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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 11 June 2025 ([A/79/947-S/2025/372](#)).

II. Relevant developments

3. The de facto authorities marked the fourth anniversary of their takeover by highlighting the stability of Afghanistan, its modest macroeconomic growth and its increasing integration into the regional economy. The Taliban leader, Haibatullah Akhundzada, engaged intensively with a wide range of de facto officials, urging obedience to his authority and strict compliance with sharia law. Armed opposition groups claimed attacks; however, they posed no significant challenge to the de facto authorities' territorial control. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) claimed no major attack. The rights of women and girls remain curtailed in all spheres of civic life due to the de facto authorities' restrictive policies and practices. Some local populations reported multiple socioeconomic challenges, including unemployment, water shortages and lack of access to such basic services as education and health care. The mass influx of Afghan returnees, including those subjected to forced returns or who returned under adverse circumstances from neighbouring countries, exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, placing severe stress on the administration given its limited resources and local-level coping mechanisms.



As at 27 August, the Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for 2025, targeting 16.8 million people out of an estimated 22.9 million in need, had received only 27.1 per cent of the \$2.42 billion required.

A. Political developments

4. The de facto authorities entered their fifth year in power on 15 August. As in previous years, the de facto authorities launched “accountability sessions” to present their achievements to the public. In inaugurating those sessions, on 16 July, the General Director of the Office of the de facto Prime Minister emphasized the importance of transparency, noting that 44 institutions would present their annual reports and engage directly with the media. In their statements on the occasion of “Victory Day”, the de facto authorities cited the liberation of the country from foreign occupation, the establishment of a sharia-based system, the restoration of nationwide security, achievements in peace and national rebuilding, and the elimination of corruption, oppression and societal divisions.

5. The Taliban leader convened a series of meetings in Kandahar with various de facto officials, including officials from several departments in Kabul and the de facto General Directorate of Intelligence and de facto judges from across the country. In those meetings, the Taliban leader reiterated his calls for people to obey the Islamic system and follow the strict implementation of the sharia. During his Eid sermon on 7 June, the Taliban leader criticized the idea of democratic governance, stating that, as it had failed in Afghanistan, it was not a solution for the future. In June, the Taliban leader issued two orders, restricting smartphone use and political discourse critical of the de facto authorities. From June to July, the de facto authorities announced new restrictions censoring poetry gatherings, certain types of religious preaching and funeral prayers for those who had died by suicide.

6. The de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice intensified its campaign to enforce the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, focusing on enforcing the prescribed beard standards for men and hijab compliance for women. The de facto Ministry also issued warnings against immoral social media use, closed the Afghan Film Organization and expanded the ban on the broadcast of images of living beings to Laghman Province, the nineteenth province affected by the ban to date. The de facto Minister, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, visited communities and local officials in Nuristan and Herat Provinces, advocating full enforcement of the law.

7. The de facto authorities continued to appoint and reshuffle Taliban loyalists – exclusively men, and largely Pashtun – to leadership positions, including the de facto Minister of Urban Development and Housing, the de facto Minister of Communication and Information Technology, the de facto Deputy Minister of Urban Development and the de facto Deputy Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs. At the subnational level, appointments included 1 de facto provincial governor, 6 deputy provincial governors, 40 district governors, 39 provincial police chiefs, 4 provincial heads of intelligence and at least 13 provincial heads of department. Two new districts were established, in Faryab and Laghman Provinces. In addition, 25 new de facto judges were appointed and posted to different de facto courts.

8. Implementation of the order issued by the Taliban leader on 8 April 2025 concerning downsizing de facto civilian and security institutions continued, particularly in the media, education and health sectors, including the dismissal of female teachers. Personnel reductions in de facto security institutions were carried out under the oversight of the de facto Security and Clearance Commission, chaired by the de facto Minister of Defence, Mohammad Yaqoub. On 22 July, the de facto

Ministry of Defence stated that its personnel had been reduced by 10 per cent, and that another 10 per cent had been placed on reserve.

9. Local populations held protests, most related to economic hardship, but some also in reaction to perceived unfair treatment of certain population segments. For example, retired government employees held seven protests in Kabul because pensions had not been disbursed for nearly four years. Protests related to the eradication of opium poppy were held in Badakhshan Province, and local farmers in the village of Adam Khan resisted attempts by the de facto authorities to tax agricultural products. On 1 July, ahead of the commemoration of Ashura', around 500 young people and locals gathered at Farhang Crossroads Square, in the Jibra'il area of the city of Herat, to protest against the destruction of Ashura'-themed ceremonial gates, flags and roadside drinking-water stands by de facto General Directorate of Intelligence forces, allegedly because they obstructed pedestrians.

10. The de facto authorities inaugurated nine new madrasas in seven provinces. Seven graduation ceremonies were held at madrasas registered by the de facto authorities in three provinces, with 119 men and 30 women graduating. Central and provincial-level senior de facto officials continued to use madrasa graduation ceremonies to promote national unity, adherence to sharia law and the importance of imparting religious education to young people.

