

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN ASIA TODAY

NAZMUL ISLAM

SETA | ANALYSIS

SEPTEMBER 2022 NO.83





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SETA Yayınları

ISBN: 978-625-8322-20-0

Layout: Said Demirtaş

Printed in Türkiye, İstanbul

by Turkuvaz Haberleşme ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2022

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	8
RECENT CONFLICT AND CRISIS IN ASIA: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS	9
ROLE OF THE U.N. IN ASIA	13
U.N.’S ROLE DURING THE SECOND TALIBAN ERA CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN	14
ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS IN MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH	18
CONCLUSION	21

AUTHOR

Nazmul Islam

This study’s primary objective is to assess the current function of the United Nations in Asia. How exactly the United Nations maintains its peace and security can be answered by focusing on the organization’s actions in Afghanistan and Myanmar, particularly regarding the Afghan and Rohingya people. This paper explores the United Nations’ capacity to breach its conflict resolution and security endurance during the conflict, crises, and disputes that occurred during and after the second era of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. It also investigates the United Nations’ humanitarian role for the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh. It asks whether this role is sufficient or merely an eye-washing initiative given that the United Nations has no other option to resolve this conflict. This assertion is backed up in the research by the use of two different case studies.

SUMMARY

The continent of Asia is beset by a myriad of crises and conflicts. The Rohingya refugee crisis, irregular migration, and regional conflicts such as the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir and post-Taliban Afghanistan are the most important inter-state conflicts in the region.

This study's primary objective is to assess the current function of the United Nations in Asia. How exactly the United Nations maintains its peace and security can be answered by focusing on the organization's actions in Afghanistan and Myanmar, particularly regarding the Afghan and Rohingya people. This paper explores the United Nations' capacity to breach its conflict resolution and security endurance during the conflict, crises, and disputes that occurred during and after the second era of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. It also investigates the United Nations' humanitarian role for the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh. It asks whether this role is sufficient or merely an eye-washing initiative given that the United Nations has no other option to resolve this conflict. This assertion is backed up in the research by the use of two different case studies.

INTRODUCTION

The creation of the United Nations in 1945 ushered in a new era of international cooperation on a global scale. Since then, however, member countries have made only a small number of preliminary measures. The 1945 ideal of a world community in which everyone had the same rights and shared a common goal has never been achieved. Most individuals agree that the sphere of international diplomacy has expanded in recent years. There are differing views on whether the United Nations (U.N.) should be at the heart or on the periphery of the new multilateral diplomacy. Since its start, the world community's response to major crises has undergone regular and occasionally more frequent modifications, as have the underlying causes of those crises. Each facet of these crises – financial, ecological, social, and disease-related – is increasingly influenced by shifts and pressures that are globally integrated. Despite the fact that there is a huge disparity in the intensity of these crises between different parts of the world, this is the case.

No matter how the events in the Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Myanmar are remembered in the future, historians will have to acknowledge that they not only brought the United Nations back into the spotlight of world affairs but also sparked a debate in more than one member country, often for the first time since its inception, in which the organization became the subject of vehement criticism. One thing to keep in mind, no matter how the text is interpreted in the light of these changes, it might be worthwhile to do a brief review of the United Nations' role in Asia, even if such an examination would necessarily be preliminary and provisional.

It is worth mentioning that the Asian continent is significant since it contains one-third of the world's total land area. It contains the equivalent of half of the world's population. In 2018, over 4.561 billion people from a diverse range of racial, cultural, and religious origins called this location home. Each of these nations is at a unique point regarding political stability, economic growth, technical advancement, and social progress. Aside from having the fastest gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate, Asia also has the largest economy of any continent when measured in terms of both nominal and PPP GDP¹. When adjusted for PPP, "Asia's share of global GDP rose from 32% in 2000 to 42% in 2017", while the percentages of global consumption and the middle class both rose from 23% to 28% during the same time period. These three indicators are projected to reach 52, 39, and 54% increases by the year 2040².

1 IMF (2022). Available at <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>

2 Oliver Tonby *et al.* (September 2019). The future of Asia Asian flows and networks are defining the next phase of globalization, McKinsey Global Institute. Available at <https://www.mckinsey.com/-/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/asia%20pacific/the%20future%20of%20asia%20asian%20flows%20and%20networks%20are%20defining%20the%20next%20phase%20of%20globalization/mgi-future-of-asia-flows-and-trade-discussion-paper-sep-2019.pdf>

The goal of this inquiry is, therefore, to learn more about the U.N.'s role in the region of Asia. The contributions of the United Nations in Afghanistan and Myanmar are thoroughly examined in this analysis. Is the U.N. the most effective forum for addressing such issues as the management of humanitarian crises, the prevention of irregular migration, the avoidance of regional military conflicts, and the promotion of a long-term strategy for resolving the problem, as seen for instance in Afghanistan and Myanmar?

RECENT CONFLICT AND CRISIS IN ASIA: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The continent of Asia is beset by a myriad of crises and conflicts. The Rohingya refugee crisis, irregular migration, and regional conflicts such as the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir and post-Taliban Afghanistan are the most important inter-state conflicts in the region. Nearly all of the other battles in the region are fought within individual states, although they have significant implications for the surrounding region. They are, beginning with Asia, the effects of the collapse of Afghanistan on Pakistan, and the dispute between Sindhis and Muhajirs in Sindh. Both of these issues have their roots in Afghanistan. The separatist insurgencies in Kashmir and Punjab are two examples of internal conflicts that occur in India. Other internal conflicts are rooted in specific regions. India is also dealing with religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims as well as caste-based disputes. The Chakma hill tribe's migration in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh is the most significant struggle taking place within the country at present. Tensions between Hindus and Muslims have also led to acts of violence in Bangladesh. The

primary conflict in Sri Lanka is a particularly bloody one, and its origins may be traced back to the country's prolonged economic downturn in recent years.

