

Silenced Voices: Afghan Women

Seeking Refuge (BCHMUN 33)



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Letter From The Chair

Greetings, Delegates!

I hope your day is going well! I know this is always a stressful time of the year, so thank you for making time for BC HIGH MUN!!! My name is Max Achab – I serve as the Under Secretary General to BCHAMOUN, and will be serving as your chair for this conference. I am a senior at BC High, and I love anything centered around fashion, travel, or politics.

Last year, I chaired the Feminization of Poverty Committee, where we looked into preventing discriminatory economic practices against women across the world – it was a hit. As an all boys school, I found it crucial we continue this theme of feminism in our club through outside voices, leading Michael and I to constitute the Silenced Voices Committee.

As most know, this topic is not light. It is personal for me. It is personal for women. It is *personal*. I'd like to center Model UN around having fun mixed with professionalism, however, participation in this committee means putting forth your utmost respect to the situation – let us remember we are exploring *real* situations with *real, current* people.

I am confident that all delegates will approach this topic with respect, and as a result, I am more than thrilled to meet all of you in March!

Happy Holidays!!!

Best,

Max Achab'25

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Letter From The Co-Chair

Hello Delegates!

My name is Michael Carroll, and I'm a senior at Boston College High School. I've done Model UN at BC High for a while, and I've gone to the UCLA and Stanford conferences, but this is my first time ever being a co-chair, and also my first BC High conference!

The topic for this committee is an extremely important one, and will require knowing both historical and present-day situations. The topic is thematically complex, upsetting, personal and will require research, hopefully most of which we have provided here. We also urge you to research independently as well!

Outside of Model UN, I am involved in theater, and I'm the co-president of my school's LGBTQ+ affinity group. I love watching horror movies, traveling, and listening to music, particularly Billie Eilish and Phoebe Bridgers. I am beyond excited to be involved in this committee and meeting you all in a couple months!

See you soon,

Michael Carroll '25

Introduction to the Topic

In Afghanistan, the treatment of women has exceeded crisis level after the Taliban gained complete control of the nation in the late 20th century. Political power has shifted since, but the Taliban regained full political power in 2021, beginning an intensification



of oppressive policy. As a result of the numerous human rights violations perpetrated by the terrorist group, there is inevitably a desire for refuge. With women already lacking basic rights *in* the nation, it is seemingly impossible for them to leave. In an area of much conflict, even if escape were to succeed, where would these women go? Which nations would be willing to provide refuge for these women and which nations would close their borders?

Using the information provided in the background guide, you will be tasked to formulate your country's stance on all aspects of the topic (the refugee crisis, women's rights, etc.), engage in moderated debate, and ultimately begin drafting resolutions with other delegates during unmoderated caucus' to propose an idea of how to best solve the issue at hand. By focusing on driving out the Taliban, altering your own border policy, or any idea you see fit, this committee will conclude with multiple resolution papers, all of which will be voted on in hopes of finding the final one.

Positions

1. Pakistan:

Supports accepting Afghan refugees but struggles with overburdened resources and security concerns.

2. Iran:

Hosts Afghan refugees but implements strict regulations, often creating barriers for women seeking asylum.

3. United States:

Advocates for Afghan women's rights but faces criticism for inadequate resettlement programs post-2021 withdrawal.

4. United Kingdom:

Supports international coalitions for Afghan refugee resettlement but enforces restrictive immigration policies.

5. Germany:

Promotes resettlement programs for Afghan refugees, particularly women, but grapples with domestic anti-immigrant sentiment.

6. France:

Balances advocating for Afghan women's rights with strict refugee and immigration policies.

7. Canada:

Strongly supports resettling Afghan women, emphasizing human rights and gender equality.

8. Australia:

Offers resettlement options for Afghan women but maintains a cautious approach due to geographic isolation.

9. Hungary:

Opposes large-scale refugee resettlement, prioritizing national sovereignty over international obligations.

10. Poland:

Focuses on border security and offers limited support for Afghan refugees, aligning with conservative policies.

11. Saudi Arabia:

Supports Islamic governance in Afghanistan but avoids openly criticizing the Taliban's treatment of women.

12. China:

Engages with Afghanistan for economic interests but refrains from condemning Taliban policies to maintain diplomatic ties.

13. Japan:

Provides financial aid to refugee programs but limits its intake of refugees, including Afghan women.

14. Human Rights Watch:

Condemns Taliban policies and advocates for immediate international intervention to protect Afghan women.

15. International Rescue Committee:

Focuses on providing humanitarian aid, safe passage, and support services for Afghan women refugees.

16. Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA):

Advocates for Afghan women's liberation and strongly opposes Taliban rule.

17. Taliban Regime:

Defends its governance as aligned with Islamic law, disregarding international criticism of women's rights violations.

18. Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah:

Encourages dialogue within the Muslim world to address human rights violations while respecting Islamic principles.

19. Germany's Green Party Representative:

Advocates for accepting Afghan women refugees and condemning Taliban human rights abuses.

20. Afghan Woman Refugee Advocate:

Emphasizes the urgent need for safe resettlement programs and international accountability for the Taliban.

