



EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION
FOR DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Unit of International Relations and Political Economy
European Organization for Diplomatic and Economic Policies
Diplomatic Document / Policy Analysis / Berlin, November 12, 2023

After two years of Taliban rule, Afghanistan has witnessed a failure to fulfill commitments, with indications of a return to the extremist approach observed between 1996 and 2001

"The United Nations expresses its concern, and the options appear limited and ineffective"



EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION
FOR DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Brussels - Berlin / The Taliban movement celebrates two years since taking over the reins of power in Afghanistan after a chaotic withdrawal by the United States, followed by NATO forces leading the military presence in the country for over 20 years.

As two years pass from the Taliban's rule from August 15, 2021, to August 15, 2023, the fundamental issues of the economic, social, and security situations in Afghanistan come to the forefront. This is especially true after the promises made by Taliban negotiators that their rule would not resemble the period between 1996 and 2001. However, based on indicators and events throughout the past year, the Taliban has failed on all fronts to fulfill its commitments.

Despite the initial promises made by the movement's leaders, those in charge quickly reverted to imposing their strict interpretation of Islamic Sharia, which characterized their previous rule and severely restricted women's rights. Additionally, there has been a significant restriction on press freedom and political life, reminiscent of the era of the movement's rigid rule. While there are minor signs of internal conflicts within the movement, it seems that the less extremist faction is the weaker one.

- Taliban's Failure in Commitments on Three Levels -

1. ****Freedom Level:**** The Taliban failed to implement its commitments, showcasing the radical face that imposed movement-specific laws and abolished all forms of political diversity in Afghanistan, including parties or political forces that could pose opposition to the extremist movement.

2. ****Security Level:**** The movement significantly and alarmingly failed to fulfill its firm commitments not to turn Afghanistan into a sanctuary for extremist groups worldwide. This failure is evident with the increasing activities of ISIS Khorasan, which escalated since the movement took power. The presence of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul, who was assassinated by the United States, added to the negative indicators about the movement's ability to fulfill its commitments regarding Afghanistan not becoming a base for extremists.

3. ****Rights of Women and Girls:**** The Taliban failed to implement its unequivocal commitments regarding the rights of girls to education and women's rights. The movement imposed increasing restrictions on women since its return to power in August last year, preventing girls from attending secondary and high schools and imposing strict regulations on women's rights.



EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION
FOR DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC POLICY

- European Union Expresses Concern on Afghan Women -

The European Union has expressed deep concern about the deteriorating living conditions of women and girls in Afghanistan, particularly after the violent suppression of a women's demonstration in Kabul. The Taliban has increasingly imposed restrictions on women since seizing power a year ago on August 15, 2021.

EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell stated, "The European Union is particularly concerned about the fate of Afghan women and girls who are completely deprived of their freedoms and rights and the ability to benefit from basic services like education." The EU emphasized the need for Afghanistan to adhere to treaties signed by the state, including supporting and protecting the economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights of all Afghans, with full, balanced, and equal participation in the country's government. The statement reiterated that all humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan remains conditional on the Taliban's compliance with fundamental principles and human rights, especially those of women, girls, children, and minorities.

Options for European Countries in Afghanistan:

There aren't many options available for European countries to pursue in Afghanistan after the chaotic aftermath caused by the sudden U.S. withdrawal, leading to the Taliban's takeover of the country once again. Despite European frustration with Washington, the option of coordination with the Americans remains almost the only choice for Brussels leaders. However, this coordination will be very cautious and consistent with a lack of trust, especially since Brussels leaders understand that the European Union will be the biggest loser in the medium and short term due to the Taliban's control over Afghanistan. This includes expected waves of illegal migration from Afghanistan and the risks of the return of extremist organizations operating there, which will launch terrorist attacks on vulnerable Western targets within the European Union.

The option of aid remains as a pressure card on the Taliban to force them to change part of their strategies. However, this card seems ineffective in the near future, considering that the movement doesn't attach great importance to the economic situation within Afghanistan. This means that the Afghan people will face significant economic crises accompanied by pressures under extremist rule, which seems likely to return to its previous state between 1996 and 2001.



EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION
FOR DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Through the indicators highlighted in this report, the need for international action toward Afghanistan must be accelerated to exert more pressure on the leaders of the extremist movement to change their strategies in managing the country's affairs and restricting freedoms. Otherwise, the danger of Afghanistan returning to being a base for extremist groups and a fertile ground for radicalization will be very close.

Unit of Extremist Groups / Afghanistan File / Taliban Movement
European Organization for Diplomatic and Economic Policies / Geneva Center for Studies

European Organization for Diplomatic and Economic Policy
Berlin 10771 Germany Email: info@europolicy.org web: www.europolicy.org