

# **Afghanistan - Three months of Taliban occupation: Barbarism unlimited**

Thursday 18 November 2021, by [AFGHAN Yasmeen](#) (Date first published: 16 November 2021).

**November 16 marked exactly three months of Taliban occupation of Kabul. It's just not the fall of Kabul, but the fall of a country along with all its achievements of 20 years. Despite US occupation and the Taliban insurgency, Afghanistan was also developing. For some of those outside Afghanistan, it means that 20 years were wasted, but for Afghans, a country under continuous attacks from the Taliban, it seemed certain significant advances were made.**

Millions of girls were enrolled in schools across Afghanistan, thousands of girls were receiving higher education in the universities run by the government or in private. Women were in positions of decision making, they were part of the military and the police force. Afghanistan had hundreds of female prosecutors and judges. Women were visible in all walks of life and the civil society and rights groups were advocating for better participation of women. This did not owe to US occupation. Instead, the resilient Afghan women seized the opportunity circumstances offered them.

Likewise, life as a whole had progressed for the common people. The entertainment industry was thriving, and the local television channels had started producing their own dramas and contents. The modeling industry was trying to find a place among the traditional populace. Sports was another area which had made tremendous progress over the past 20 years. Afghanistan had its women's football and cricket team, besides the men's teams.

On August 15, 2021, everything vanished into thin air. Afghanistan's heart stopped beating on all fronts. Its women became imprisoned once again with no rights whatsoever. Afghans lost their basic rights and lost their hopes of a better tomorrow.

Khalida (not their real name) a teacher from Mazar-e-Sharif told me, "Nobody would be able to feel the helplessness of the Afghan people. We have become like cattle to the Taliban once again. They beat us at the flimsiest pretext."

Under the previous rule of the Taliban, public beatings, amputation of limbs, executions were a common sight. Most of these harsh rules have returned. The Taliban controlled Afghans by spreading fear and they have reintroduced that method once again.

Khalida's brother, who didn't want to be identified added, "People might be able to live with hunger but not with being humiliated for every single step they take."

Haji Ibrahim (not their real name) who is in his late 60s and a resident of Qasaba area of Kabul told me, "I have not shaved my beard since the fall of Kabul. I don't want to be beaten and humiliated for my beard. I have asked my sons to grow their beards too. Why be humiliated at the hands of a bunch of thugs?."

Reports of disappearances, executions, torture and imprisonment are circulating on social media.

The Taliban are not only targeting the former military and security personnel but athletes, members of the entertainment industry, former government employees, anyone who is deemed a threat and thus as a whole the entire nation is at the receiving end. The Taliban have been boasting about peace and security for all but on the contrary, the security situation is dire and deteriorating ever since they have returned to power by force. The Hazaras are attacked on a daily basis. The reports of Hazaras being evicted from their villages have been making rounds. Women activists have been attacked and killed. Recently, four civil society women activists were killed in Mazar. There is a growing list of such assassinations. The local media does not report it out of fear. Konar and Nangarhar provinces have witnessed a daily surge of killings. Men are taken out from the homes in the middle of the night, tortured and then either their bodies are found hanging by a tree or they are beheaded.

Wahid (not their real name), 25 years old and a resident of Jalalabad told me, "Forced disappearances are on the rise. We hear about three or four murders every day, men hanging from trees. Life has become hell. We live under constant fear."

Hashim, another resident of Jalalabad, told me, "It's not just Jalalabad, the whole country is witnessing executions, but it's not broadcasted on the mainstream media as the television channels are scared of retaliation by the Taliban. The situation is dire, and fear is on the rise among the people."

A civil society activist, who didn't want to be named and wanted her location to be anonymous told me, "I am fearful for my safety. I am so scared since reading about the killing of four civil society activists in Mazar. Every incoming call makes my heart sink, thinking my turn has come. Is this peace and security for all? The Taliban are calling on the people not to leave, why shouldn't the people leave, why should we stay? To be killed by them and thrown into ditches."

Markets and bazaars throughout Afghanistan had started to flourish and in cities like Kabul, Mazar, Kunduz, and Herat, and women could easily go and shop but now they women are confined to their homes.

Hadia (not their real name) from Kunduz city told me, "Since the Taliban takeover, I have not been able to go to the bazaar. Women are scared of leaving their houses. I never had any job as I am a housewife, but I used to do all the shopping for my family and now I cannot even do that."

Since the fall of Kabul to the hardliners, most of the channels do not have female presenters, a few that still have, are new presenters and they are fully covered, and you hardly see them in bright colors or the way they used to dress up. Music channels are banned, and no music is broadcasted on radio channels too. The entertainment industry is on a halt. The different television channels either have Islamic programs or news. Dramas that are on air at the moment are all Islamic.

Shazia, another resident of Kabul, who didn't want to disclose her location told me, "I think it's one of the basic rights of any human being to watch and listen to music, but we do not have that right under the Taliban."

Shazia's mother, Gul Bibi who is illiterate and has lived her life raising her children and now looking after her grandchildren, told me, "The Taliban are scared of happiness, so they stopped everything that was a source of it. My favorite time of the day would be to watch a drama and drink my green tea but now I don't know how to pass my time."

Hamayoun (not their real name) a resident of Kabul told me, "Afghans are living in the dark ages as the Taliban have banned every form of entertainment. The situation in the provinces is worse than

Kabul as in the provinces there is an absolute ban on female presence in the media.”

Mukhtar, a resident of Kunduz told me, “Soon we will be banned from laughing out loud as with each passing day they introduce a new ban.”

Within three months the focus of the entire world has diverted from Afghanistan and some world leaders are preparing to talk to the brutal regime of the Taliban without considering the voices of Afghan people, and especially Afghan women.

Fawad, a resident of Kabul told me, “The situation was not ideal previously but despite all the security threats from the Taliban, we as a nation were trying to strive, achieve our dreams, we had hopes that were shattered by the Taliban and the world leaders.”

45 years old Ahmad (not their real name), a lawyer from Kabul told me, “We wanted the end of the US occupation but that did not mean we wanted the return of the Taliban. We didn’t want the jihadi leaders but they were imposed on us just like the Taliban.”

Roya, who didn’t want to disclose her location, said to me, “Where are the democracy loving people of the world? Why are they quiet to the agonies of Afghans? Will they allow their governments to recognize the Taliban?”

Marjan, a resident of Makroryan told me, “Afghanistan has lost its voice. We have become a voiceless nation as there is no freedom of speech, but the Taliban should not deem us weak, we are fighting and will continue our fight even if the entire world turns their back on us.”

The people of Afghanistan are showing defiance against the Taliban and are resisting on every level be it the streets of Kabul, Herat or Mazar or be it at an international platform of cricket. The women of Afghanistan are the bravest as they have organized protests from time to time even though the Taliban have banned protests and would even arrest reporters covering the event. Media is abuzz with strikes of teachers, professors, doctors and government employees. Even though the world media has lost its interest in the situation in Afghanistan, the people of Afghanistan are slowly but steadily standing against the Taliban and their brutal rules.

**Yasmeen Afghan**

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