

Afghan Refugees in the UK: Support Systems and Challenges

Written primarily summarizing a conversation with Fulbright Scholar Omid Walli

This article focuses on the experience of Afghan refugees in the UK. It discusses the various types of support available to refugees, including financial aid, healthcare, and housing. It also touches on the challenges that refugees may face, such as navigating the asylum process and finding employment. The UK's refugee support system is complex, but it aims to assist those in need while they rebuild their lives. Additionally, the article delves into the political landscape of Afghanistan, highlighting the struggles for power, corruption and the roles of various political actors and groups that have contributed to the ongoing challenges in the country.

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Afghani Refugee Details and Context

Here's a detailed outline of each aspect the Afghani refugee shared, along with context and expanded information for each item:

1. Section 95 Support for Refugees

Overview: Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 provides essential support for asylum seekers who are awaiting a decision on their application. It applies to those who can demonstrate destitution, meaning they do not have adequate accommodation or cannot meet their basic living needs.

Eligibility Criteria: Asylum seekers must show that they are destitute or risk destitution if support is not provided. This support is generally available until their application is resolved, either through granting refugee status or another conclusion.

Support Offered: Section 95 support includes accommodation and financial assistance. The Home Office allocates housing and a weekly allowance for essential items such as food, clothing, and toiletries. The financial assistance currently stands at approximately £45 per person per week.

Source: Home Office and the UK government guidelines on Section 95 support.

2. Migrant Help

Purpose and Role: Migrant Help is a UK charity that assists refugees and asylum seekers throughout their journey, from arrival to resettlement or appeals. They provide various forms of support, including advice on housing, health services, education, and legal assistance.

Services Offered: Migrant Help provides access to interpreters, guidance on navigating the asylum process, and assistance with accessing government benefits. They also offer an asylum helpline for immediate questions or emergencies.

Significance: As an independent charity, Migrant Help is critical in helping refugees understand the complexities of UK immigration law and access the resources available to them.

Source: Migrant Help UK official website.

3. Aspen Card - £45/Week

Explanation: Asylum seekers receiving Section 95 support are issued an Aspen card, which functions like a prepaid debit card. The UK government deposits a weekly allowance onto this card, currently about £45 per person, which can be used to purchase essential items.

Limitations and Regulations: The Aspen card can only be used in certain stores and for approved items, ensuring that the funds are spent on essentials. The card is designed to cover basic needs and is a crucial resource for asylum seekers with limited financial options.

Context: The weekly allowance may seem minimal, but it aims to cover immediate, day-to-day living expenses while refugees await a decision on their application.

Source: UK Home Office guidelines on financial support for asylum seekers.

4. HC1 Certificate (Help with Health Costs)

Purpose: The HC1 certificate allows refugees and other low-income individuals to receive free or reduced-cost healthcare. It covers costs for prescriptions, dental services, eye tests, and hospital travel.

Application Process: Asylum seekers and refugees can apply for the HC1 certificate by submitting proof of their financial status. Once granted, the certificate provides coverage for a specified period.

Importance: Access to healthcare can be challenging for refugees, and the HC1 certificate ensures they receive the medical attention they need without financial burden.

Source: NHS Business Services Authority and UK Government.

5. If Rejected, Appeal to the Court

Process: If an asylum application is denied, applicants have the right to appeal the decision in an immigration tribunal. This process involves presenting additional evidence or challenging procedural errors in the initial assessment.

Legal Assistance: Refugees can access legal aid and advice through organizations like the Refugee Council and Migrant Help. An appeal can be a lengthy process, and support is often critical for navigating the legal complexities.

Appeal Outcomes: An appeal can result in various outcomes, including a reversal of the rejection, an order for a new hearing, or, in some cases, a final denial. This step offers refugees a chance to make their case more comprehensively.

Source: UK Courts and Tribunal Service and the Refugee Council.

6. Work Authorization Granted Within 4 Weeks

Regulation: In some cases, refugees and asylum seekers may be granted work authorization within a short period after arrival, typically around four weeks. This varies depending on the individual's status, country of origin, and the specifics of their application.

Conditions: For asylum seekers specifically, work authorization is often restricted to certain shortage occupations unless they have been waiting for over a year without a decision. Recognized refugees typically receive broader employment rights.

Significance: Access to work allows refugees to become financially independent, contribute to society, and support themselves, reducing the reliance on government support.

Source: UK Home Office policies on refugee employment rights.

