

Critically evaluate the challenges faced by Afghanistan's government to get internal and external recognition also highlights option for Islamabad to follow

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1. INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan's sitting government assumed power within some weeks when the United States and its allies withdrew from the country on August 2021. A new government led by Afghan Taliban came into being, the reconstruction of the country seemed topmost challenge for it. However, the reconstruction of the country cannot be achieved by incumbent regime without internal and external recognition. Multiple factors, including internal dissension within Taliban, existence of militant groups, violation of human rights and humanitarian crisis obstruct Afghan government's internal and external recognition since their takeover.

"It is not right time for me to directly engage with Afghan rulers and not about recognition of the de facto Taliban authorities amidst human right violation suppression of women and counterterrorism."

(Antonio Guterres, in Doha conference)

2. Situation in Afghanistan after Taliban Takeover:

The fall of Kabul led socioeconomic chaos, humanitarian crisis, security issues, surge in unemployment and inflation, civil war and the country's diplomatic isolation. Thus, internal and external recognition becomes imperative for Afghan Taliban for establishing peace and stability in the country.

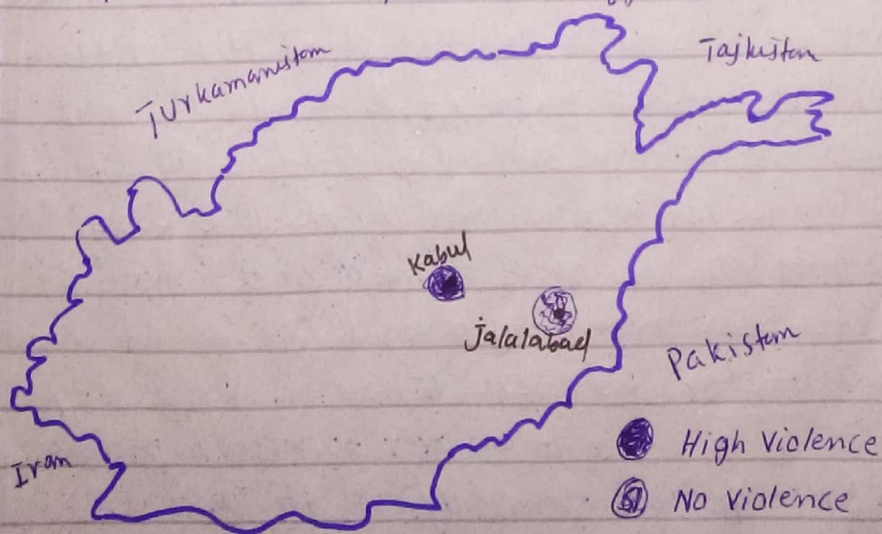
3- CHALLENGES TO GET INTERNAL RECOGNITION

- (i) Internal dissension within the Taliban including both ethnic and factional power struggles and policy differences;

Current Taliban regime has witnessed ethnic and factional power struggles and policy differences. Some Taliban leaders are reluctant to become part of authority as they think the country cannot get out of crisis due to lack of resources. Some Taliban ministers ^{are} against Haibatullah's decision on the restriction of women and other controversial ^{policies}

- (ii) Terrorism by Islamic State by Khorassan province:

In months of Taliban takeover IS-KP launched more attacks than ever. Deprived of rural strongholds, IS-KP reasserted itself in cities with a flurry of hit-and-run and sniper attacks targeting Taliban after their victory. IS-KP has ideological and territorial disputes with Afghan Taliban.



Geographic concentration of violent incidents involving IS-KP, 15 September 2021 - 15 July 2022

(iii) Armed resistance by National Resistance Front:

Armed groups composed mostly of people affiliated with the previous tribes who had fought the Taliban in 1990s. Their ranks now include a younger generation that defined itself in the opposition of Taliban insurgency. The NRF is primarily active in Panjshir province and ~~parts~~ provinces like Parwan and Kapisa. The groups' opposition to Taliban began immediately after takeover.

(iv) Civic protest largely led by women:

~~Impositions~~ Imposing strictions on women in Afghanistan and violation of other human rights by government have triggered countrywide civic protests largely led by women. This situation has created social uncertainty in the society.

(v) Persisting humanitarian crisis:

Currently, Afghanistan is facing the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. According to the United Nations, in January 2022, the UN launched the largest single-country aid appeal in its history of finance humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan. By August 2022, six million people were on "the brink of famine." By March 2022, ~~ninety~~ ninety percent Afghan could not have "enough food to eat." Moreover, skyrocketing inflation has meant an over 50 percent increase in price of goods from July 2021 to June 2022.