11. On 17 June, the de facto Ministry of Justice publicly announced that its review of all existing laws to ensure conformity with Islamic jurisprudence was 95 per cent complete. On 20 July, the de facto Chief Spokesperson stated in a media interview that the de facto authorities saw no need for a constitution, as sharia law provided a comprehensive legal framework. On 10 August, in a media interview, he stated that there was no legal vacuum but noted that, if circumstances allowed it and there were a need, the de facto authorities would consider creating a formal constitution. He emphasized that all government activities were based on sharia law. On 15 August, in an interview, he explained that the de facto authorities had removed the term "acting" from titles to enhance administrative efficiency and accountability.

12. The de facto authorities' ban on the licensing of women to practise law remains in force. As at June 2022, 2,409 male defence lawyers were licensed to practise law in Afghanistan, as compared with about 4,000 people, including 270 women, who practised law during the Republic era. Many legal disputes are resolved through informal dispute resolution processes, both because litigants prefer those mechanisms and because judges refer disputes to them.

13. Between 23 May and 3 August, UNAMA field offices facilitated 164 outreach activities across different provinces, engaging with men and women civil society actors, tribal elders, journalists, entrepreneurs, activists and young people. The interlocutors expressed concern over shrinking civic space and emphasized the importance of inclusive education, youth employment opportunities and improved services, particularly in healthcare, water and agriculture. Young interlocutors, both men and women, highlighted concerns regarding a reported increase in mental health issues among youth, which they attributed to such factors as increased surveillance and harassment, alongside economic hardship and high unemployment.

14. The de facto authorities publicly reported that, between 23 May and 3 August, 51 local conflicts in 20 provinces, including disputes related to family and community issues and to land and water rights, had been resolved through mediation by local community elders, religious scholars and the de facto authorities. Local sources claimed that all parties involved were satisfied with the conduct of the conflict resolution process.

15. The United Nations also continued to engage with the international community, the de facto authorities and Afghans on the contours of a political road map to comprehensively address the complex issues, including in relation to human rights and governance, that affect the current situation of Afghanistan and prevent the country's potential reintegration into the international community, and aligned it with General Assembly resolution [79/317](#) adopted on 7 July.

B. Security

16. From 1 May to 31 July, the United Nations recorded 2,658 safety and security-related incident reports, marking a 9 per cent increase as compared with the same period in 2024.

17. From 1 May to 31 July, armed opposition groups posed no significant challenge to the Taliban's control of the national territory. The Afghanistan Freedom Front, the National Resistance Front, the Afghanistan Liberation Movement, the People's Sovereignty Front and the National Mobilization Front claimed responsibility for a total of 47 incidents, of which 19 were verified.

18. From 1 May to 31 July, ISIL-K attacks declined in number and scale, while de facto security forces continued operations against the group. Several ISIL-K members were reportedly killed in de facto General Directorate of Intelligence operations in the city of Kabul on 10 June and in Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces on 29 June and 2 July, respectively. On 26 May, in Shuhada District, Badakhshan Province, a raid targeting a Salafi scholar allegedly linked to ISIL-K resulted in the deaths of the scholar and his bodyguard, as well as unconfirmed casualties among the de facto security forces. On 14 June, unidentified individuals shot and reportedly beheaded the imam of a Shia mosque in Nusay District, Badakhshan Province, leaving an ISIL-K flag at the scene. On 15 June, ISIL-K targeted de facto security forces in Darah-i Nur District, Nangarhar Province. On 8 July, an armed clash reportedly occurred between the two groups in Alingar District, Laghman Province.

19. From 1 May to 31 July, 14 incidents involving de facto security forces and Pakistani security forces were reported, including armed clashes and cross-border shelling in Khost, Kunar, Nangarhar and Paktika Provinces. An armed clash and mortar shelling occurred from 30 May to 1 June due to the construction by de facto security forces of a checkpoint near the unofficial Bahram Chah border crossing point in Dishu District, Helmand Province, causing the temporary displacement of approximately 50 families. Overall, 12 sightings of uncrewed aerial vehicles and two sightings of jet aircraft were reported in Kandahar, Paktika, Khost and Paktiya Provinces.

20. The security forces of Pakistan claimed to have killed several members of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan in border areas during attempted cross-border movements, either into or out of Pakistan, in Paktika on 16 and 23 July, in Khost on 3 and 27 July and in Kunar on 8 July. Two separate incidents involving the deaths by detonation of alleged members of that group were reported in Asmar and Shultan Districts, Kunar Province, on 27 and 28 June.

21. From 1 May to 31 July, the United Nations documented 57 safety and security incidents directly affecting its personnel. In May, dozens of female national staff of the United Nations received death threats from unidentified individuals in relation to their work with the Organization, prompting the United Nations to implement interim safety measures. The de facto authorities informed UNAMA that their personnel were not responsible for the incidents; they have yet to identify the perpetrators.