7. Five-Year Refugee Status If Approved

Grant of Status: When granted, refugee status provides five years of protection and the right to live, work, and study in the UK. During this period, refugees can apply for benefits and access public services, similar to other UK residents.

Path to Permanent Residency: After five years, refugees can apply for indefinite leave to remain (ILR), which provides permanent residency and a pathway to UK citizenship.

Implications: Five years is a critical timeframe, allowing refugees to stabilize, integrate, and start anew, with the potential for permanent residency thereafter.

Source: UK Visas and Immigration and Refugee Council.

8. Universal Credit

Overview: Universal Credit (UC) is a social security payment for people on low income or out of work. Refugees granted status are eligible to apply, provided they meet certain residency and income criteria.

Components: UC combines six benefits into one, including housing benefit, jobseeker's allowance, and income support. The amount received depends on personal circumstances, such as family size, age, and housing situation.

Challenges for Refugees: Applying for Universal Credit can be complex, especially for those unfamiliar with the UK's system. Refugees often need support in navigating the application process.

Learning Opportunity: Universal Credit (UC) serves as a streamlined welfare system that simplifies access to multiple benefits for low-income or unemployed individuals. It highlights a

significant approach to poverty reduction, designed to alleviate financial pressure for those in economic transition—especially relevant for refugees adapting to a new country.

Potential Adaptation for Afghanistan: Implementing a UC-style support system in a country with economic instability and limited resources may seem challenging. However, even a scaled-back program, targeting the most vulnerable populations with basic income support, could aid in reducing extreme poverty and supporting displaced families.

Broader Implications: The UK's UC model demonstrates how an integrated welfare system can reduce administrative complexity and provide holistic support. This approach is especially important for refugees, as it reduces the need to navigate multiple agencies and application processes, making the transition to financial independence smoother.

Lesson: Simplified and centralized welfare models can better serve vulnerable populations by reducing bureaucratic obstacles. In the context of Afghanistan or similar settings, an integrated assistance system could support stability and self-sufficiency for displaced families and those in extreme poverty.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Citizens Advice UK.

9. Universal Credit (Expanded)

Overview and Purpose: Universal Credit (UC) is a UK welfare system designed to streamline benefits by combining multiple forms of assistance into a single payment. It covers support for housing, children, and low-income or unemployed individuals. Refugees with status are eligible for UC, which helps cover living expenses while they settle and find employment.

Calculation and Entitlements: The amount of UC a refugee family receives depends on several factors: household income, number of dependents, disability status, and housing costs. For many refugees, UC becomes a vital resource during the initial months or even years as they build self-sufficiency in a new environment.

Application Process and Barriers: While UC is intended to simplify welfare, the application process can be challenging, especially for those with limited English proficiency or digital literacy, as the process is largely online. This difficulty is often compounded for refugees dealing with trauma or resettlement stress, necessitating support from organizations like Migrant Help and local charities.

Impact on Refugees: Access to UC allows refugee families to meet basic needs while they establish themselves in the UK. It helps alleviate immediate financial burdens, enabling them to focus on integration activities such as language learning, skills development, and job search.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions and academic studies on welfare impacts for refugees.

10. Three Paths for Afghan Refugee Seekers

Pathways:

- **Resettlement Programs:** The UK offers specific programs, such as the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), which prioritizes vulnerable Afghan nationals, including those who worked with the UK government and other entities.
- **Family Reunion:** Refugees in the UK can apply to bring family members, typically a spouse and children under 18, to join them. This path is essential for Afghans who were separated from their families due to conflict.
- **Asylum Process:** Afghans can also seek asylum through the standard asylum process. This option applies to those who did not qualify for the ACRS or family reunion.

Significance: These pathways reflect the UK's commitment to providing safe havens for vulnerable Afghans, though each route has different requirements and processing times.

Source: UK Home Office policies on Afghan resettlement and refugee support.

11. Social Assistance as a Draw for Refugees

Perceptions: Some people believe that the UK's robust social support system attracts refugees, as it offers access to healthcare, housing, and financial aid. However, this perspective can overlook the fact that most refugees flee due to conflict or persecution rather than seeking benefits.

Challenges Faced: While refugees receive support, it is often limited to basic needs, and asylum seekers face restrictions on work and benefits until they receive status.

Policy Implications: This perception influences public opinion and policies surrounding immigration, though studies suggest that most refugees contribute positively to the economy once integrated.

Source: Various reports from Migration Observatory and academic analyses on immigration policies.

