

THE TALIBAN REGIME AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Women's Journeys Amongst Adversity

INTRODUCTION

The rise and resurgence of the Taliban and the role of the United Nations (UN) in dealing with this conflict have become a topic of special awareness at a global level.

Purpose: Examine the Taliban's impact on women's rights, analyse the UN's responses aimed at safeguarding these rights, and provide recommendations to enhance UN's role in fostering gender equality.

Research Question: Does the UN's action in Afghanistan suffice to address the challenges faced by Afghan women?

CONCEPTUAL & METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focused on women:

- **SDG 3:** *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;* emphasizing the women access to health services.
- **SDG 4:** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*
- **SDG 5:** *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;* emphasizing the *participation in public and political life.*
- **4th variable:** *Freedom of Movement* (UN Women, 2016: 8, 10, 12, 17).

A qualitative research method will be employed, using official UN documents.

1. 1996-2001: THE RISE OF THE TALIBAN

1996 → Taliban's seizure of power → severe impact on women's rights:

- Women could only leave their homes if accompanied by a *mahram* (male family member), access to health care was limited, they were excluded from public and political life and school was banned for girls.

Responses:

- Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 → Increase women's participation in decision-making levels.
- Economic and Social Council → restrictions on women's access to health care, education and freedom of movement.

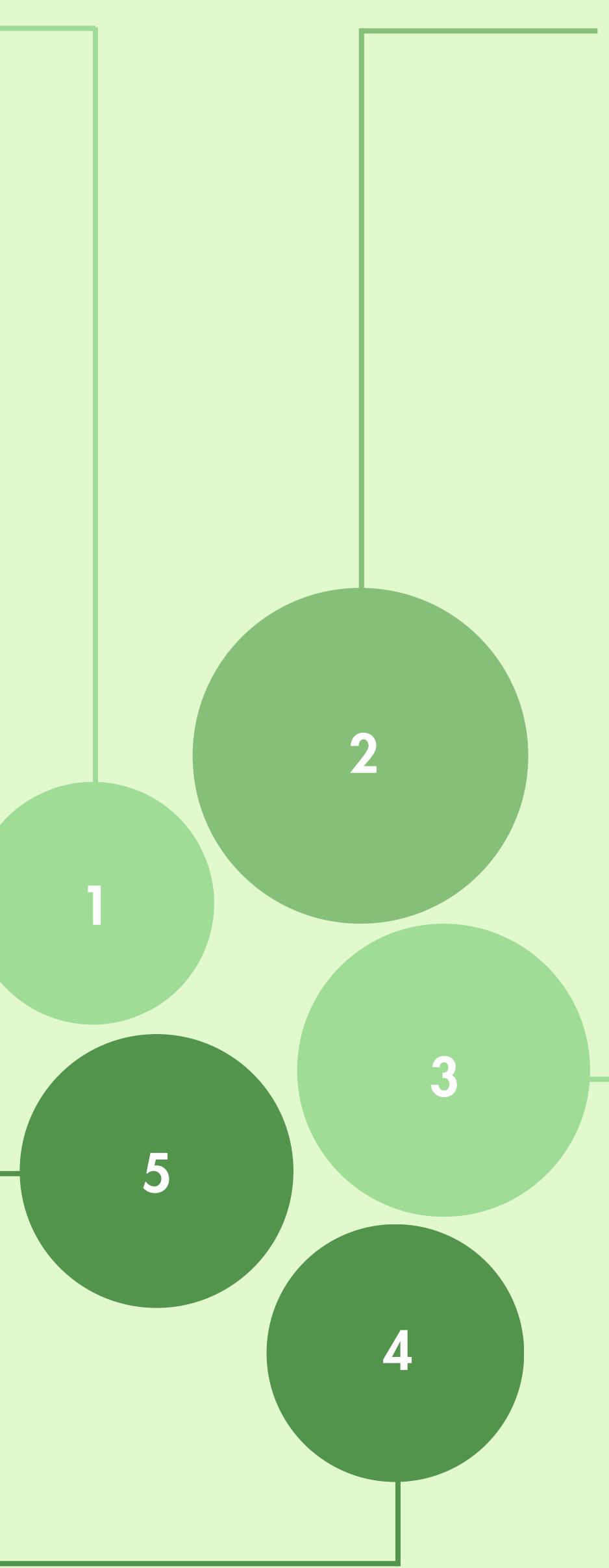
5. CONCLUSION

Need for a greater UN involvement in Afghanistan:

- Insufficient UN's response to the Taliban's rules → owing to:
 - ┌ Lack of assets
 - └ Bureaucratic barriers
- Religious interpretations present obstacles for international bodies seeking to intervene.
- Consider the Taliban regime within the UN system would suggest:
 - ┌ Acceptance of undisputed Human Rights violations
 - └ Contravene UN's main values

4. UN MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Exclusion of the Taliban from the Bonn Conference in 2001.	Critical constituencies, particularly women, were ignored because participants were only seeking for a "quick fix".
Pakistan support for the Taliban and its lack of involvement in the peace process.	Negotiations for the Doha agreement excluded Afghan women and did not include any reference to women's rights.
2003 US invasion of Iraq deflected attention from Afghanistan.	Giving aid money which ended up in the hands of local politicians and not in what it was intended for.



2. 2001-2021: THE PERIOD IN BETWEEN

Significant progress was made:

- The 2004 Constitution → incorporated gender equality principles:
 - 27% of parliamentary seats reserved for women.
- UN advocated for women's full participation in political decision-making.
- Karzai government → legal framework to protect and empower women.
- Nine SCR on Women, Peace and Security were published.

3. 2021-PRESENT DAY

Taliban's re-take of power → huge backslide in women's enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

What have the Taliban done?

- Suspension of the 2004 Constitution.
- Introduction of 54 decrees, including:
 - ┌ Mandates on hijab
 - ┌ Limited access to education
 - ┌ Constrained access to health services
 - └ Restrictions on movement
- Women's influence in decision-making has heavily shrunk.
- December 24th 2022: prohibition to work in NGOs.

Responses:

- Partnership → UN Women
UN Office on Drugs and Crime
- SCR 2681 denouncing the Taliban's ban on Afghan women working for the UN in Afghanistan.
- Extension of UNAMA's mandate until March 2025.
- Several sanctions on the Taliban.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General	Encourage a more moderate implementation of Sharia throughout the country. → Provide technical assistance and training to Afghan officials on Human Rights and principles of Sharia which could improve gender equality.
SDG 3	Emphasize mental health services to prevent and/or deal with depression and suicides. → Provide trainings to healthcare workers and allocate more funds to mental health services.
SDG 4	Continue funding women-led Afghan aid programs bringing education opportunities to Afghan girls.
SDG 5	Ensure that women have access to UN spaces, and that their voices are heard and contemplated. → Implement gender quotas, such as candidate quotas and reserved seats.
4th variable	Establish a secure and unrestricted migration pathway for girls and women.

REFERENCES

For complete references, scan the QR code:

