

## **Afghanistan: Genocide Emergency**

### **June 30, 2016**

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the US invaded Afghanistan and drove the Taliban from power. While the Afghan government attempted to rebuild the country, with the support of other foreign donors, the Taliban began an insurgency. After the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011, Afghanistan–Pakistan border skirmishes intensified and many attacks by the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network took place across Afghanistan.

The US war in Afghanistan officially ended on December 28, 2014. However, thousands of US-led NATO troops have remained in the country to train Afghan government forces. Also in 2014, a presidential election brought the country's first peaceful and democratic transfer of power. The decline in the US forces in Afghanistan and the peaceful transfer of power might have undercut the Taliban's claim that it is resisting foreign occupation, but the Taliban justifies the continuation of its attacks by viewing the government as illegitimate, divorced from hardline Islamic teachings, and overly influenced by the West.

Fighting between the Taliban and government forces escalated in 2015. The upsurge in violence had devastating consequences for civilians, with attacks by the Taliban and other insurgents causing 70 percent of all civilian casualties. More people became internally displaced (IDP) due to conflict than in any previous year since 2002; bringing the nationwide total of the IDPs to almost 1 million. The UN deemed nearly half of the country's provinces as being at high or extreme risk.

In 2015, the new Afghan administration publicly affirmed its commitment to women's rights. However, it failed to enforce the Elimination of Violence against Women Law (EVAW) and to stop prosecutions of "moral crimes", which try women who are fleeing domestic violence and forced marriages. The murder of Farkhunda Malikzada by a Kabul mob after she was falsely accused of burning a copy of the Quran resulted in a movement by women's rights activists to publicly demand justice.

Genocide Watch considers the situation in Afghanistan to be at Stage 9 of the Genocide process, Extermination, with the Taliban and Al Qaeda as the perpetrators and civilians and government supporters as the victims. The Taliban views government workers, including judges, prosecutors, civil servants, teachers, and health workers, and anti-Taliban clerics above all, as targets for assassination, and has increased its attacks on international humanitarian organizations.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The Afghan government should protect women's rights by enforcing the Elimination of Violence against Women Law (EVAW), ending prosecutions of "moral crimes", and increasing women's participation in political decision-making and peace processes.
- The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) should strengthen its training programs for armed groups to adhere to international humanitarian law.
- US and NATO forces should not withdraw prematurely from Afghanistan before the Taliban are defeated.
- President Ashraf Ghani's efforts to uproot endemic corruption should be strongly supported by the US, NATO, and Afghan civil society organizations.