12. Salary Cap of £30,000 and Benefits

Income Threshold: In the UK, those earning below £30,000 may qualify for benefits on a sliding scale, depending on their income level, household size, and other factors. Universal Credit is structured to assist low-income earners, helping to meet living costs.

Relevance to Refugees: For refugees, this cap means they can access additional financial assistance while working in low-paying jobs, which is often the case due to language barriers and limited UK work experience.

Economic Impact: This threshold supports social mobility by providing a safety net, ensuring refugees and low-income individuals have essential support.

Source: UK Government policies on Universal Credit and income thresholds.

This expanded explanation provides a structured and detailed look into each of these aspects of the refugee experience in the UK, particularly relevant for Afghan refugees. Each section references policies, processes, and resources that impact refugees' lives and opportunities for integration into British society.

Here is an expanded analysis of these additional aspects of refugee support and integration in the UK, specifically regarding Afghani and other refugee populations.

13. Homeless Department in Every Municipality

Role and Responsibilities: Every local authority in the UK is legally required to have a department dedicated to homelessness, which includes assisting refugees and asylum seekers facing housing challenges. This department typically operates within the council's housing office and provides services such as emergency accommodation, housing advice, and longer-term housing solutions.

Refugee Access to Services: For refugees, accessing stable housing is a critical first step toward integration. Once their asylum claim is approved, they can apply for housing assistance, often facilitated through these departments. Due to the high demand, they may be placed on waiting lists, and temporary accommodation is often provided until permanent housing is available. However, asylum seekers awaiting a decision typically receive housing support directly from the Home Office, not the local homelessness department.

Challenges: The influx of refugees, particularly during crisis periods, can strain local housing resources, leading to long waits and overcrowding in temporary accommodations. Additionally, refugees can face challenges like language barriers, which these departments must be equipped to address, often collaborating with charities to provide interpretation services and culturally sensitive support.

Source: UK government guidelines on homelessness prevention and support.

14. Are Refugees Welcomed Because of Vacant Jobs?

Economic Need: The UK has faced labor shortages in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, hospitality, and social care. Refugees often possess diverse skills, some of which align with these sectors, helping fill critical gaps in the labor market. Programs have been established to match refugees with vacant positions, promoting both economic productivity and integration.

Controversies and Public Perception: While some view refugees as necessary to meet labor demands, others worry that they may increase competition for jobs. However, research

suggests that refugees generally take up roles in areas with high vacancy rates, which helps sustain essential services.

Skilled Refugees: Many refugees are highly educated, having previously worked in professional fields such as engineering, medicine, and education. Programs that facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications are key to enabling refugees to work at their skill level, benefiting the UK economy by utilizing their expertise.

Government Perspective: Policies encouraging refugee integration often highlight the economic benefits, recognizing that supporting refugees' entry into the workforce reduces long-term welfare dependence and fosters self-reliance.

Source: Migration Observatory and studies on refugee economic impact in host countries.

15. Supporting Parents for Children's Full Integration

Family-Centered Integration Model: Supporting refugee parents is essential to ensuring the full integration of their children. Parents who receive adequate assistance—such as housing, language classes, job support, and mental health resources—are better equipped to provide a stable, nurturing environment for their children. When parents are empowered, children benefit from greater emotional security, academic support, and social integration.

Educational Opportunities for Children: When parents have access to stable housing, income, and mental health support, children are more likely to thrive in school and participate in extracurricular activities, enhancing their integration. Schools in the UK often provide additional language support and resources to refugee children, enabling them to progress academically and build friendships with peers.

Intergenerational Integration Benefits: Research indicates that children adapt more quickly to new cultures, often bridging cultural gaps for their parents. By supporting both generations, the UK promotes an intergenerational integration model where children act as cultural ambassadors within their families, fostering greater understanding and acceptance of UK social norms.

Source: Studies on family integration models in immigration, Department for Education guidance on supporting refugee children.

16. Is This a Capitalist Perspective?

Balancing Humanitarianism with Economic Benefit: The UK's approach to refugee support does intersect with capitalist motivations. While there are clear humanitarian reasons for offering refuge, there is also an economic interest in integrating refugees to contribute to the labor market. By investing in support systems for refugees, the UK reduces long-term dependency, encouraging self-sufficiency and economic participation.