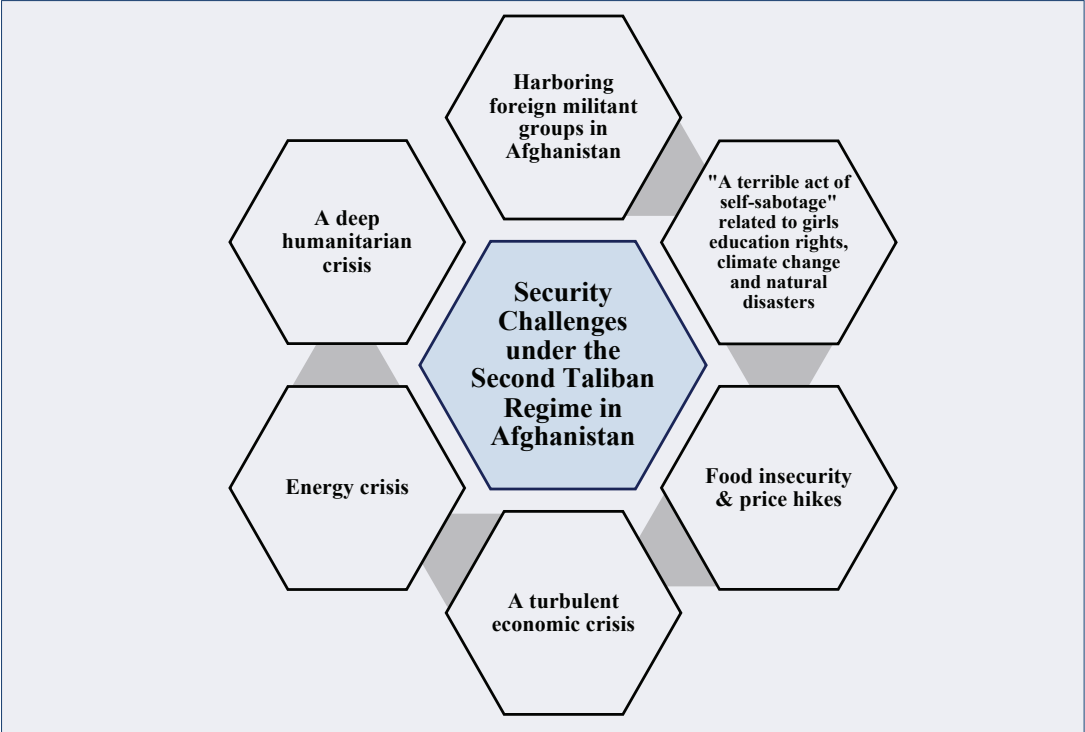
Security Challenges under the Second Taliban Era in Afghanistan and Asia

Some heavy questions need answering before we can get into the security threats posed by the second era of the Taliban in Afghanistan and its implications on Asia. After the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 2021, it was inevitable that the world's worst war would fade into a tense calm. Western voices have persisted in claiming that the Taliban provide safe refuge to foreign militants and could perhaps use Afghan soil as a launchpad for terrorist attacks on other countries. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda until his recent death, is one such figure. The recent "U.S. drone strike that killed Al-Qaeda commander Ayman Al-Zawahiri" has brought the Taliban's incapacity or lack of motivation – or perhaps both – to separate from al-Qaeda to the attention of the world community.³

Meanwhile, regional actors and Afghanistan's neighbors have tried to initiate negotiations with the Taliban. Although they do not legally recognize the Taliban administration, other countries, including Pakistan, Iran, China, and Russia, have kept their embassies open to maintain dialogue with the current regime. However, the Taliban's takeover has had a severe effect on the security situation in Afghanistan's neighboring countries. The insurgent group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is affiliated with the Afghan Taliban and responsible for the deaths of thousands of Pakistanis on its quest to create a

³ Hameed Hakimi and Gareth Price. (August 15, 2022). Afghanistan: One year of Taliban rule. Available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/08/afghanistan-one-year-taliban-rule>

FIGURE 01: SECURITY CHALLENGES UNDER THE SECOND TALIBAN REGIME IN AFGHANISTAN
(PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)



Taliban-style, Sharia-compliant state in Pakistan, is increasing its activity, putting additional strain on Pakistan, the Taliban's closest ally.

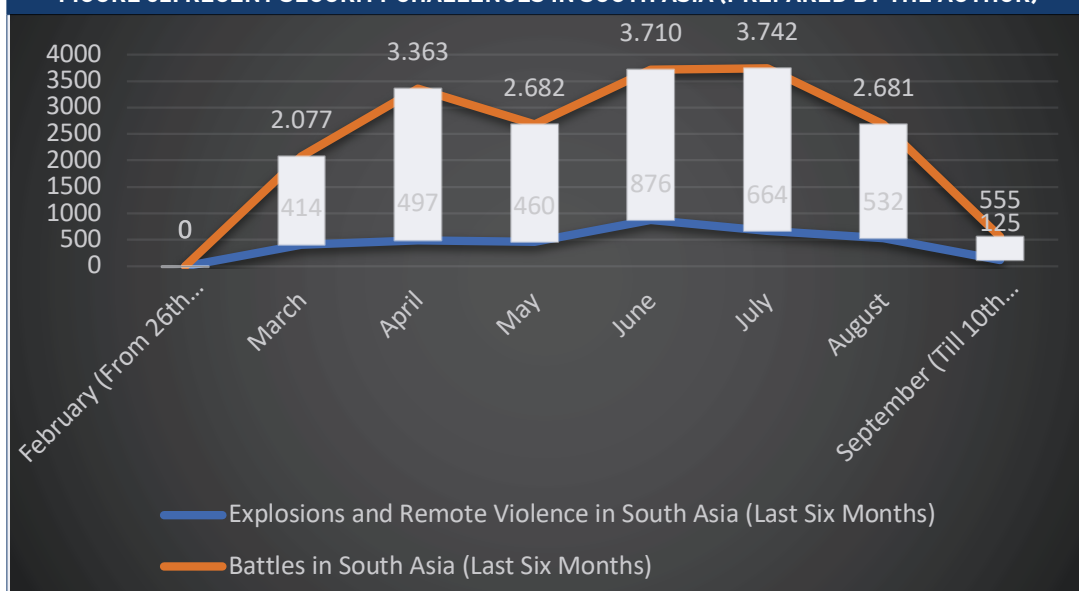
Apart from the security challenges, the Taliban's leadership in Afghanistan worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis. Millions of Afghans have seen their incomes decline, their cash reserves dwindle, and their food prices skyrocket as a result.