C. Regional cooperation

22. From 15 to 18 May, the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Abdul Ghani Baradar, attended the sixteenth International Economic Forum “Russia – Islamic World: KazanForum” in the Russian Federation, where the two countries signed five agreements to boost cooperation in trade, transport, aviation and energy. On 16 May, the de facto Minister of Justice, Abdul-Hakim Sharei, attended the thirteenth Saint Petersburg International Legal Forum in the Russian Federation, where he delivered remarks on legal system reforms and international cooperation. From 17 to 19 May, the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi, attended the Tehran Dialogue Forum in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where he also met with Iranian officials to discuss economic cooperation and regional security. From 19 to 21 May, the de facto Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs for Finance and Administration, Mohammad Naeem, attended the inaugural meeting of the Termez Dialogue on Connectivity between Central and South Asia in Uzbekistan to discuss regional connectivity and economic integration. From 13 to 15 May, the de facto Minister of Energy and Water, Abdul Latif Mansoor, participated in the fifth Uzbekistan International Energy Conference in Tashkent. From 10 to 13 June, the de facto Minister of Industry of Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi, attended the fourth Tashkent International Investment Forum. From 17 to 21 June, the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, Abdul Salam Hanafi, attended the China–South Asia Expo in Kunming, China, accompanied by the de facto Minister of Commerce and Industry and the de facto Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Finance and Administration. On 19 June, the de facto Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Ataullah Omari, attended the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum in the Russian Federation. On 21 and 22 June, the de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs attended a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul, Türkiye. On 3 and 4 July, the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs attended the seventeenth Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Khankendi, Azerbaijan, where he also had bilateral engagements with representatives of Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan to discuss the promotion of economic cooperation. On 13 July, the de facto Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mohammad Ishaq Sahibzada, attended the twelfth International Union of Railways World Congress on High-Speed Rail in Beijing.

23. On 10 and 11 July, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Murat Nurtleu, visited Kabul, where he met with the de facto Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and the de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs to discuss economic cooperation, trade, agriculture and the Toraghundi–Herat railway project. In Kabul on 17 July 2025, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, Bakhtiyor Saidov, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Ishaq Dar, signed a trilateral agreement with the de facto authorities on launching the feasibility study for the Trans-Afghan Railway Project. During the visits, the Uzbek and Pakistani Ministers also met with the de facto Prime Minister, Mohammad Hassan Akhund, the de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs and the de facto Minister of Interior. On 20 July, the Minister of the Interior of Pakistan, Syed Mohsin Naqvi, met the de facto Minister of Interior in Kabul and discussed strengthening cooperation. On 22 July, the Chair of the State Security Service of Uzbekistan, Colonel General Bakhodir Kurbanov, met with the de facto Minister of Interior and the de facto Minister of Defence in Kabul and discussed bilateral security cooperation. On 20 August, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs held a meeting in Kabul to discuss the promotion of trilateral cooperation, and the Chinese and Pakistani Ministers also held bilateral meeting with de facto Cabinet members.

24. On 3 July, the Ambassador of Afghanistan to the Russian Federation, Gul Hasan, appointed by the de facto authorities, presented his credentials to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the latter country, Andrei Rudenko. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the “official recognition of the Government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will give an impetus to the development of productive bilateral cooperation between our countries in various areas”.

25. UNAMA continued to facilitate regional cooperation efforts, organizing meetings with Kabul-based diplomatic missions and engaging with visiting delegations to promote the economic integration of Afghanistan in the region and encourage humanitarian assistance.

III. Human rights

26. Unexploded ordnance continued to cause harm to civilians, mostly children. During the reporting period, a total of 8 civilians were killed (2 men, 3 girls and 3 boys) and 45 were wounded (10 men, 9 women, 8 girls and 18 boys).

27. Cross-border armed violence between Pakistani security forces and de facto security forces caused civilian casualties. During the period from 29 May to 20 July, in Helmand and Kunar Provinces, small arms and mortar fire by Pakistani security forces resulted in civilians being wounded (six, including one girl) and killed (two boys). The Embassy of Pakistan to Afghanistan informed UNAMA in writing that “unprovoked and indiscriminate” cross-border firing by Afghan de facto security forces had resulted in casualties on the Pakistan side, including “civilians”, something to which Pakistan had been “compelled to respond”. The Embassy further indicated that Pakistan had “demonstrated restraint in the face of provocations” and would continue efforts towards “dialogue and cooperation”.

28. During the reporting period, UNAMA documented at least five killings, one arbitrary arrest and detention and three instances of torture and ill-treatment of former government officials and former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

29. On 24 July, UNAMA released a report entitled “No safe haven: human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan”, in which it documents cases of individuals who had been forced to return to Afghanistan and who have experienced serious human rights violations on the basis of their specific profiles. Women and girls, former government officials, former members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists were found to face heightened risk of human rights violations. The de facto authorities responded to the report by rejecting many of its findings and reiterating that all returning Afghans benefited from the general amnesty of 2021.

