



# United Nations Human Rights Council

**Chairperson**  
Trayambak Pathak

**Secretary General**  
Shubhankar Dhulia

**Director General**  
Arnav Goel

**Under-Secretary General**  
Ayushman Tiwari

**Welham Boys' School**  
**Model United Nations 2022**

**Email-**  
chair.unhrc@welhamboys.org

**Website**  
[www.welhammun.org](http://www.welhammun.org)

**Agenda**  
Discussing the humanitarian  
crisis in Afghanistan

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## Letter From The Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

The Executive Board warmly welcomes you to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at the ninth edition of WELMUN.

As a delegate in the UNHRC, you have the responsibility of resolving humanitarian crises and passing resolutions that secure the human rights of global citizens. An in-depth understanding and extensive research are a must for any delegate participating in the HRC to properly examine the conflict and its background. The manner in which you speak should not be your primary concern, but speaking clearly, with comprehensive framing will enhance the depth of your speeches.

The agenda for this year's conference is:

### **Discussing the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan.**

Afghanistan has always been the centre of chaos and conflict for the last 4 decades. Ever since its involvement in the Great Game and the Cold War, to the Taliban, the nation has rarely seen political and economic stability. The Agenda has a wide scope for discussions and the aim of the delegates should be to come up with solutions to tackle the atrocities being faced by the citizens and the draconian laws imposed on them.

As a delegate, your aim should be to **examine the shortcomings** of the Taliban's regime, which is based on a harsh version of Islam, and research the **violation of human rights** and **war crimes** committed by them.

Whether you are new to the concept of MUNs or are a seasoned MUNer, we urge you to give it your best shot and leave it for us to give you an environment that is equal parts learning and fun. The board is hopeful that each delegate will be well researched and will provide their own unique perspective on the agenda.

Anticipate two days of intense debate, discussion and fun memories that will last a lifetime.

### **Your position papers would give emphasis on the women's rights in Afghanistan and their uncertain future**

Please feel free to contact the Executive Board for any queries you might have.  
Looking forward to seeing you this fall.

The Executive Board  
UNHRC

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Trayambak Pathak  
(Chairperson)

Maulik Khanna  
(Director)

Param Mehta  
(Joint Director)

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Sabhya Malik  
(Rapporteur)

Eshan Agarwal  
(Rapporteur)

## Introduction

The situation in Afghanistan is one of the **world's worst humanitarian crises** as the country experiences large-scale **humanitarian needs**, displacement of **refugees**, a severe subsistence crisis, **violation of rights**, and **war crimes**. Due to its complex history, it is full of conflicts, constant droughts, and a steep economic decline due to recent political developments. This guide will first help you understand the history and then the current humanitarian crisis.

The invasion of the Taliban, both in 1996 and 2021, was what hurt the nation the most as it led to one of the most significant humanitarian catastrophes the world had ever witnessed.



<https://depositphotos.com/214078006/stock-photo-taliban-flag-isolated-white-background.html>

Today's crisis can thus be traced back to the 1990s, when the country's institutions collapsed and suffered a decline first, when the mujahideen took over in the early 1990s and later, under the Taliban. They began implementing a stricter interpretation of the **Shariah rule**-the Islamic rule that denied women and girls their fundamental human rights, including education and healthcare hence rolling back all the advancements made in the sector. Soon, Afghanistan would sink into deeper poverty, violence, and ambiguity. Except for the aid provided by humanitarian

organisations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Afghanistan would get cut off from the rest of the international community.

Then, amid this chaos, the US invaded for political reasons and removed the Taliban based group from the country. However, they did not prove to be successful in their efforts as the Taliban-based groups kept coming to both Pakistan and Afghanistan to conduct malicious acts.

The United States of America remained in the country for 20 years, the longest war in the country's history. Finally, **in 2021, the US withdrew all its troops**, and what followed next was a glimpse of the crisis Afghanistan would face.

The international airport of Afghanistan had been flooded with civilians trying to escape the country, which was now under the helm of the Taliban. However, the Afghans who were prone to be tortured or discriminated against by the Taliban rule could not flee the country. We also learned that the Taliban soon ordered the end to the airlifts, due to which the country had to end its services hurriedly, and many people were left stranded this way.