Recent Security Challenges in South Asia

The countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh are all in the throes of a terrible crisis in light of recent events in South Asia. Pakistani government forces fought the TTP and possibly other armed groups in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Even though

violence has continued, the Taliban in Pakistan and the Pakistani state soldiers have stuck to the terms of their ceasefire deal (Dawn, 2022)⁴. While this was going on, Baloch separatists were responsible for attacks on security forces and civilians in Balochistan, while in Punjab, local political leaders were being assassinated by unknown assailants. From India's vantage point, Naxal-Maoist militants continually attacked civilians and participated in violent conflicts with state authorities in the Red Corridor. In addition, in the Indian district of Chhattisgarh, rebels killed people they thought were police informers and looted a passenger bus full of supplies meant for police soldiers. While arresting key protest organizers in Sri Lanka did dampen

⁴ Ismail Khan. (September 5, 2022). Ceasefire 'holding' amid evolving TTP threat. Available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1708524>

FIGURE 02: RECENT SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SOUTH ASIA (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)

Source: ACLED, 2022

anti-government demonstration activity, this did not happen in other countries. The United Nations has issued a request for more accountability and thorough institutional reforms because the country is still struggling due to a scarcity of food and fuel (OHCHR, 2022)⁵. Almost for the same reason, there were staged protests organized by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) around Bangladesh. The opposition party in Bangladesh holds the ruling Bangladesh Awami League (AL) accountable for the country's growing costs and inflation (Dhaka Tribune, 2022)⁶.

However, the following figure illustrates the most recent security challenges and incidents that have taken place in South Asia over the past six months. This information was obtained through

⁵ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (September 06, 2022). Sri Lanka at critical juncture: UN report urges progress on accountability, institutional and security sector reforms. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/09/sri-lanka-critical-juncture-un-report-urges-progress-accountability>

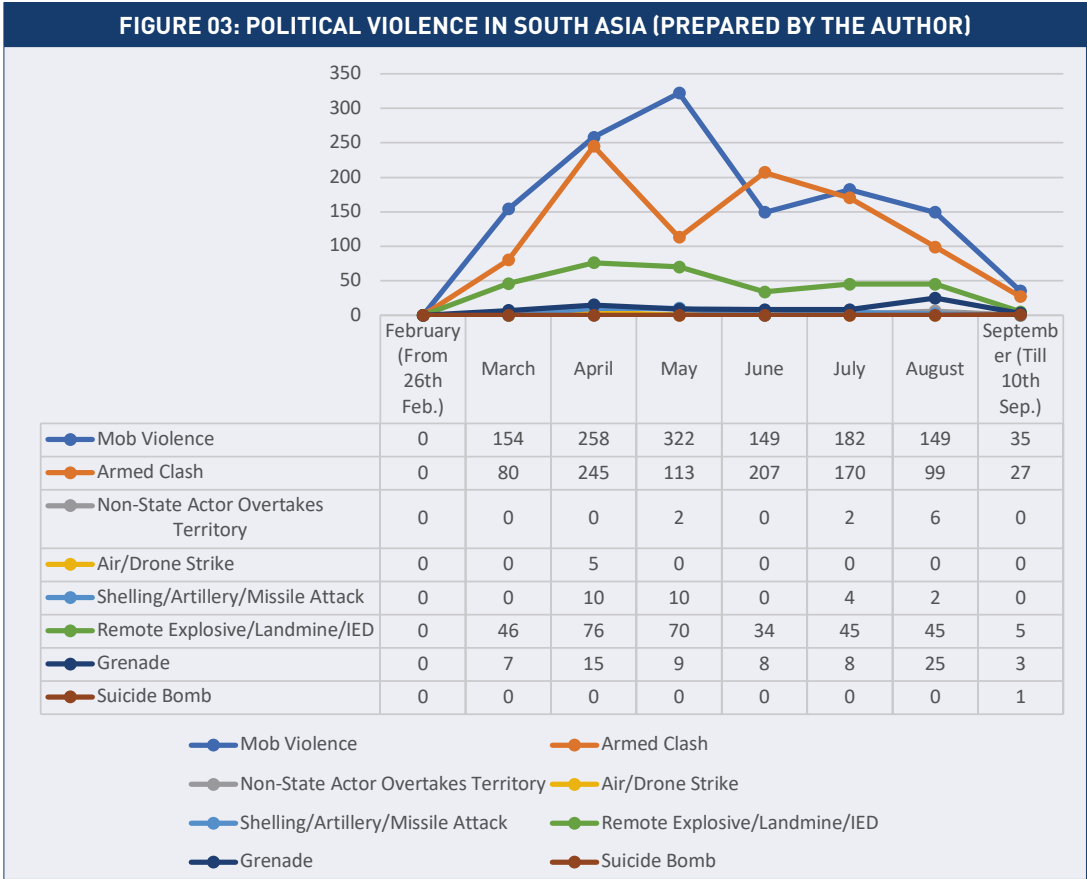
⁶ Dhaka Tribune. (August 17, 2022). BNP blames corruption for soaring prices of essentials. Available at <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2022/08/17/bnp-blames-corruption-for-soaring-prices-of-essentials>

an analysis of data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). The image also illustrates the interconnected nature of these occurrences.

Recent Security Challenges in the Southeast and Asia Pacific Region

Myanmar is one of the most unstable and hazardous states in Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific region, according to recent data. The Myanmar military increased its attacks on people and arrests in Chin and Rakhine states as the conflict escalated with the United League of Arakan Army (ULA/AA). After the ULA and AA severed their supply lines on August 26, the military and police evacuated a base on a strategic road connecting the northern Rakhine states and the southern Chin states (Narinjara News, 2022)⁷. The Chi-

⁷ Narinjara News. (26 August 2022). Soldiers abandon important Paletwa military base. Available at <https://www.narinjara.com/news/detail/630c3e5b21f2d423422dc834>



Source: ACLED, 2022

nese government has begun a fresh crackdown in Southeast Asian countries like Myanmar and Thailand, aimed at Protestant congregations that have refused to align themselves with the state (Radio Free Asia, 2022)⁸. The closures have been linked by some experts to President Xi Jinping’s December 2021 call for action against “non-Sinicized” and “illegal” religious organizations in China (Bitter Winter, 2022)⁹.

By looking at the recent data taken from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

(ACLED), the following figure shows the recent security challenges and the related incidents that happened in the East Asia Pacific region in the last month.

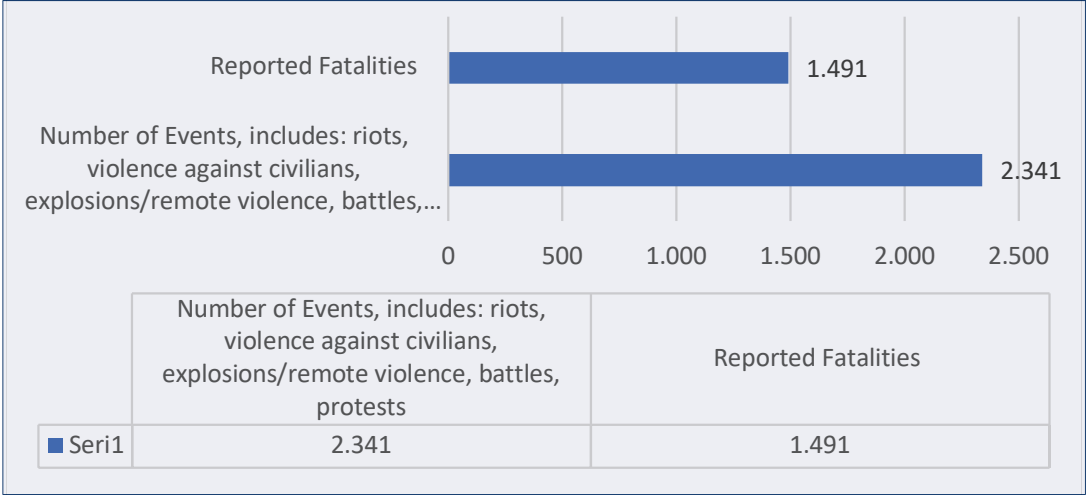
Rohingya Refugee Crisis

About 730,000 Rohingya fled from Myanmar in the second half of 2017, and the majority of them are still living in the vast refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. However, despite Myanmar and Bangladesh establishing the legal repatriation process in November 2017, not long after the exodus began, not a single displaced person has returned to their home in Rakhine State under the auspices of the program. Several thousand refugees were encouraged to return to

8 Radio Free Asia. (22 August 2022). The churches in Changchun and Linfen were attacked, and the two churches in Xi’an were banned. Available at <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/shehui/gt2-08222022-025223.html>

9 Bitter Winter. (24 August 2022). House Churches Attacked and Banned in Several Provinces. Available at <https://bitterwinter.org/house-churches-attacked-and-banned/>

FIGURE 04: RECENT SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SOUTHEAST & ASIA PACIFIC REGION (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)



Source: ACLED, 2022

Myanmar in 2018 and 2019, however, these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. Those who had been chosen to take part in the process were hesitant to do so because they felt they could not trust the Myanmar government to provide their security, grant them citizenship, and provide them with adequate economic possibilities after they returned home. Since the coup in Myanmar in February 2021, the two nations have not been able to successfully restart the process, and the prospects for repatriation have only worsened¹⁰.

The government of Bangladesh has spent hundreds of millions of dollars building Bhasan Char, a small silt island in the Bay of Bengal, to house as many as 100,000 Rohingya refugees. Almost 30,000 Rohingya have fled to Bhasan Char. Bhasan Char was designed with displaced people in mind. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the government of Bangladesh to coordinate the delivery of services to

the island in October 2021 on behalf of other U.N. organizations dealing with the Rohingya refugee problem. This agreement could be helpful since it requires Dhaka to guarantee that refugees are not forced to leave their homes and that they are given accurate information about the conditions they can expect to face on the island. Those who make the trek to Bhasan Char likely hope to escape the worsening conditions in the camps in Cox's Bazar¹¹.

ROLE OF THE U.N. IN ASIA

Territorial disputes have been at the center of many of the ongoing crises and conflicts in Asia, both between as well as inside individual governments. There is consensus, however, that the region is still experiencing the six core crises and wars that have the most impact. The first is the current Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar and

10 Richard Horsey. (January 25, 2022). One Year On from the Myanmar Coup. International Crisis Group. Available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/one-year-myanmar-coup>

11 United Nations, Bangladesh. (October 09, 2021). UN and Government of Bangladesh sign Memorandum of Understanding for Rohingya humanitarian response on Bhasan Char. Available at <https://bangladesh.un.org/en/150722-un-and-government-bangladesh-sign-memorandum-understanding-rohingya-humanitarian-response>

TABLE 01: RECENT CONTENTS RELATED TO SECURITY CHALLENGES IN ASIA (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)	
Recent Content Related to Security Challenges in Asia	Hard Security Content
	South Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Afghanistan, Taliban and post-security fact- Rohingya Refugee Crisis- Sectarian violence in Pakistan- India-Pakistan disputes over Kashmir
	Southeast and Asia Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pelosi's Taiwan visit and the future relations between the U.S. and China- Military coup and its effects in Myanmar and the region- China-India border dispute- Ukraine effect and nuclear war in Asia (North Korea vs. South Korea/ China, Pakistan vs. India)
	Soft Security Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">. Prevention of irregular migration. Climate change. Poverty alleviation. Emergencies of scarcity. Rapid unsustainable urbanization. Public health crisis like COVID-19. Food insecurity. Islamophobia in Asia, especially in India over citizenship and registration debates

Bangladesh, and the second is the issue that occurred in Afghanistan during the second reign of the Taliban. The third is the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, and the fourth is the war between the Moro and the Philippines in Mindanao, especially, a peace treaty with an organization known as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The fifth is the war between China and Taiwan over Taiwan's independence. Fighting is taking place on the border between South and North Korea, the fifth front, and between the Patani people and the Thai government, the sixth. In this article, however, I want to talk about the worst disaster to happen in recent history and the part the United Nations played in

it. The Rohingya issue in Myanmar and Bangladesh, together with the turmoil in Afghanistan, will be included.