30. During the reporting period, UNAMA documented judicial corporal punishment against at least 63 individuals (47 men and 16 women).

31. Instances of the arbitrary arrest and detention, ill-treatment and killing of protesters against the eradication of opium poppies by the de facto authorities were recorded in Badakhshan Province. On 5 May, in Argo District, around 20 protesters were arrested by de facto security forces. De facto security forces shot at protesters on 25 May in Jurm District (1 man killed and 6 wounded), and on 19 and 30 June in Khash District (8 men killed and 21 men and 1 girl wounded). On 1 July, de facto security forces fired shots at a burial ceremony for those killed on 30 June (1 man killed and 12 wounded). On 1 July, in a media interview, the de facto Provincial Governor of Badakhshan confirmed that clashes between protesters and de facto

security forces had caused casualties. He cited the lack of non-lethal crowd control equipment in the province.

32. The de facto authorities increased the implementation and enforcement of such restrictions as those imposed under the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. They continued enforcing the ban on beauty salons by closing those operating clandestinely and, in some areas, increased enforcement of the *mahram* requirement. In Kandahar, since May, female healthcare workers must be accompanied by a *mahram* with an official identification card issued by the de facto Department of Public Health, which reportedly requires a cumbersome application process that takes up to several weeks. Women were excluded from the latest round of university entrance examinations. Enforcement of strict dress codes intensified in some provinces. Since May, in the city of Herat, wearing the chador (a full-body cloak covering the head) has become mandatory for women. Non-compliance has led to detention and restricted access to markets and public transport. In July, in various areas of the city of Kabul, de facto police and inspectors of the de facto Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice arrested at least 60 women and girls for allegedly violating hijab instructions.

33. UNAMA continued to record incidents of gender-based violence, including reports implicating de facto officials in forced marriages, in violation of the decree issued by the Taliban leader on 3 December 2021 banning the practice. Between 1 April and 30 June, the Afghanistan country task force on monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict documented some 191 grave violations affecting at least 130 children, including 22 girls. The most prevalent violation was killing and maiming.

34. On 8 July, Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for the Taliban leader and the de facto Chief Justice, Abdul Hakim Haqqani, having found reasonable grounds to believe that they had committed crimes against humanity of persecution on gender grounds against girls, women and other persons non-conforming with the Taliban's policy on gender, gender identity or expression, and on political grounds against persons perceived as "allies of girls and women". In response, the same day, the de facto Chief Spokesperson publicly stated the de facto authorities did not recognize the Court and asserted that its decisions had "no impact on the determination and stance of the Islamic Emirate".¹

35. The de facto authorities issued instructions to regulate various forms of expression. In May, the de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice announced that it was monitoring social media to prevent content considered to be contrary to religious values or to include insults or expressions of ethnic prejudice. Since the announcement, the de facto Ministry has arrested several individuals for posting content that it considered inappropriate. On 29 June, the de facto Ministry of Information and Culture introduced a directive that regulates political debates and requires, among other provisions, that political analysts must speak in accordance with sharia law and obtain an identity card issued by the de facto Ministry to be able to speak in the media as political analysts.

36. The de facto authorities continued to restrict religious practices that they considered discordant with their views. Various security measures reportedly adopted as precautions to prevent attacks against Shia communities nonetheless restricted the commemoration of Ashura' in early July. In Herat Province, UNAMA documented arrests and ill-treatment by the de facto authorities on the grounds of violations of restrictions related to Ashura'. Individuals accused of promoting atheism or religions

¹ See <https://rta.af/en/statement-by-the-spokesperson-of-the-islamic-emirate-regarding-the-ruling-of-the-so-called-international-court/>.

other than Islam were arbitrarily arrested by the de facto authorities. On 4 July, in Badakhshan Province, unidentified individuals shot and killed a prominent figure from the Ismaili community.

37. On 5 June, in a meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, the de facto Director-General of the Office of Prison Administration reaffirmed his commitment to ensure the Mission's continued access to prisons across the country. In mid-July, the de facto Office of Prison Administration reported that the prison population, which was over 27,000 at the end of April, had increased to almost 29,500, the highest since the Taliban takeover. That number comprised over 26,000 men (88.6 per cent), 1,800 women (6.2 per cent) and 1,500 juveniles (5.2 per cent). The rise in the prison population is due in part to the fact that the de facto courts regularly order pretrial detention for people accused of crimes, including those accused of and arrested for minor crimes and financial disputes.

38. On 17 June, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) launched its report entitled *Gender Index 2024: Afghanistan*.² The report provides a consolidated benchmark to assess the status of Afghan women and girls across five key dimensions of human development: health; education; labour and financial inclusion; participation in decision-making; and freedom from violence. The findings indicate that Afghan women and girls experience one of the most severe empowerment deficits and the widest gender gaps in the world, with women achieving only 17 per cent of their potential and with a 76 per cent disparity between women's and men's outcomes across all measured areas. Ongoing restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities continue to erode women's rights and capabilities, rolling back progress made in the previous decades. In the report, UN-Women highlights how those trends may further affect the development trajectory of Afghanistan and its progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

IV. Economic development, donor coordination and aid effectiveness

39. According to the economic monitor released by the World Bank in late July, the economic growth of the estimated 2.5 per cent in the fiscal year 2024 remains insufficient to meaningfully improve living standards given persistent poverty, widespread unemployment and the high population growth, which was inflated in 2025 by significant numbers of Afghans returning from abroad. The economic outlook is constrained by economic isolation, limited access to finance and persistent structural challenges. Between late March and late May, 422 billion afghanis (\$605 million) was collected in revenue, a 13 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2024. This growth was driven by higher tax revenues, including increased customs, duties and fees, as well as a rise in non-tax revenues and partly by levies on transportation and goods. While the afghani remained stable over 2025, at 69.4 against the dollar on 21 July, inflation rose in May for the first time since April 2023, reaching 0.5 per cent, up from deflationary levels in previous months.

40. Afghanistan continued to face a persistent trade deficit. The trade deficit in May was nearly 40 per cent higher year-on-year. Exports decreased by 20.0 per cent in May 2025 (\$82.4 million) and by 22.2 per cent in June 2025 (\$65.8 million) as compared with the same months in 2024, due largely to exchange rate appreciation, increased tariffs and regional instability. Imports rose by 9.9 per cent in June (\$942.8 million), following a 30 per cent year-on-year increase in May. The informal

² See www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/06/afghanistan-gender-index-2024.

economy continued to account for a significant portion of the overall economy of Afghanistan, and was driven by high unemployment, challenges to the banking system, displacement, illicit economies, informal financial services and small-scale agriculture and trade, including with neighbouring States.

41. In June, the Taliban leader approved a five-year Afghanistan national development strategy, its first such strategy, focused on governance, international relations, security and public order and economic and social development. On 21 June, at a regular meeting of the de facto Economic Commission, the de facto authorities adopted policy based on the Islamic economic system, in which investment, production, job creation and poverty reduction is prioritized. On 18 July, feasibility studies for the 681 km trans-Afghan railway commenced.

42. As at June, the credit guarantee facility of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the Afghanistan Credit Guarantee Foundation, had released \$9.5 million in loans to 3,623 micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including 981 loans to female entrepreneurs, supporting 8,790 jobs, including 2,434 for women.

43. On 25 and 26 June, UNAMA, UNDP and Afghan private partner entities co-hosted an event in Kabul to promote business-to-business partnerships for investments in renewable energy and to launch the in-country Green Economy Financing Facility initiated by UNDP.

44. The United Nations continued operating the cash shipment facility. Between 1 January and 30 June 2025, it brought \$360 million for United Nations entities, publicly financed donors and approved non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Improvements in correspondent banking to Afghan banks have enabled United Nations entities to partially resume international transfers.

45. From 16 to 17 June, a meeting of senior officials on Afghanistan hosted by the European Union and held in Brussels brought together representatives of States members of the European Union, the United Nations, international financial institutions, Afghan and international civil society and the private sector to discuss developments related to the political and humanitarian situation, basic needs and livelihoods. Donors reaffirmed their commitment to the Afghan people, while noting that funding levels had significantly decreased due to competing international crises and decreased foreign aid allocated by donor countries.

46. On 10 June, the Steering Committee of the Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan approved \$3.64 million to support the Fund's operations through 2027 and endorsed the joint project entitled Participatory Action for Integrated Developmental Assistance to Areas of Return, which was officially launched on 28 July. The initiative aims to assist 57,000 households in displacement-affected communities in Kunduz and Baghlan Provinces and is funded at \$23.01 million: \$15.80 million from the Fund and \$7.21 million from co-financing from other funding sources.

47. UNAMA observed ongoing environment-driven displacements throughout the country, exacerbated by drought conditions across at least 19 of the 34 provinces. On 16 June, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) released a report in which it noted that 79 per cent of internal displacements in Afghanistan from January to March 2025 were driven by environmental hazards. UNAMA recorded cases in southern, eastern, northern and central Afghanistan in which environmental displacements had exacerbated local tensions over resources, while urban areas continued to face worsening groundwater depletion. In June, the de facto National Environment Protection Agency, together with a national NGO, co-launched the first "state of the environment" assessment in Afghanistan since 2012.

48. Within the framework of the private sector working group, UNDP and UNAMA jointly facilitated technical consultations with Afghan and international stakeholders to identify confidence-building measures for private sector resilience. A technical task team led by UNDP was established as a coordination mechanism to support the development of new microfinance institutions in Afghanistan, inclusive of women and prioritizing institutional capacity, including in relation to Islamic finance.