Challenges of Market-Driven Support: Capitalist perspectives can sometimes limit the quality of support provided to refugees. For instance, underfunding in areas like mental health or community services may lead to gaps in support that impact successful integration. A purely economic perspective risks overlooking the social and psychological needs that are essential for true integration.

Labor Market Contributions: The idea of welcoming refugees to fill labor shortages aligns with a capitalist view that emphasizes productivity. This perspective supports policies that equip refugees with skills for specific sectors, benefiting both the economy and individual refugees by enhancing employability.

Human Rights Considerations: At its core, the refugee support system also upholds a commitment to international human rights, transcending purely economic incentives. While capitalism plays a role in framing policies, ethical and humanitarian considerations remain integral to the UK's commitment to offering refuge.

Learning Opportunity: The UK's model of refugee support, while rooted in humanitarianism, also has capitalist motivations. By enabling refugees to contribute to the economy, the system fosters self-reliance and reduces long-term welfare costs, aligning with capitalist principles of productivity and economic contribution.

Potential Adaptation for Afghanistan: In Afghanistan, where resources are limited, incorporating elements of capitalism into support systems could provide a sustainable way to encourage productivity among displaced populations. Programs that promote skills training, entrepreneurship, and economic contribution could create self-sustaining communities while addressing poverty.

Broader Implications: Balancing humanitarian values with economic objectives can create more sustainable support models. However, a purely capitalist approach may risk neglecting the social and mental health needs of refugees, which are essential for true integration. The UK's approach, while practical, demonstrates the need to balance economic and social support.

Lesson: A capitalist perspective can support sustainable refugee integration when combined with strong humanitarian principles. By encouraging economic productivity alongside social support, countries can foster both self-sufficiency and social cohesion among refugee populations.

These insights emphasize the importance of balancing humanitarianism with structured support systems that recognize economic potential, social needs, and intergenerational impacts. Whether in the UK or Afghanistan, the integration of displaced populations requires policies that consider the broader societal and economic benefits of providing stability, opportunities, and a path to self-sufficiency.

Source: Academic discussions on capitalism and humanitarian aid, UNHCR reports on refugee integration.

17. A Homeless Department in Every Municipality

Learning Opportunity: The presence of a homelessness department in every UK municipality reflects a structured approach to housing support and social welfare. For refugees, who often arrive with limited resources and few personal connections, having a designated department to address housing needs is crucial for stability.

Potential Adaptation for Afghanistan: In regions facing high displacement rates, establishing municipal-level departments focused on housing could provide a more organized response to homelessness and create safer transitional spaces. Even a modest version of this approach could assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Afghanistan, particularly those affected by conflict or environmental factors.

Broader Implications: The UK's approach underscores the importance of having structured, localized responses to housing insecurity. This model demonstrates that addressing homelessness effectively requires dedicated resources, interagency coordination, and a commitment to inclusivity, especially for vulnerable populations like refugees.

Lesson: A structured approach to housing assistance can prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable populations to integrate more effectively. By centralizing this support in municipalities, the UK provides a framework that prioritizes access and responsiveness.

18. Is This Welcomed Because of Vacant Jobs?

Learning Opportunity: In the UK, refugee support and integration policies are often linked to labor market needs. Welcoming refugees not only fulfills humanitarian responsibilities but also addresses labor shortages in essential sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and hospitality. This approach can stimulate economic growth and helps fill positions that may otherwise go unfilled.

Potential Adaptation for Afghanistan: If refugee returnees or IDPs within Afghanistan were given support to re-enter the workforce, especially in essential sectors, this could contribute to local economic revitalization. Supporting displaced populations by matching their skills to local labor market needs could offer a pathway toward economic stability for both individuals and communities.

Broader Implications: This approach highlights the potential for economic policies to be designed with both humanitarian and economic outcomes in mind. Refugees often bring skills, experience, and a willingness to work, which, when supported, can benefit host communities by strengthening workforce diversity and resilience.

Lesson: A policy approach that aligns humanitarian support with economic objectives can create mutually beneficial outcomes. By focusing on integrating displaced people into the workforce, countries like Afghanistan could improve economic stability and foster a sense of community contribution among returnees and IDPs.

19. By Supporting Parents, Children are Fully Integrated

Learning Opportunity: The UK's emphasis on supporting refugee parents to facilitate full integration for children highlights the intergenerational nature of successful integration. By providing stability and resources to parents, children are more likely to thrive in educational and social settings, achieving better outcomes and becoming active, productive members of society.

