

Indoctrination and Erasure: Envisioning Afghanistan's Trajectory Under Taliban Rule

Introduction

Afghanistan stands at a precarious crossroads under the Taliban regime, where the seeds of extremism are sown among boys through ideologically driven education, while girls and women are systematically excluded from schooling beyond primary levels and barred from most professional workspaces. This dual crisis not only perpetuates cycles of radicalization and inequality but also undermines the nation's long-term political and security stability, economic potential, and social cohesion. The Bareen Initiative for Development (BID), committed to fostering sustainable development and human rights in conflict-affected regions organize an event to critically analyze these dynamics. This hybrid Webinar will convene experts, policymakers, Afghanistan people's voices, and international stakeholders to dissect the implications of the Taliban's policies on future generations. Drawing on recent analyses from global bodies like the United Nations and human rights organizations, the event aims to foster dialogue that transcends condemnation, offering pathways toward resilience and reform.

Rationale

The Taliban's return to power in 2021 has entrenched a regime characterized by severe restrictions on women's rights, including a blanket ban on secondary and higher education for girls—a policy unique globally and affecting over 2.2 million girls. Concurrently, the education system for boys has been overhauled to prioritize religious indoctrination through an exponential increase in madrasas to 23,000, often in regions historically resistant to Taliban influence.

This approach not only propagates extremist ideologies but also eliminates secular subjects like arts, sciences, and human rights from curricula, fostering a generation primed for radicalization. The exclusion of girls from education and employment exacerbates economic stagnation, with UNESCO estimating billions in potential losses, while heightening vulnerabilities to abuse, forced marriages, and mental health crises. For boys, immersion in unchecked extremism risks perpetuating violence, terrorism, and regional instability, as evidenced by the Taliban's links to groups like Al-Qaida and the rise of unregulated religious schooling. The current system in Afghanistan provides terrorist groups with an open, large-scale, and low-cost recruitment path.

BID's event is timely and essential amid a humanitarian crisis where up to seven million children are out of school, compounded by drought, migration waves, and international isolation. While global condemnation persists, engagement with the Taliban remains fragmented, often overlooking the interplay between gender apartheid and youth radicalization. This event addresses a critical gap by integrating socio-cultural, political, security and economic lenses, informed by BID's expertise in development initiatives.

Objectives

- **To Analyze Long-Term Impacts:** Examine how the Taliban's educational overhaul indoctrinates boys into extremist ideologies, while the bans on girls' education and work create a bifurcated society, potentially leading to entrenched poverty, radicalism, and social fragmentation.
- **To Foster Multidisciplinary Dialogue:** Bring together Afghanistan activists, international experts, policymakers, and youth representatives to discuss evidence-based projections of Afghanistan's future, drawing on reports from entities like the UN and Human Rights Watch.
- **To Identify Pathways for Intervention:** Explore strategies for conditional international engagement, underground education initiatives, and community-led resistance that could mitigate radicalization and advocate for gender-inclusive policies.

- To Amplify Afghanistan Voices: Prioritize narratives from within Afghanistan, including clandestine educators and former students, to humanize the crisis and challenge external perceptions of inevitability.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced Awareness and Advocacy: Participants will gain a nuanced understanding of Afghanistan's future trajectories, leading to policy briefs and recommendations distributed to international forums like the UN Security Council, emphasizing the link between gender equality and counter-extremism efforts.
- Strategic Partnerships: Formation of coalitions between NGOs, governments, and Afghanistan diaspora groups to support alternative narrative, which have emerged despite risks.
- Policy Influence: Generation of actionable insights on how lifting Afghanistan behind could be a risk in instability in region and beyond region by open recruitment path for terrorist organizations.
- Long-Term Impact Measurement: Establishment of a BID-led monitoring framework to track progress on youth deradicalization and gender rights, with follow-up events to sustain momentum.

Key Messages

- Education as a Bulwark Against Extremism: Denying girls education while indoctrinating boys creates a volatile future; inclusive, secular learning is essential to uproot radical ideologies and build resilient societies.
- Gender Equality as National Security: The Taliban's policies represent not just human rights violations but a strategic threat to regional peace, as excluded women and radicalized youth fuel cycles of violence and instability.
- Resilience Through Collective Action: Afghan women's underground resistance and international solidarity offer hope; engagement must be principled, conditioning aid on reforms to prevent a return to the 1990s' darkness.
- A Call for Holistic Reform: Afghanistan's future hinges on dismantling ideological fascism; prioritizing human rights, economic inclusion, and deradicalization education can pave the way for a stable, prosperous nation.

Discussion themes:

Political Themes

- Turning Aid into Leverage
Can conditional engagement finally force real concessions on girls' education and curriculum extremism — or will it only buy time for the regime?
- Gender Apartheid — Time to Name It
Why the world still hesitates to call the total exclusion of girls from secondary education and work what it is: gender apartheid — and what happens if it does.
- The Regional Domino Effect
A generation of radicalized boys and excluded girls is being created next door — how long before neighboring capitals feel the political and security shockwaves?

Security Themes

- Schools as Terrorist Supply Chains
State-backed madrasas + erased secular education = the cheapest, largest recruitment pipeline violent groups have seen in decades. How real is the threat?
- Half a Society Excluded = Double the Danger
When women are erased and boys are indoctrinated; violence doesn't stay inside the home — it becomes

the country's export product.

- Fighting Extremism with No Permission

Underground classes, secret networks, remote mentoring — can small acts of intellectual defiance slow the radicalization machine?

Societal Themes

- A Society Split in Two

One half radicalized, the other half erased — what kind of families, communities, and future does that fracture produce?

- Erasing an Entire Civilization's Mind

When science, literature, critical thought, and human rights disappear from school — what dies with them?

- The Quiet Rebellion That Still Breathes

Clandestine teachers, hidden students, women refusing silence — proof that even in darkness, Afghan society has not surrendered.

Format

- Duration: 2 hours, comprising a keynote address, a moderated panel discussion, and an interactive Q&A session.
- Platform: Conducted via Zoom, with live streaming on the Bareen Initiative for Development's website and social media channels to ensure global accessibility.
- Moderation: Facilitated by senior experts from the Bareen Initiative for Development to ensure rigorous, inclusive, and constructive dialogue.

Date & Time: 21 Feb 2026, 05:00 Pm London Time Zone, 12:00 Pm USA Time Zone, 06:00 pm Europe time zone, 08:00 Pm Turkey time zone

Moderator: Ms. Nazila Jamshidi, Policy, Gender Equality and Human Rights Specialist

Speakers:

Mr. Ahmad Zia Saraj, Former Director General of the National Directorate of Security (NDS)

Prof Michael Semple, Queen's University Belfast former UN and EU Representative for Afghanistan

Mr Zalmay Nishat, Founder and Executive Chair of Mosaic Global Foundation

Call to Action

The Bareen Initiative for Development (BID) calls on stakeholders to engage in this critical dialogue to reassess past policies and chart a principled path forward for Afghanistan and the region. Through rigorous analysis, collaborative innovation, and a commitment to justice, this webinar aims to contribute to the creation of safer, more equitable, and resilient communities. Join us to shape a future that upholds both strategic imperatives and universal human rights.