49. On 1 July, UNAMA convened the second meeting of the private sector working group in Doha, bringing together participants from Member States and international organizations, as well as representatives of the de facto authorities, Afghan private sector stakeholders, including women, United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. Discussions were focused on strengthening the private sector of Afghanistan, highlighting the need for the economic inclusion of women and the education of girls. Participants expressed support for the working group and emphasized collaborative engagement to develop the Afghan private sector, including through female entrepreneurs, as a key driver for growth and sustainable development.

50. During the reporting period, the Afghanistan Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network adopted a revised and fully funded two-year strategy. Priorities include joint advocacy, risk mitigation, capacity-building and field monitoring, with a focus on safeguarding women and children.

V. Humanitarian assistance

51. Afghanistan continued to face the compounded challenges of poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, frequent natural hazards, a fragile economy and limited access to essential services. Funding shortfalls have forced humanitarian partners to scale back or suspend critical operations, leaving millions of people unsupported. As at 26 July, an estimated 1,627,000 Afghans had returned to Afghanistan in 2025, including forced returns and returns under adverse circumstances – some 1,280,000 from the Islamic Republic of Iran and 348,000 from Pakistan. The de facto authorities mobilized resources to help manage returns, including cash assistance, biometric registration and land identification in high-return districts. In July, \$10 million was allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund of the United Nations for initial border relief, including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

52. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees visited Afghanistan from 19 to 21 July, meeting the de facto authorities, stakeholders and returnees at the Islam Qal'a border crossing. He urged international support for immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reintegration. He later visited the Islamic Republic of Iran to engage with officials and Afghan refugees, and advocated regional dialogue and durable solutions.

53. In interviews conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at official crossings, returnees made claims of harassment, detention and extortion in countries of asylum and during return; women-headed households and unaccompanied women were reportedly especially vulnerable. Discussions in focus groups convened by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group in Nangarhar, Kandahar and Herat Provinces highlighted urgent needs for shelter, livelihoods and education for girls. Because the response capacity has been overwhelmed, and due to funding cuts, women's participation has been reduced. From January to June, the Office provided protection services to 179,121 people. Between 1 January and 12 July, IOM assisted 265,888 undocumented returnees with post-arrival assistance and medical care. From January to June, humanitarian partners reached 11.5 million people with at least one form of assistance, including 2 million people across three

sectors. Those included 8.1 million people who were provided with food and livelihood support, 4.4 million people with healthcare, 4.4 million people with water, sanitation and hygiene, 2.9 million children and pregnant or lactating women with nutrition, 2 million people with protection, 702,000 children with education and 378,000 people with emergency shelter and non-food items.

54. Hunger continues to affect much of the country; between May and October, some 9.5 million people were projected to face acute levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or above). That number includes 1.6 million facing emergency levels (phase 4) of food insecurity. Between April and June, the World Food Programme assisted 8 million people with food, nutrition, cash and livelihoods, distributing 50,400 metric tons of food and \$31.3 million in cash. Due to funding gaps, the Programme can now only reach at most 1 million of the 6 million people whom it had planned to reach, and it has cut its malnutrition treatment programme by 60 per cent, leaving 1.2 million children under the age of five and 500,000 women untreated.

55. From April to June, the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded 43,600 measles cases, 14,000 malaria cases, 46,400 acute watery diarrhoea cases, 513 suspected dengue fever cases and 650 suspected cases of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever. As at 20 July, 422 health facilities had closed due to funding gaps, affecting 3.08 million people across 30 provinces. Hundreds of health- and gender-based violence service points supported by the United Nations Population Fund had also closed. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reached over 19 million children with essential healthcare, vaccinated over 12 million children against polio, provided micronutrient powder to 842,789 children and treated 114,942 children under the age of five with severe wasting. UNDP provided services for tuberculosis, HIV and malaria to 844,841 beneficiaries.

56. From April to June, WHO supported 20,499 beneficiaries through its trauma care programme. During the same period, 156,643 children under the age of five with severe acute malnutrition were treated in 147 inpatient and 3,287 outpatient facilities, and 343,483 children under the age of five and 243,982 pregnant and lactating women with moderate acute malnutrition were reached through the targeted supplementary feeding programme.

57. From April to June, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations supported 595,070 people across 32 provinces, forming 161 community groups for climate-smart agriculture, rehabilitating 284 structures under 19 irrigation schemes, restoring 221 hectares of land, vaccinating 2.19 million ruminants against the peste des petits ruminants virus and treating 44,922 hectares for locust control across 11 provinces.

58. Between January and June, 489 access-related incidents, which caused the suspension of 245 humanitarian activities, were reported. Although that number marks a 69 per cent decrease as compared with the same period in 2024, access remains difficult. Interference in humanitarian activities by the de facto authorities accounted for 73 per cent of incidents; 12 per cent involved violence against personnel and assets, including the detention of 100 humanitarian workers, including 31 women and 12 United Nations personnel, and 19 per cent involved gender-related restrictions, which hindered the inclusive and principled delivery of aid.