Potential Adaptation for Afghanistan: Similar support structures, even on a smaller scale, could benefit displaced or returning families within Afghanistan. Access to education, vocational training, and mental health resources for parents could stabilize families, allowing children to focus on schooling and adapting to their environments.

Broader Implications: Supporting parents is an investment in the future of the community, as children with a stable, supported family environment are more likely to achieve educational and social success. The UK's model showcases the importance of family-centered policies, recognizing that the well-being of one generation directly impacts the next.

Lesson: By investing in parental support, countries can foster a smoother integration process for children. This approach underscores the importance of family resilience as a foundation for social and cultural integration.

Afghani Government

Here's an expanded presentation of each aspect related to the Afghani government, based on the insights shared by your friend:

1. Karzai Empowered Corruption and Warlords

Background: Hamid Karzai, the first post-Taliban president of Afghanistan, held office from 2001 to 2014. During his administration, corruption became deeply entrenched in Afghan politics and governance. Karzai faced significant challenges, including a fragmented political landscape and the influence of local warlords who held power in various regions.

Encouragement of Corruption: Karzai's approach was often pragmatic—he attempted to maintain stability by working with warlords and allowing certain corrupt practices to go unchecked. By relying on local power brokers, he empowered a system where warlords and their allies controlled key positions, used state resources for personal gain, and maintained patronage networks.

Impact: This legacy of corruption weakened Afghanistan's institutions and undermined public trust in the government. Karzai's administration became associated with a "culture of impunity," which had lasting effects on the country's political structure and stability.

Source: Transparency International and reports on Afghan governance.

2. The Next Prime Minister Cracked Down

Shift in Governance: After Karzai, Ashraf Ghani became president in 2014. Ghani prioritized anti-corruption efforts and sought to centralize power, moving away from Karzai's alliances with warlords. Ghani introduced reforms intended to modernize Afghanistan's institutions and create accountability mechanisms within the government.

Anti-Corruption Measures: Ghani worked with international partners to strengthen anti-corruption efforts, including establishing the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC). However, his attempts were met with resistance from entrenched interests, and his efforts were only partially successful.

Legacy: While Ghani's administration saw some progress, systemic corruption remained a significant challenge. His focus on centralization also alienated regional leaders, contributing to internal instability and ultimately to the rapid fall of his government in 2021.

Source: International Crisis Group and Afghan government reports on anti-corruption.

3. Northern Allies from Panjshir Province

Panjshir's Historical Role: Panjshir Province, known for its resistance against the Soviet invasion and later against the Taliban, has a unique place in Afghan history. Many leaders from this region, such as Ahmad Shah Massoud, played key roles in Afghanistan's anti-Taliban resistance.

Northern Alliance: The Northern Alliance, a coalition of anti-Taliban forces, was largely comprised of fighters from Panjshir and surrounding regions. This alliance continued to play an influential role in Afghanistan's politics, often opposing the Taliban and representing the interests of ethnic Tajiks and other minorities.

Modern Influence: Panjshir remains a symbol of resistance, and even after the Taliban's 2021 return to power, there were reports of renewed resistance from this region. Leaders from Panjshir continue to have a strong influence within Afghanistan and among the Afghan diaspora.

Source: BBC History of the Northern Alliance, Institute for the Study of War.

4. ISIS in Iraq and Afghanistan

Origins and Spread: The Islamic State (ISIS) emerged in Iraq around 2013, expanding into Syria and rapidly establishing a so-called “caliphate” across both countries. Its extremist ideology and brutal tactics had a destabilizing effect across the region.

Presence in Afghanistan: ISIS spread its influence to Afghanistan, where it operates as ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), a faction focused on establishing an Islamic state in the Khorasan region, which includes parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and surrounding areas.

Impact on Afghanistan: ISIS-K is often in conflict with both the Taliban and the Afghan government. The group has carried out high-profile attacks, targeting civilians, minority groups, and political gatherings, further destabilizing the region.

Source: United Nations reports on ISIS-K and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

5. Khorasan as an Ideology of a Province

The Concept of Khorasan: The term “Khorasan” refers to a historical region encompassing parts of Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. For ISIS, Khorasan represents both a geographical and ideological target for establishing its influence.

ISIS-K Ideology: ISIS-K uses the historical concept of Khorasan to draw on a narrative of Islamic conquest and expansion. This ideology aims to legitimize their extremist actions in Afghanistan and the broader region.