U.N.'S ROLE DURING THE SECOND TALIBAN ERA
CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN

However, the United Nations is currently seen as the primary avenue through which humanitarian assistance may be supplied in Afghanistan, despite being excluded from talks between the United States and the Taliban and the peace process taking place within Afghanistan. Fun-

FIGURE 05: CRISIS AND CONFLICT IN ASIA AND THE ROLE OF UN (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)

damental weaknesses in the U.N. system will be shown ineluctably if certain states use their influence for bad and weaken the U.N. by making it impossible for the institution to negotiate with the Taliban. The United Nations needs to change its approach while the rest of the world waits for the Taliban to show that it has changed; therefore, it would be wise for them to study the lessons that follow. The mandates assigned to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) by the Security Council are a good indicator of how deeply the United Nations is involved in Afghanistan's politics, economy, and humanitarian concerns. The UNAMA now has international backing to keep working in Afghanistan thanks to these mandates. The

UNAMA was originally tasked with helping the Afghan people "create swiftly such a new and transitional administration leading to the creation of a new government" (U.N. Security Council, S/RES/1378).

After the fall of Kabul, the U.N. reaffirmed its commitment to staying in Afghanistan and continuing aid to the country's millions of disadvantaged citizens. The United Nations has announced its intention to keep a permanent presence in Afghanistan to continue providing the impartial assistance it has been providing there.

Accordingly, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stressed that teams had been sent out to assess the requirements in and around Ka-

FIGURE 06: UNAMA IN AFGHANISTAN (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)

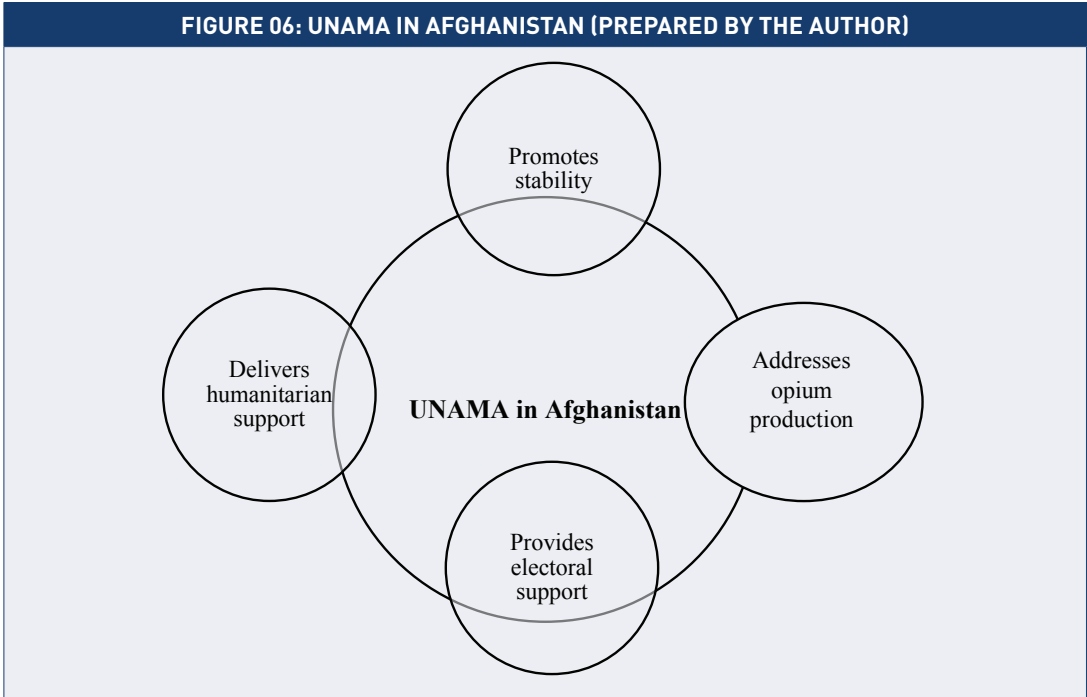
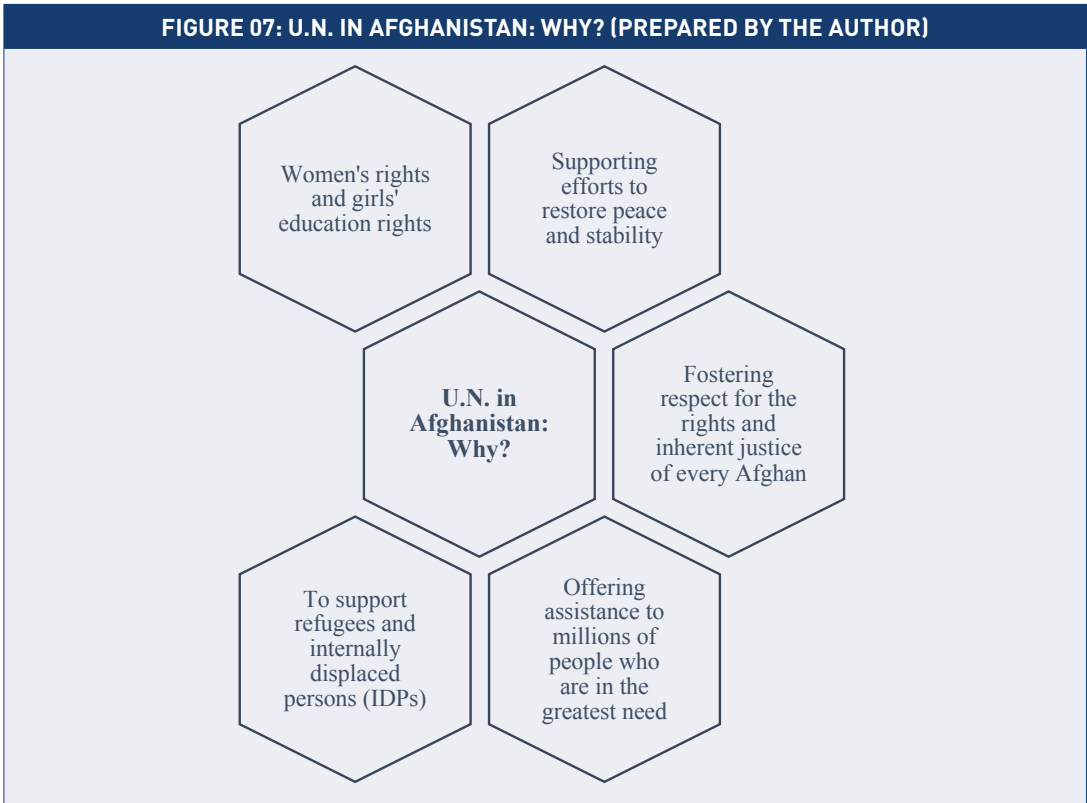
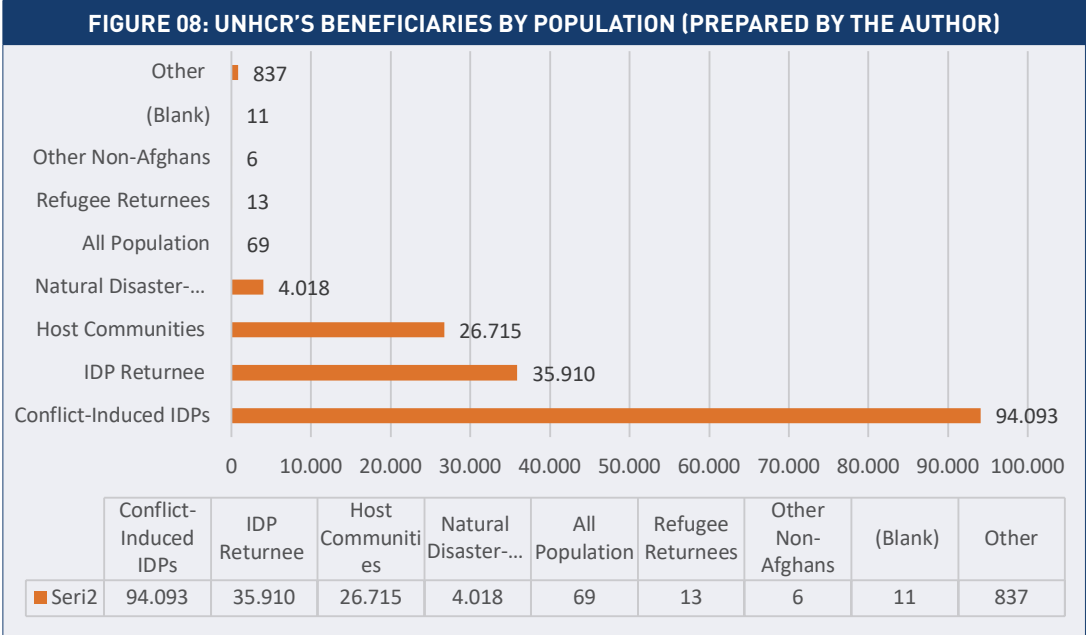


