

How to ease Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis

By **Dr Mohammad Naqib Eishan Jan**

January 5, 2022 @ 4:16pm



Pedestrians pass street vendors as snow falls in Kabul, Afghanistan, 03 January 2022. Afghanistan has been battling an acute humanitarian crisis since the fall of Kabul to the Islamist Taliban militia on August 15. Acute food shortages fueled by drought, lack of cash, the pandemic, and crippled health services have piled up miseries on the people of Afghanistan. - EPA pic

Get breaking news fast – follow us on [WhatsApp](#) and [Telegram](#).

THE humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is appalling. Despite having US\$1 trillion or more in untapped natural resources, the country lacks liquidity and suffers from an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe.

This requires immediate and practical action. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whose mission is to help countries reduce poverty, achieve sustainable economic growth and human development, approximately 23 million Afghans need food, and 97 per cent of the 38 million population are at risk of poverty.

Controlling this dire crisis and achieving sustainable economic growth requires effective moral leadership and good governance, which Afghanistan unfortunately lacks for a very long time.

Due to these shortages, Afghanistan, despite having rich natural resources, tourism potential and hospitable culture, instead of achieving economic growth, has a fragmented

Top stories : [vborn allegedly swapped in hospital, father demands answers](#) [Others](#) | [Lee Peng: 'I wore my n](#)

WHAT TO READ NEXT

n

sentence for ex-education
under over US\$125mil graft



May 14, 2026 @ 12:30am

Thailand cuts visa-free stays :
crime concerns

The cost of wheat and fuel has risen by about 40 per cent, and food now accounts for more than 80 per cent of the average household expenditure. In short, the citizens of Afghanistan are suffering from unprecedented poverty and hunger.

In her latest report, Neda Al-Nashaf, deputy chief of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), noted that the Afghan people are struggling to meet their basic needs.

They are taking extreme measures, such as child labour, child marriage, and even some of them, according to news reports, sell their children simply because they are unable to feed them.

The situation is deplorable, some have likened it to the crisis that Yemen has endured for years.

It may worsen unless its causes are identified and all stakeholders, including the Taliban de facto government, the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and their wealthy and industrial members, respond seriously, promptly and effectively.

So far, no significant steps have been taken to address the dire situation in Yemen, and it is hoped that Afghanistan, like Yemen, will not be forgotten.

Natural disasters, such as drought and Covid-19, have contributed to this crisis, but they are not the main cause. War, corruption, mismanagement and over-reliance on foreign aid are the main reasons.

Both the former regime and the current Taliban de facto government are to blame. Although the war is largely over, its effects, for which both the Taliban and the former regime are responsible, are obvious. The poor and innocent civilians are being punished.

The corruption of the former regime and the policies of exclusion and gender discrimination of the current Taliban-led government, which deepen its international isolation, worsened the economic situation of the country and led to a humanitarian disaster that shocked the world.

Abdallah al-Dardari, the resident representative for the UNDP in Afghanistan, called the humanitarian catastrophe in the country the "worst", which must be managed and eventually brought to a lasting end.

However, it is not easy unless concerted action is taken by all stakeholders. Undoubtedly, the Taliban's de facto government has minimised and or eliminated corruption to some extent, but that is not enough.

Senior officials of the former regime, who were involved in the embezzlement of public property in any way, must be held accountable. Discriminatory and gender-based policies of the current de facto government should be set aside.

In other words, the irrational and un-Islamic policy of depriving women of the right to education and work is detrimental to economic growth and must end. To help eradicate poverty and participate in the development of the country, women must be allowed to work in all sectors.

The Taliban de facto government's gender-discriminatory policies do not send a good picture of them to the international community and should, therefore, be put aside. The Taliban must respect the will of the people and form an inclusive government, and earn national and international legitimacy.

It should, provide opportunities for skilled youth not to leave the country, and encourage those who have left to return; make use of the country's natural resources to build infrastructure, create a favourable environment for domestic and foreign investment in various sectors, boost tourism and create job opportunities instead of depriving people of existing opportunities.

These are important for sustainable economic development, which the Taliban must focus.

Although the primary responsibility for combating the crisis and ensuring sustainable economic development lies with the Taliban de facto government, the UN, the OIC, and their rich member states, can lend a hand.

Given peace as an essential ingredient of sustainable economic growth, the UN can help in finding a political settlement. It can also support farmers and agricultural livelihoods for the sake of food security in Afghanistan.

The UNDP has created a People's Economy Fund that provides cash to vulnerable Afghans and micro-businesses, which can support livelihoods and macroeconomic stabilisation.

On Dec 19, 2021, the UN Security Council passed a resolution that facilitates humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, while keeping funds out of the Taliban hands.

The OIC has also taken some steps, though negligible, to give a helping hand to manage the crisis in Afghanistan. It has set up a humanitarian trust fund for Afghanistan under the aegis of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), though it is not clear how much funds it has and who is contributing to it and how much.

In any case, its aim is to be a channel of humanitarian assistance. It also agreed to launch a food security programme for Afghanistan to mitigate food shortages. To coordinate humanitarian assistance efforts, the OIC has appointed a special representative for Afghanistan.

It is hoped OIC fulfils its promises and with the UN make sure humanitarian aid continues until the end of the crisis and beyond, and that the Taliban-led government will facilitate the fair distribution of aid to people in need.

The writer is a professor at the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, International Islamic University Malaysia

NEWS NEAR YOU

in, heart attack suspected



May 9, 2026 @ 10:24am

An undying love