Significance in Afghanistan: By claiming a presence in “Khorasan,” ISIS-K aligns itself with a broader global jihadist vision, attempting to attract recruits and resources for its cause.

Source: Reports on ISIS-K and its ideological foundations by the Counter Extremism Project.

6. Trump’s Partnership with the Taliban to Combat ISIS

U.S.-Taliban Dynamics: Former President Donald Trump’s administration negotiated with the Taliban in an effort to secure a peace deal that would allow U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. One of the conditions was that the Taliban would prevent ISIS from gaining a foothold in the region.

Common Enemy: While the U.S. and Taliban were historic adversaries, both saw ISIS as a mutual threat. This “partnership” was largely based on overlapping interests, with the U.S. relying on the Taliban to counter ISIS-K following its withdrawal.

Complexities of the Partnership: This arrangement reflects the complicated nature of alliances in Afghanistan. While it was beneficial in combating ISIS-K in the short term, it raised ethical and strategic questions regarding the legitimacy and reliability of the Taliban.

Source: U.S. State Department press releases and analysis from the Council on Foreign Relations.

7. Trump's Potential Influence on Girls' Education in Afghanistan

U.S. Influence on Education: During the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, there was a significant increase in educational opportunities for girls, largely supported by U.S.-funded programs. Trump's administration expressed interest in protecting these gains during peace negotiations.

Challenges to Influence: While Trump advocated for certain educational standards, actual influence was limited due to Afghanistan's complex socio-political dynamics. Ultimately, the ability to protect girls' education depended on Afghan leadership and the willingness of the Taliban to permit such reforms.

Impact on Policy: Trump's stance highlights the importance of education in U.S. foreign policy goals, but it also underscores the limitations of external influence on deeply ingrained cultural practices.

Source: Reports by USAID and UN Women on girls' education in Afghanistan.

8. Funding of ISIS and the Taliban

Overlapping Funding Sources: It is widely believed that both ISIS and the Taliban have, at times, relied on similar sources for funding. These sources include the illegal narcotics trade, extortion, and private donors from sympathetic organizations and individuals.

Differences in Funding Models: While there are similarities, ISIS and the Taliban also receive funding through different networks. The Taliban historically relied on Pakistan-based support, whereas ISIS has connections to broader transnational jihadist networks.

Implications for Security: The overlapping financial networks make it difficult to combat terrorism financing, as these resources often flow through complex and opaque channels.

Source: U.S. Department of Treasury reports on terrorism financing.

9. Politics is Never Healthy

Afghanistan's Political Landscape: Afghan politics have been characterized by instability, factionalism, and shifting alliances. Political actors often prioritize personal gain or regional loyalties over national interests, leading to cycles of corruption, distrust, and ultimately, violence.

Impact on Governance: This dynamic has hindered Afghanistan's development and made it difficult to establish a stable government. As a result, Afghan citizens have faced challenges in accessing reliable governance and essential services.

Broader Implications: This reinforces the notion that healthy political systems require accountability, transparency, and unity—elements that are often undermined by chronic conflict and external influence.

Source: Afghanistan Analysts Network and International Crisis Group reports.

10. U.S. Financial Support of \$12–\$40 Million per Week (Not for Humanitarian Aid)

Financial Support Breakdown: The U.S. provided substantial financial support to Afghanistan during its military presence, primarily for military and governance purposes. This funding was distinct from humanitarian aid, which was channeled through organizations like the United Nations and NGOs.

Allocation: The funding covered expenses such as military operations, infrastructure projects, and security training. However, a lack of oversight often led to misuse and inefficiency, with some of these funds ending up in the hands of corrupt officials and local power brokers.

Implications for Afghanistan: This heavy reliance on foreign aid led to economic dependence, which became problematic when the funding was reduced or withdrawn, contributing to Afghanistan's current economic crisis.

Source: Congressional Research Service reports on U.S. foreign aid to Afghanistan.

11. Struggle for Power

Endemic Power Struggles: Afghanistan's political landscape has long been characterized by a struggle for power among various ethnic, tribal, and political groups. These struggles have been intensified by foreign intervention, economic disparities, and ideological divides.

Effects on Stability: The continuous power struggles weaken governance, hinder economic development, and exacerbate insecurity. This environment has made Afghanistan vulnerable to insurgent groups like the Taliban and ISIS, which exploit these divisions to gain influence.

Global Context: The power struggles in Afghanistan serve as a reminder of the challenges in building stable governance in regions with complex social and ethnic dynamics, highlighting the need for