59. The survey conducted in June by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group and the Humanitarian Access Working Group found that only 46 per cent of organizations remained fully operational with both women and men. Women staff face growing constraints: 23 per cent work from home, up from 12 per cent as

compared with the previous round conducted in March; 26 per cent are stopped en route to work; and 40 per cent of organizations can no longer cover *mahram* costs.

60. Afghanistan remains heavily contaminated by explosive ordnance, which affects nearly 3 million people in 261 districts. In July 2025, the number of mine action teams decreased to 188, as compared with 282 at the same time in 2024. The United Nations-led Mine Action Technical Cell operated with minimal staff and no quality management due to funding gaps. The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan funded clearance and risk education activities through the Mine Action Service of the United Nations, which removed 1,678 explosive remnants of war from Laghman Province and delivered 201 risk education sessions for 4,501 people (of whom 2,696 were children), including 999 returnees and 99 internally displaced people, in Laghman and Nangahar Provinces.

61. From April to June, UNICEF renovated water systems, benefiting 192,249 people, and supported 65,000 households with cash transfers. Over 400,000 vulnerable school-aged children gained access to community-based schools.

62. As part of the broader humanitarian reset, the Afghanistan humanitarian country team continues to conduct a review of humanitarian coordination structures to ensure that they are fit for purpose, streamlined and aligned with evolving needs, including the shift towards longer-term programming.

VI. Counter-narcotics

63. On 25 June the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a report entitled *Afghanistan Drug Insights Volume 5: High-Risk Drug Use in Afghanistan*,³ in which it highlighted a worsening crisis of high-risk drug use in the country. Approximately 27,000 individuals, including 2,670 women and 2,150 children, use drugs in public drug-use hotspots, and more than one fifth of those users are homeless. Comparing the findings with data from 2009,⁴ UNODC notes a decrease in the use of cannabis and opium, a significant increase in the use of heroin and stimulants and an increase in the use of injection drugs. Seventy-five per cent of injectors share needles. While more than half of the surveyed users have received some treatment, access to quality care remains limited, especially in rural areas. Opiate prices, particularly in the north-east, have declined sharply, with dry opium at \$579 per kg, due to the harvest season and the poor quality of fresh opium entering the market. Social stigma continues to be a major barrier to seeking treatment.

64. During the reporting period, UNODC supported 51,342 individual drug users (34 per cent of whom were women) at 13 drug treatment centres, 2 drop-in centres, 2 opioid maintenance therapy centres and 9 vocational skills training centres in 12 provinces. With WHO support, a total of 1,438 individuals, including 371 women and children, completed inpatient treatment and were discharged from drug addiction treatment centres, and 1,250 were receiving opioid maintenance treatment. UNODC also supported 3,992 farming households (30 per cent of which were headed by women) in seven provinces with licit crop inputs and training. UNDP supported 21 agribusinesses (10 of which were women-led) in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces to participate in agricultural fairs in Kabul, generating sales of dry fruits and agroprocessed goods sourced from former poppy farmers. Efforts by United Nations entities to support alternative livelihoods for former poppy farmers also included the rehabilitation of 26 water facilities and irrigation canals in Helmand, Kandahar and

³ See www.unodc.org/coafg/uploads/documents/Afghanistan_Drug_Insights_Volume_5.pdf.

⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Drug Use in Afghanistan: 2009 Survey* (2009).

Nangarhar Provinces, to improve agricultural access to water, and the construction of 40 greenhouses across six districts in Badghis, Helmand and Kandahar Provinces.

65. On 30 June, UNAMA convened the third meeting of the working group on counter-narcotics in Doha, gathering participants from Member States and international organizations, as well as representatives of the de facto authorities of Afghanistan, Afghan subject-matter experts, the United Nations and one international financial institution. Meeting attendees discussed implementing a joint action plan on alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers, the development of a joint engagement plan on drug prevention and treatment for people affected by drugs and critical issues related to drug trafficking and production, cross-border management and law enforcement.

VII. Mission support

66. As at 30 June, vacancy rates in UNAMA were 18 per cent for international staff, 11 per cent for international United Nations Volunteers, 15 per cent for national United Nations Volunteers, 18 per cent for National Professional Officers and 14 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, 37 per cent for international United Nations Volunteers, 10 per cent for national United Nations Volunteers, 7 per cent for National Professional Officers and 10 per cent for national General Service staff.

VIII. Observations

67. Despite modest macroeconomic growth and relative security, the people of Afghanistan face chronic widespread poverty with limited access to basic services. The intertwined risks associated with poverty and extremism, whether terrorism or the repressive policies of the Taliban in relation to women, threaten to further isolate Afghanistan from the international community.

68. In view of the pressures of population growth, the recent mass return of Afghan citizens from abroad, and insufficient and discriminatory investment in human development and basic services, long-term economic growth will remain at an extremely low level. Many Afghan citizens are barely managing to survive. The continuing strict implementation of restrictive policies and practices by the de facto authorities has not only negatively affected the economic, social and personal lives of the Afghan population, especially women and girls; it has also constrained the country's cooperation with and integration into the international community, many of whose members are increasingly signalling their frustration at the lack of progress made in previous engagement efforts and their intention to reduce future engagement. Engagement at the regional level alone will not be sufficient to generate the necessary cooperation and resources to address the formidable challenges faced by the people of Afghanistan, challenges that have significantly increased in 2025.

69. I am gravely concerned about the impact of mass returns of Afghan citizens to the country in the recent period, with an estimated 1,627,000 Afghans having returned by 26 July. Many returnees face serious protection risks and lack access to shelter, livelihoods and basic services, and the current humanitarian capacities in the country are already overstretched. I call upon Member States to uphold their international obligations in relation to protection, including the principle of non-refoulement, and ensure that returns are voluntary, safe, dignified and accompanied by sustained

support for the returnees' reintegration into communities, in order to minimize the risk of deepening the humanitarian crisis and of destabilizing vulnerable areas.

70. The reports of human rights violations against Afghans who have returned to their country are deeply troubling. I call upon the de facto authorities to ensure that returnees' rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, that individuals are not persecuted after their return and that actions are taken to prevent future violations. I also call upon Member States to increase the availability of safe pathways for the resettlement of Afghans at risk and to refrain from returning Afghan migrants and refugees to Afghanistan in the absence of an individualized assessment to ensure that their return is not a violation of their human rights.

71. The ongoing funding crisis has caused significant financial and operational instability for the United Nations and aid partners in Afghanistan, a situation that has now been exacerbated by the added pressure of mass returns. In the first half of 2025, the humanitarian partners reached 600,000 fewer people than in the same period in 2024. I appeal to all donors to increase their contributions and/or to prioritize flexible, reliable and long-term funding. Critical humanitarian and resilience-building efforts must continue.

72. While continued efforts by the de facto authorities to eradicate poppy cultivation are welcome, violence resulting from poppy eradication campaigns is of great concern. I urge the de facto authorities to ensure that the use of force, including in connection with protests, is deployed only as a last resort, when strictly necessary, and is proportionate. The de facto authorities and the international community must enhance their efforts to provide alternative livelihoods. I am also concerned by the issue of domestic drug use in Afghanistan and its impact on the health of the Afghan people.

73. The persistent exclusion of women and girls from secondary and higher education, and the severe restrictions on their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of movement, access to employment and participation in public life, should be a matter of grave concern for all. I reiterate my call upon the de facto authorities to reverse all discriminatory measures and uphold the international obligations of Afghanistan to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of all Afghan women and girls.

74. Coercion to deter religious minorities from observing their chosen religion is unacceptable. I am particularly alarmed at the recent murder of a prominent member of the Ismaili community by unidentified individuals in Badakhshan Province. The de facto authorities must ensure both physical security and the freedom of religion of all religious groups.

75. The new measures taken by the de facto authorities restricting political debates, poetry and social media are also of great concern. Such restrictions stifle various forms of expression and important channels for the public to voice their concerns, channels that are crucial for building public trust. Media restrictions continue to jeopardize a sector that has already been strained by a sharp drop in funding. Journalists and media workers must be allowed to continue their work, and the right to freedom of expression must be upheld.

76. There is an urgent need to safeguard the access of Afghan people, including women and girls, to health-care and other essential services and livelihoods. I urge all stakeholders to ensure that humanitarian assistance remains principled, impartial and accessible to all in need. Continued support for female-led and life-saving services is essential in order to protect the dignity, safety and prospects of Afghan women and girls.

77. The international community remains extremely concerned about the unacceptable situation of Afghan women and girls, the lack of inclusive governance and the marked deterioration in the human rights situation. The de facto authorities have also conveyed their grievances: frozen assets, sanctions, non-recognition and the need for development assistance and an end to dependency on aid. The United Nations has continued its efforts to help to address those challenges. It has worked to facilitate a more coherent, coordinated and structured engagement between the international community and the de facto authorities, for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan.

78. As part of that process, the United Nations convened the meetings of the working groups on counter-narcotics and the private sector on 30 June and 1 July, which contributed to further confidence-building and enabled the participants to discuss practical solutions to address the challenges faced by the Afghan population. The complex issues related to the nascent political road map are interlinked and require the consensus of various groups of stakeholders; it will take time to make progress. I urge the international community, the de facto authorities and other Afghan stakeholders to constructively engage in dialogues with reasonable expectations.

79. Lastly, I extend my deep appreciation to all United Nations personnel in Afghanistan under the leadership of my Special Representative, Roza Otunbayeva, and NGO partners for their continued dedication and service to the people of Afghanistan in an extremely challenging environment.