It further led to the problem of refugees and migrants in the country. According to the UNHRC, almost **3.5 million people were internally displaced**. The human rights defenders and the media have also suffered a significant blow as whenever they have tried to do their duty, they have been **mentally and physically tortured**. The Taliban issued eleven rules for journalism which are immensely restricting as they **prohibit the media** from posting anything that goes against their Islamic law or religion.

After this, the Taliban has again been committing war crimes. There have been numerous incidents when the prisoners have been given no food and water, **women have been held at gunpoint**, and civilians have been shot just because they were protesting. However, one section that has been agonised the most is the women.

**Misogynism in the country has led to various harsh rules**. Higher education has been restricted (from grades 6-12) has been restricted, and they have also been disallowed from going to work. Their freedom to wear whatever they want has been snatched as it has been made compulsory for them to wear the veil and burqa. Lastly, we have also left some questions that we want you to ponder and then come up with solutions for the committee.

The crux here is to have a **solution-oriented debate** to help the Afghans upon whom the Islamic extremists have imposed such stringent regulations.

## History of the Agenda

To fully comprehend the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, we first need to understand the country's complex history. "The graveyard of empires" has experienced multiple invasions from the most incredible superpowers even though their efforts have mostly gone in vain. The Britishers came in the 19th century, the Soviet Union came in the 20th century, and the USA followed, which too retreated its army in August 2021.

### THE GREAT GAME

In the 18th century, there was the enormous Russian Empire in the North, while in the south was India which the British Empire then ruled. **Three Anglo-Afghan wars** occurred; the first one led to the defeat of the British, and the second one saw the British defeating Afghanistan and taking them under their influence. The Durand line was drawn as the borderline between Afghanistan and British India during this war. The Third Anglo-Afghan War took place in 1919, which led to Afghanistan's independence.

Now, the country was ruled by Emir Amanullah Khan, who in 1926 converted Afghanistan into a constitutional monarchy. Along with his wife Soraya Tarzi, they introduced many reform measures like campaigning against polygamy, stressing girls' education, working for equal rights for women and the right to divorce. However, they were then overthrown by the 'guardians' of Islam, who felt that these measures were wrong for their religion. In 1933, his son Zahir Shah became the country's new king for the next 40 years.

Around this time, **two types of ideologies** were observed in Afghanistan: **Communist** under the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) while the second was the **Islamist** ideology. In 1973, Daoud Khan carried out a ruthless coup, which led to him becoming the President of Afghanistan. Despite being a dictator, he brought in some good social and economic reforms in Afghanistan. But after this, **Afghanistan was again trapped between two superpowers: The USA and the USSR.**

In 1977, Daoud Khan created his new party: National Revolutionary Party and a new constitution was brought. He tried to appease the extremist Islamists but sensed danger from the two factions of the Communist party, thereby killing the party's members. The liberals were infuriated with the extreme dictatorship, and this unrest eventually led to a revolution against Daoud Khan called the "Saur revolution."

Afghanistan became a Democratic Republic country, and a new communist government came into power, led by the new President, Nur Muhammad Taraki. Under him, good reforms took

place, such as the land reforms. However, he was utterly anti-religion, which displeased the Islamic people of Afghanistan, who then declared a civil war against the Communists in 1979.

## INVOLVEMENT OF THE USSR

**Hafizullah Amin**, a Communist now, **worried about an Islamist takeover** in Afghanistan. To avoid this, he started appealing the Islamics by constructing mosques, mentioning the name of Allah in speeches, and distributing copies of the Quran. Then in December 1979, before the Islamists could take power, the Soviet Union intervened by sending its forces. The ideological reason was that Communism was being misrepresented and was losing its influence in Afghanistan.



The geopolitical reason was that The USSR here could see an opportunity of adding one more country under its influence hence providing them with an upper hand in the **Cold War**. Things were starting to get stable, but then another superpower, the United States of America, intervened.

## INTERVENTION BY AMERICA

America had got wary of the growing influence of the Soviet Union over Afghanistan and hence started looking for an opposing ideology to support them. At that time, the ideology opposing Communism was that of the Islamists and Mujahideen.

In 1988, the Geneva Accord was signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the USA and the USSR guaranteeing it, ultimately leading to the withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan. This was as the USA promised that if the Soviet Union withdrew its troops, the USA would stop the militarization.