4- CHALLENGES TO GET EXTERNAL RECOGNITION

(i) Existence of Foreign militant groups:

Afghanistan has become sanctuary of foreign militant groups. They include Al-Qaeda, Jamaat Ansarullah, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Pakistani Taliban and bands of Uighur fighters. Most of these groups share some ideological affinity with Taliban. The world and most importantly neighbouring countries of Afghanistan has serious concerns about their stay in Afghanistan.

(ii) Human rights violation:

Afghan Taliban are making human abuse in the country by suppressing fundamental and human rights. They ^{have} imposed multiple bans on women. They have tortured their critics and opponents. According to the Amnesty International, the Taliban's governance structure lack justice, truth, freedom of speech and ^{women empowerment}.

(iii) Absence of inclusive government in

Afghanistan:

Afghanistan's government has blatantly violated Doha Accord that stresses on the formation of inclusive government in the country. For stable and peaceful Afghanistan, the partnership in power by all ethnic groups of Afghanistan is imperative. Thus, world powers have observed the violation of Doha Agreement by Taliban.

(iv) Gender apartheid in Afghanistan:

Government has imposed strict restrictions on women that shows Afghan government lacks international commitment. Fawzia Koofi, former Deputy Speaker of Afghan Parliament says, "fifty five percent of Afghan women society is excluded from public life and women have become prisoners within the walls of their own home."

(v) Growth of illicit drugs:

The cultivation and production of illicit drugs have taken rise in the country. On its growth the international community has repeatedly shown concerns on several occasions. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the UN office on Drugs and Crime, has pointed out that, "although illicit cultivation and production may seem the only alternative starvation for many terrorist groups can profit from illicit drugs." The international community, therefore, must respond to these trafficking challenges.

5- OPTIONS FOR ISLAMABAD TO FOLLOW

(i) Demand for removal of western sanctions and resumption of development aid to Afghanistan:

Pakistan wants the lifting of western sanctions against Afghanistan and resumption of development aid to Afghanistan. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari calls for easing sanctions on Afghanistan so that basic functioning of Afghan economy must not be endangered as per a report of Reuters of June 20, 2022.

(ii) Provide as much assistance as Pakistani resources permit:

Pakistan should provide as much assistance as Pakistani resources permit. Also, it should keep humanitarian air and road corridors for the UN agencies and non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors.

(iii) Make diplomatic efforts to end Taliban's diplomatic isolation:

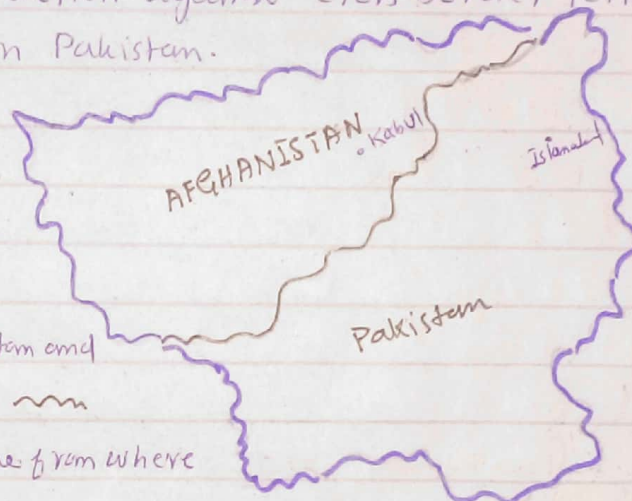
Fearing that Taliban's government would be internationally isolated, Pakistan launched diplomatic offensive aimed primarily at the west - to not isolate Afghanistan in the time of humanitarian crisis. Afghan government has clearly acknowledged Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for them.

(iv) Strengthening trade and transit ties with crippling economy:

Pakistan needs to mend strong trade and transit ties with new Afghan government that is suffering from economic chaos. In this regard, Pakistan has passed a special order to allow barter trade with Afghanistan as per a report of Reuters of June 2, 2023.

(V) Stress on ^{Afghan} Taliban for women empowerment
and ^{action against} cross-border terrorist activities:

Pakistan needs to stress on Afghan government to not oppress women rights as ~~by taking a hard~~ Taliban are justifying women rights on the grounds of a hardline version of Sharia. This will help to acquire internal and external recognition to Taliban government. Pakistan should also make Taliban government bound on strict action against cross border terrorist activities in Pakistan.



Map of Pakistan and
Afghanistan. ~~~~

is demand line from where
cross-border terrorism is forced by TTP

6. CONCLUSION

Both international community and citizens of the country are reluctant to recognize present Afghanistan's government as it ^{has} blatantly violated ^{to} international commitment in form of Doha Agreement. Its immediate neighbour Pakistan can help her to get recognition by providing financial assistance and supporting on the diplomatic front. The country has also to follow Doha Accord in letter and spirit in this regard.