FIGURE 07: U.N. IN AFGHANISTAN: WHY? (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR)





Source: UNHCR, Afghanistan: Core Relief Items Snapshot, July 2022

bul. This year, the United Nations agency and its partners made “a \$1.3 billion appeal for the country, which is being supported at a rate of less than 40%”¹².

Refugees and Internally Displaced People

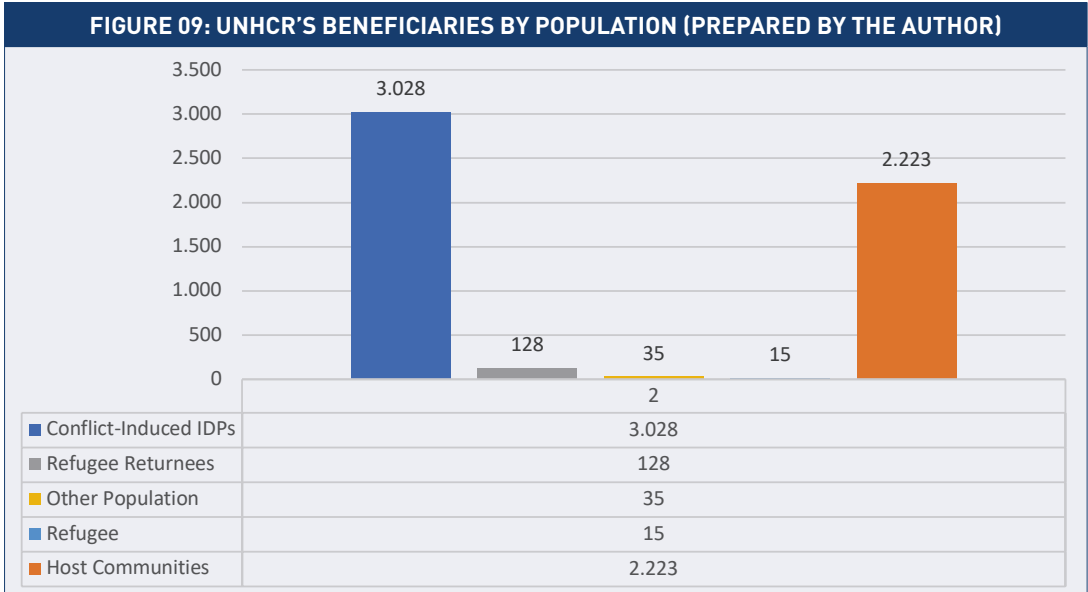
Afghan refugees should not return there, under advice from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The recommendation urges a ban on the forced return of Afghan people, including rejected asylum applicants. The agency is pleased that several states have decided to temporarily halt the deportation of those whose asylum requests were denied. UNHCR spokeswoman Shabia Mantoo said, “Among the hundreds of thousands who have been displaced, we now have 550,000 people who have been displaced within the nation.” This means that these individuals are still in Afghanistan.

12 UN. (2022).The United Nations intends to remain in Afghanistan. Available at <https://unric.org/en/the-united-nations-intends-to-remain-in-afghanistan/>

UNHCR in Afghanistan

The UNHCR’s objective in Afghanistan is two-fold: to protect the most vulnerable among the Afghan population and to provide new refugees with shelter, food, water, and other necessities. This aid is distributed both inside Afghanistan and to neighboring countries. The UNHCR and its partners will keep their staff on the ground and continue their emergency response efforts so long as they can access those in need.

