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Written statement* submitted by International Human Rights Council, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 August 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Implications of The Return of The Taliban to Afghanistan

According to reports, International Human Rights Council (IHRC) witnessed how the Taliban declared the war in Afghanistan over, after taking control of the Presidential Palace in Kabul while Western countries scrambled on Monday 16th August, 2021 to evacuate their citizens amid chaos at the airport as frantic Afghans searched for a way out. President Ashraf Ghani fled the country on Sunday as the Islamist militants entered the capital virtually unopposed, saying he wanted to avoid bloodshed, while hundreds of Afghans desperate to leave flooded Kabul airport.

"Today is a great day for the Afghan people and the mujahideen. They have witnessed the fruits of their efforts and their sacrifices for 20 years," Mohammad Naeem, the spokesman for the Taliban's political office, told Al Jazeera TV. "Thanks to God, the war is over in the country," he added.

It took the Taliban just over a week to seize control of the country after a lightning sweep that ended in Kabul as government forces trained for years and equipped by the United States of America and others at a cost of billions of dollars, melted away. The IHRC has been collating news of the new dispensation in Afghanistan. The IHRC report shows Al Jazeera broadcast footage of what it said were Taliban commanders in the presidential palace with dozens of armed fighters. Naeem said the form of the new regime in Afghanistan would be made clear soon, adding the Taliban did not want to live in isolation and calling for peaceful international relations.

Assurances of maintaining international best practices have so far been aired by Taliban - "We have reached what we were seeking, which is the freedom of our country and the independence of our people," he said, adding: "We will not allow anyone to use our lands to target anyone, and we do not want to harm others." said Nadeem. The IHRC report hereby confirm that the insurgents are regrouping from different provinces, and seem to have adopted the strategy to wait until foreign forces have left before creating a new governance structure.

The Taliban fighters have so far allowed Afghans to resume daily activities and have not done anything to scare civilians. This give hope that normal life will continue and some Taliban authorities have said that life will now be in a much better way. Although the current situation is that central Kabul streets have largely been deserted since Monday, 16th August, 2021. It is however undeniable that there will be no foreigners, no international people who will visit Kabul at this time as a result of the uncertainty that pervades. However, it is heartwarming that the Taliban have said that they will concern themselves more to promote and respect women's rights and protect both foreigners and Afghans.

IHRC has called for the Taliban to uphold human rights and said the world was watching: the International Human Rights Council requests that the new Taliban dispensation must take actions and continue to ensure that their words are matched by the actions expected by the international community.

IHRC's report has definitely posited that more than 60 western countries, including the U.S., the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, and Japan, issued a joint statement saying all Afghans and international citizens who wanted to leave must be allowed to do so. So far, the Russian Federation has said it saw no need to evacuate its embassy for the time being while Turkey said its embassy would continue operations. The IHRC report backs some people who have insisted that many Afghans fear that the Taliban will return to past harsh practices in their imposition of sharia religious law. During their 1996-2001 rule, women could not work and punishments such as stoning, whipping, and hanging were administered.

For so doing IHRC calls the main player in Afghanistan today Pakistan and Turkey with others to:

1. Assure the international Community that all there steps will stand behind the people of Afghanistan and obtain all support, strength and good wishes to heal each and everyone especially refugees.

2. Decisively to avert any loss to human life especially Children and Women, properties and the environment.
 3. We call on our Council to undertake decisive and strong outcomes during the session to urge States taking harsh measures to guarantee the Safety of Afghans and foreigners in Kabul and to use all matter of legal binding tools to implement such.
 4. Needs more coordinating efforts to ensure the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms as per international laws and obligations in which Afghanistan is signatory.
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