History of the Topic

In 1953, Mohammed Daoud Khan became Prime Minister of Afghanistan. In an alliance with the Soviet Union, Afghanistan is dependent on the Soviet's economic and political aid. In the 1950's, women were officially given the opportunity to enter the workforce, have a public presence, attend university, etc as a result of Khan's policy. Khan rules in a way similar to an absolute ruler, as he overthrows the king, abolishes monarchical power, and names himself president. At this time, under Khan, the Republic of Afghanistan was created. He continues granting women more opportunities, particularly economic ones in hope of benefitting the empire.

In 1978, after Khan was killed by a member of the Afghanistan Communist Party, a secret group that was in the works during his rule, power became complex. Some new leaders want to break ties with the Soviet Union and declare Afghanistan as a nation that will be backed by Islamic principle, essentially becoming a theocracy, and others want to align with the Soviet Union. Though the execution of Khan was successful, fighting between new leaders ensued, and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to aid the communist regime. Citizens begin fleeing this war, seeking refuge in Pakistan and Iran.

After years of violence, Osama Bin-Laden formed al-Qaeda in 1988. This terrorist group works against both the Soviet Union and the United States, believing these two nations are the

sole reasons why Afghanistan is unable to be a nation built upon Islamic principles. In 1986, Dr. Mohammed Najibullah was named president, and he was a Soviet influenced figure. Rebel groups, mainly the Mujahadeen, are tired of this Soviet control and officially remove Najibullah from power in 1992.

Later, in 1995, the Taliban was formed. This group promises the people of Afghanistan a peaceful nation backed by the principles of Islam. The several different rebel groups, leaders, and political influence over the years have exhausted the citizens of Afghanistan, so they ultimately agree to support the Taliban. Women now begin to lose many of the few rights they had. In 1995, they officially must veil themselves at all times and can not be outside without a man present.

As al-Qaeda only gains power in the years following up to 9/11, Afghanistan backs Bin Laden and his secretive plans. As a result, Afghanistan has no support from the United States. In the late 20th century until 2000, Islamic law continued to become stricter in the nation. In 2001, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States ordered Afghanistan to turn over Bin Laden, as Afghanistan is the place in which Bin Laden and al-Qaeda are based. Afghanistan refuses to do so, and the US responds with airstrikes.

The Northern Alliance (a regime in Afghanistan against the Taliban), immense pressure and airstrikes from the United States, and political instability begin to cause a decline in the Taliban's power. In 2001-2021, US troops were deployed in Afghanistan, putting the nail in the coffin on the Taliban and significantly suppressing their power. However, in 2021, US troops withdraw. The Taliban regains power.

On August 26, 2021, citizens attempted to flee after hearing the terrorist group was rising again, but the Taliban took complete control of the airport, bombing its exterior which killed

hundreds of citizens. With the Taliban back in full control since 2021 until present day, the human rights violations are intensifying.

Present Day

Situations

When the Biden Administration spearheaded the removal of United States forces from Afghanistan, a force that once



was a lifeline for the Afghan people, the terrorist organization, The Taliban, returned to power, in August 2021. Following their empowerment, The Taliban regime has imposed a number of draconian laws that severely limit the rights and freedoms, such as to *speak* in public, as their voices are “lustful”. Thus, many have been forced to flee the country and seek safety abroad, however, today, there has been an influx of women doing this alone. The normal journey consists of a woman who is accompanied by her husband, due to harsh circumstances, many countries are seeing women making this journey solo. Another entrenchment on their freedoms today, is the ban on female education beyond the sixth grade, forced dress codes, such as the burqa, and a complete prohibition on women working in most sectors. Women who break these laws may receive punishment such as arrest, or violence. Circling back, a hightening issue of women fleeing alone, is simply their vulnerability during fight. Aghan women fleeing solo face

heightened risk, such as sexual violence, trafficking, and exploitation by smugglers. They are often forced to travel long and dangerous routes to reach neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, Iran, or further into Europe. Women also struggle to access basic necessities such as food, medical care, and legal support, due to the common reliance on their husbands for such things. In refugee camps, women are especially vulnerable to exploitation, harassment, and even detention. Many women lack the financial means to pay smugglers or secure safe passage, leaving them further at risk. This is a snapshot into the struggles Afghan women experience in today's world.

Questions to Consider

1. What responsibilities do member states have in ensuring the safe passage of Afghan women seeking asylum, especially with growing anti-refugee policies?
2. How can the international community address the specific needs of Afghan women refugees, including healthcare, legal protection, and education?
3. What measures can be taken to ensure Afghan women have a voice in decisions regarding their asylum and refugee status?
4. How can the international community hold the Taliban accountable for the oppression of Afghan women both within Afghanistan and in exile?
5. What steps should be taken to provide mental health support for Afghan women refugees who have experienced trauma and violence?
6. How can the exploitation and trafficking of Afghan women refugees be prevented during their journey and in host countries?
7. What immediate solutions should be proposed to facilitate the safe resettlement of Afghan women into countries that uphold their human rights?
8. How can international organizations better coordinate with local governments to provide culturally appropriate services for Afghan women refugees.
9. What are the ethical implications of prioritizing Afghan women and children for resettlement, and how can this be balanced with an equitable approach from all refugees?
10. How can the international community ensure Afghan women refugees are not marginalized in the broader refugee crisis due to their intersectional vulnerabilities?

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