In addition, the UNHCR has recently monitored the timely delivery and distribution of “Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI)” to assist populations of people who have been displaced within their own country as well as the communities that are hosting them. It is working in partnership with other members of the ES/NFI group, making the prompt and accurate delivery of emergency shelter and household goods to persons affected by the disaster in all regions of the country a top priority. People benefited from the provision of necessities as a



Source: UNHCR, Afghanistan Persons with Specific Needs Snapshot, July 2022

result of the relief efforts. In total, the UNHCR aimed to reach 90,000; however, it only reached 62,042 households. The following chart displays the distribution of “core relief items” in Afghanistan by the UNCHR.

The UNHCR not only brought desperately needed help to Afghanistan but also launched a program for those there with unique requirements. The UNHCR launched this initiative because it forms an integral part of the operation’s Protection and Solution Strategy. It aspires to meet the immediate requirement of persons with specific needs (PSNs) across Afghanistan and lessen the security concerns they face by employing a plan that takes into account the entire community. Individualized support is provided to those who have been assessed as being at extremely high risk of exposure to vulnerabilities and abuse. This support may come in the form of money or information about where to find more help. The UNHCR’s project in Afghanistan has aided nearly 5,429 people directly or indirectly.

UNDP in Afghanistan

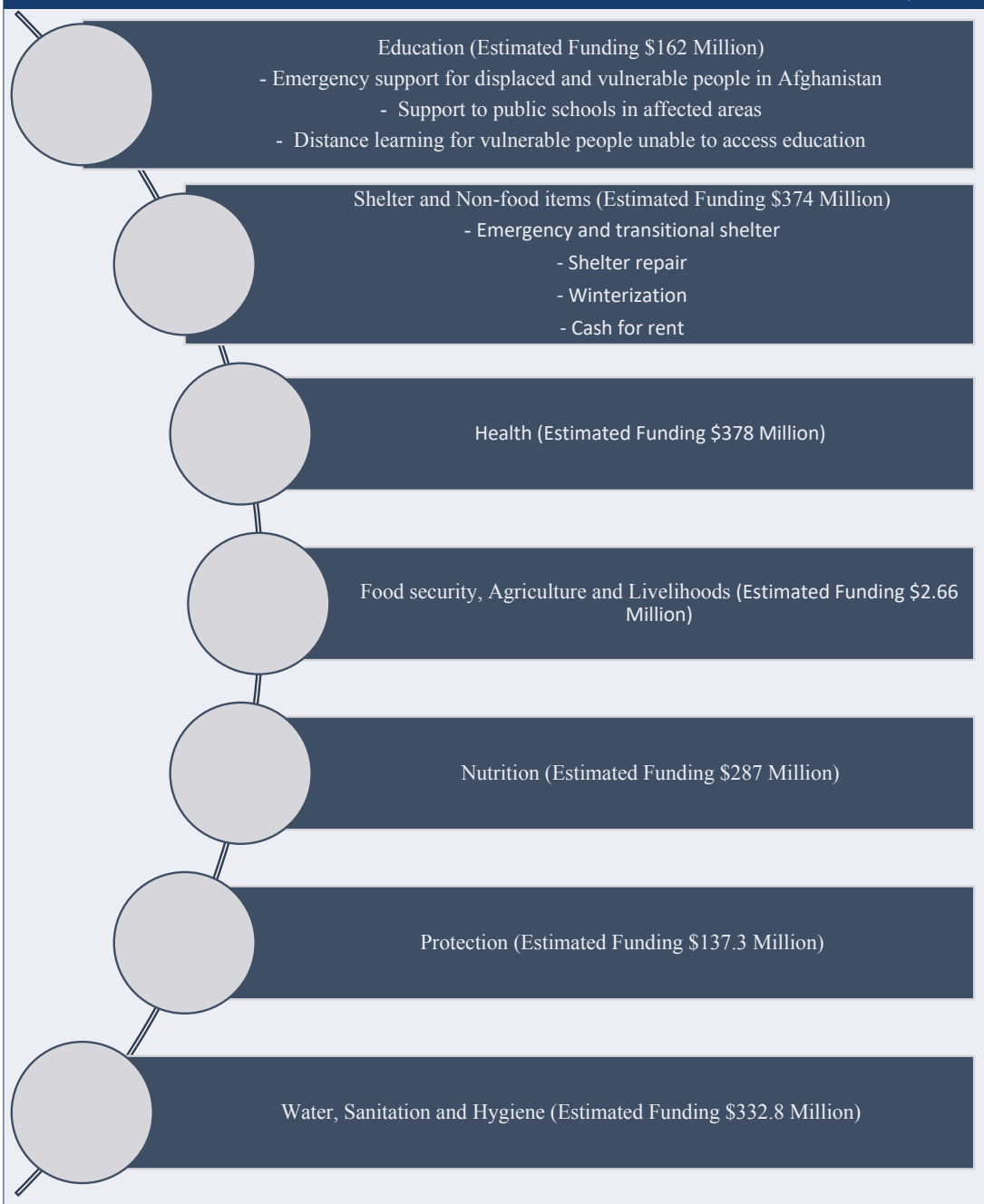
Families in the Spera District of Khost Province and the Bermal District of Paktika Province that were affected by the earthquake have been assisted by the UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the implementation of a collaborative project with a financial plan of \$1 million. The UNDP’s primary focus is on enhancing access to basic services in the UNHCR’s Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARR) districts¹³.

ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS IN MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH

Although the Rohingya crisis has been ongoing for decades, it did not receive much atten-

13 UNDP. (June 30, 2022). UNHCR and UNDP agree to provide \$1 million for housing and infrastructure in Khost and Paktika Province. Available at <https://www.undp.org/afghanistan/press-releases/unhcr-and-undp-agree-provide-1-million-housing-and-infrastructure-khost-and-paktika-province>

FIGURE 10: UNDP'S ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN (PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR). SOURCE: UNDP, 2022



Source: UNDP. (2022). UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (TEF) FOR AFGHANISTAN. Available at https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/UN_Transitional_Engagement_Framework_Afghanistan_2022.pdf

tion from the international community until 2012. The UNHCR had begun to implement steps in refugee camps in Bangladesh. This includes delivering critical assistance to refugees in Bangladesh to save their lives, assisting the government in the construction of housing for the refugees and working to enhance the refugees' living conditions. On the other hand, the UNHCR has not yet taken any steps that can be considered meaningful in the state of Rakhine¹⁴.

