities to lift these restrictions.

73. The death penalty is incompatible with the core principles of international human rights law. I urge the de facto authorities to establish a moratorium on further executions, with a view to their abolition.

74. The 48-hour countrywide total telecommunications shutdown by the de facto authorities was a deeply concerning infringement on a broad array of human rights. It had a severe and, in some cases, life-threatening impact on people in Afghanistan and on the country's economic and social system.

75. The mass return of Afghans from neighbouring countries, largely involuntarily, has significantly altered the country's demographic and economic landscape, placing immense pressure on already overstretched services, scarce natural resources and fragile social cohesion. Many returnees lack shelter, livelihoods and documentation, exposing them to severe protection risks. This confluence of factors creates a high-risk environment that threatens to exacerbate social tensions and risks fuelling discontent, especially among young returnees who may become vulnerable to recruitment by violent or extremist groups. I urge all Member States to uphold the principle of non-refoulement and ensure that returns are voluntary, safe, dignified and accompanied by sustained reintegration support.

76. The humanitarian situation remains dire. The underfunding of the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan and the associated Regional Refugee Response Plan for Afghanistan threatens to deepen food insecurity, malnutrition and inequality, particularly among women and children. Moreover, there is a risk that shrinking funding will lead to the entrenchment of humanitarian needs and the erosion of community resilience. I appeal to donors to sustain and increase their contributions and to provide predictable, flexible funding to maintain life-saving operations and essential services through the upcoming winter months. The effects of the August and

November earthquakes on the population are heartbreaking. I call upon the international community to support reconstruction efforts in the affected areas, especially in support of housing, before the onset of winter.

77. The economy of Afghanistan remains highly vulnerable to external shocks and internal constraints. Despite the marginal appreciation and stability of the afghani, declining aid inflows and reduced remittances have sharply curtailed per capita income and household purchasing power. The resulting contraction in livelihoods, combined with recurrent climate shocks, heightens risks of food insecurity and social instability. Sustained and coordinated support for economic resilience and job creation, including through strengthened engagement with micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, women entrepreneurs and returnees, remains vital.

78. The ban on opium cultivation has been a net positive, reducing the amount of opium grown in Afghanistan. The resulting loss of rural income, however, combined with deepening poverty and limited livelihood alternatives, risks fuelling instability and illicit activities, including the production of synthetic drugs. I urge the de facto authorities and international partners to provide the necessary support for alternative livelihoods, rural infrastructure and harm reduction programmes to protect vulnerable communities and promote legal agricultural activities to ensure that these gains are sustainable.

79. The scale of civilian deaths and injuries resulting from the hostilities between the de facto and Pakistani security forces was alarming. I welcome the ceasefire and call for a lasting end to hostilities, to protect civilians and prevent further loss of life. I welcome the mediation efforts led by Qatar and Türkiye to seek a lasting solution to the disputed issues and urge both parties to continue to seek to resolve differences through diplomacy.

80. I reiterate the urgency of upholding the principled, impartial and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need. Continued female-led and life-saving services are vital to safeguarding the dignity, safety and prospects of Afghan women and girls.

81. In alignment with General Assembly resolution [79/317](#), adopted on 7 July, and Security Council resolution [2721 \(2023\)](#), the United Nations continues to pursue efforts to promote a more coherent, coordinated and structured engagement between the international community and the de facto authorities, for the benefit of the Afghan people. I encourage the de facto authorities to make use of the comprehensive approach proposed by the United Nations as a platform for enhanced dialogue with the international community, to address critical issues that can only be resolved multilaterally and to support the reintegration of Afghanistan into the international community, in line with its international obligations.

82. Lastly, I extend my deep appreciation to all United Nations personnel in Afghanistan under the leadership of my Officer-in-Charge and Deputy Special Representative (Political), Georgette Gagnon, and my Deputy Special Representative, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Indrika Ratwatte, and non-governmental organization partners for their continued dedication and service to the people of Afghanistan in an extremely challenging environment.