The U.N. issued a formal accusation of "ethnic cleansing" against the Rohingya in November 2016¹⁵. Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a flash report on Rohingya human rights abuses in 2017¹⁶. After releasing a brief summary of their findings in August of 2018, this mission completed a comprehensive report spanning 444 pages in September of the same year. Among the many suggestions made by the "fact-finding team was that the United Nations Security Council bring the matter before the International Criminal Court-ICC" (Bülbül, Islam & Khan, 2022). Meanwhile, the United Nations dispatched an impartial international fact-finding delegation to Myanmar to look into the situation. The mission concluded that "the horrors perpetrated on Rohingya men, women, and children" constituted crimes against humanity and war crimes, with "the likely aim of genocide." Simultaneously, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights voiced concern over the

persistent violation of human rights against the Rohingya¹⁷.

In nutshell, it can be stressed that numerous attempts were made by the U.N. Security Council to address the plight of Rohingya, whose suffering was seen by many countries near Myanmar. The goal of one of these initiatives was to prepare a resolution on the Rohingya minority that would outline a deadline for Myanmar to resolve its concerns, notably concerning the return of refugees, and possible measures of exerting pressure on Myanmar, including the implementation of penalties. Unfortunately, "Russia and China, two permanent members of the Council," had no intention of working to promote the adoption of this resolution. Since this was the case, the proposed resolution was rendered moot¹⁸. The resolution condemned the violence and demanded that the government of Myanmar guarantee basic rights and citizenship to minority groups. Both of those attempts failed. Undeniably, the Myanmar ambassador to the United Nations responded negatively to this resolution¹⁹. The UNHCR has recently launched a response plan to aid 1.4 million Rohingya and Bangladeshis. Babar Baloch, a spokesman for the UNHCR, stressed, "Humanitarian agencies are seeking more than \$881 million to support approximately 1.4 million people, including over 918,000 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, and around 540,000 Bangladeshis in neighbouring communities."

14 Amnesty International. (2017). Who are the Rohingya and What is Happening in Myanmar?, September 26, 2017. <https://www.amnesty.org.au/who-are-the-rohingya-refugees/>

15 Al-Jazeera. (2018). Who are the Rohingya?, April 18, 2018. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims->

16 OHCHR. (2017). Report of OHCHR mission to Bangladesh, Report, OHCHR, 2017.

17 The United Nations. (2018). 'Terror and panic' among Rohingya who may be forced to return to Myanmar – UN rights chief, November 13, 2018. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1025651>

18 The Japan Times. (2018). U.N. Security Council considers move to push Myanmar on Rohingya crisis, but Russia and China boycott talks, December 18, 2018. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/12/18/asiapacific/u-n-security-council-considers-move-push-myanmar-rohingya-crisis-russia-china-boycott-talks/#.XDVG6wVUzbIV>

19 The Asahi Shimbun. (2018). U.N. committee condemns rights violations against Rohingya, November 17, 2018. <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201811170027.html>

CONCLUSION

The United Nations was established as an organization to promote and secure international tranquillity. Given that many of the disputes in Asia have historically arisen within individual states and are often related to state sovereignty, it is reasonable to assume that the United Nations' influence in the region will be limited. In the advocacy and humanitarian aid issues that have developed in the conflict zones of Asia, the United Nations has, for the most part, played a supportive role. I would argue that the United Nations is limited to implementing a decisive role in dispute settlement and that its job is better described as providing a foundation for peace-building. This is due to the fact that the U.N. was unable to establish a significant contribution in mediating the dispute.

The U.N.'s incapacity to forestall the escalation of minor conflicts like those in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Afghanistan is its most glaring failure. Even though its stated mission is the "maintenance of international peace and security," the UNSC has long been the subject of criticism concerning how and why it accomplishes this goal. The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council who have the right to veto resolutions do not include any countries from Latin America, Africa, or South Asia. The P5 consists of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Some U.N. member states see this as creating a legitimacy crisis. Several U.N. member states have proposed increasing the size of the Security Council by adding permanent members and eliminating or

expanding the council's veto power. In the past few years, the United Nations Security Council has struggled to establish common ground and enact resolutions on contentious issues like the Rohingya refugee crisis. As a result of this flop, its role has garnered even more criticism. During the beginning phases of COVID-19, the United States and China were at odds over whether or not to include a reference to the World Health Organization. As a result of this disagreement, the worldwide peace settlement was disrupted for several months. Nevertheless, amending the United Nations Charter, which outlines the procedures that are to be followed by the United Nations Security Council, would be challenging because it would demand the backing of two-thirds of the 193 member states of the United Nations as well as the backing of all five permanent members of the UNSC.

However, in war-torn, crisis-hit, and conflicting areas of Asia, regional actors appear to have played a larger role in conflict resolution than international actors. Malaysia, a regional actor, facilitated peace talks in two of the three conflict zones mentioned in this article. However, the international community was unable to intervene in the third conflict area because of the lack of prospects for peace talks or a negotiated settlement. International organizations like the United Nations often act as a peacekeeper in this respect. Therefore, the United Nations' engagement in war-torn countries in Asia may exemplify another dimension of ceasefire in the sense that sometimes it is quite impossible for the U.N. to utilize hard power to respond to the conflict.

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN ASIA TODAY

NAZMUL ISLAM

SETA | ANALYSIS

This study's primary objective is to assess the current function of the United Nations in Asia. How exactly the United Nations maintains its peace and security can be answered by focusing on the organization's actions in Afghanistan and Myanmar, particularly regarding the Afghan and Rohingya people. This paper explores the United Nations' capacity to breach its conflict resolution and security endurance during the conflict, crises, and disputes that occurred during and after the second era of Taliban rule in Afghanistan. It also investigates the United Nations' humanitarian role for the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh. It asks whether this role is sufficient or merely an eye-washing initiative given that the United Nations has no other option to resolve this conflict. This assertion is backed up in the research by the use of two different case studies.

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