Finally, **in February 1989, the Soviet Union withdrew its army** from Afghanistan. One reason was that the USSR was slowly and gradually disintegrating and thus could no longer stay in Afghanistan. In 1990, Afghanistan was declared the Islamic Republic, and all Communist references were eradicated. Despite all this, America continued to supply weapons to the Mujahideen, and the civil war continued.

In 1992, the Mujahideen won this civil war, and a person came to power, Burhanuddin Rabbani. Unfortunately, **in 1996**, he too was removed by **the Taliban**.

## RISE OF TALIBAN

Who are the Taliban? In the Pashto language, 'Taliban' means student. Initially, the leader of this Taliban group was Mullah Omar, who formed this group of 50 students. The majority of the Afghans were reportedly educated in madrassas (religious schools) in Pakistan, where they developed their extremely rightist ideology. By 1998, they had 90% control of the country. Initially, Afghans, exhausted from the mujahideen's superfluity and infighting after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, welcomed the Taliban when they first came in.

They had even been successful in curbing corruption, lawlessness, constructing roads, etc. But then the Taliban also **introduced their austere interpretation of the Sharia law**, which stood for extreme punishments - such as public executions of murderers. All sorts of entertainment like television, music and cinema were banned. Girls aged 10 and over were disallowed from going to school.

In the late 1990s, some Mujahideen forces formed the Northern Alliance to fight the Taliban. But in 2001, they lost this fight. Afghanistan sank into deeper poverty, violence, and uncertainty and had been cut from the rest of the international society.

### **THE 9/11 ATTACKS**

**On September 11, 2001, the 9/11 attacks were conducted** in the USA by the terrorist group "Al-Qaeda," The whole world could see the World Trade Centre attacks in New York. **The Taliban were accused of providing shelter to** one of the prime suspects - **Osama Bin Laden**, who later argued through a letter that these attacks were to avenge the USA's war crimes against the Islamics.

America launched attacks on the Taliban for providing sanctuary to Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan, and by the first week of December, the Taliban regime had collapsed. During this time, the US had sent its troops to ensure security and keep the Taliban in check. The group had not been completely removed as it kept popping up at different places and conducting shootouts and bombings.



<https://www.vox.com/2016/9/9/12839824/9-11-anniversary-terrorist-attack-safer-today>

## WITHDRAWAL OF THE US TROOPS

In February 2020, The Doha deal was signed, stating that America would withdraw its troops from Afghanistan if the Taliban cut off its relationship with terrorist groups like Al Qaeda. Finally, In April 2021, Joe Biden announced the complete **withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan by September 11 2021**. He believed that the 3,00,000 soldiers of the Afghanistan army would suffice to counter the 85,000 Talibani fighters.

But in reality, the country no longer wanted to fight a war that was not theirs. They had reportedly spent more than 8 trillion dollars on the post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and elsewhere. If America aimed to make Afghanistan a democratic country and end the Taliban, it has failed in this aspect. Since then, the humanitarian crisis has been further deteriorating across Afghanistan.

## The Current Humanitarian Crisis (2022)

### Taliban Regime 2.0

Afghanistan has undergone a dramatic transformation in half a year of Taliban rule, as the once aid-fueled economy is now barreling toward collapse. The citizens have said that they feel much less hopeful since tens of thousands of Afghans have fled or have been evacuated, including large numbers of the educated elites.



They either fear for their economic future or lack of freedom under a group that puts them under a strict interpretation of Islam and, during its previous rule in the late 1990s, barred girls from school and women from work. Thankfully, women have returned to the streets, and many young men have put on Western clothes again after initially shedding them for the traditional salwar kameez favoured by the Taliban.

## **THE DOWNWARD ECONOMIC SPIRAL**

Poverty is deepening in Afghanistan, and even those who have money have difficulty accessing it. At banks, lines are long as residents wait for hours, sometimes even days, to withdraw a limit of \$200 a week.

On 19 December 2021, the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Council of Foreign Ministers took place in Islamabad. During the Session, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths stated that around 23 million people in Afghanistan suffer from hunger. Malnourished children are overflowing in health facilities. In addition, 70 percent of teachers in Afghanistan are working without salaries, and millions of students, which are Afghanistan's future, are not able to attend school.

The Taliban takeover and ensuing events have caused the value of the Afghani currency to incur a sharp drop. Monetary insecurity grows because of the lack of confidence in financial sectors, affecting all trade opportunities and attracting investment. The need for liquidity and stabilisation of the banking system is also crucial.

### **Media Oppression**

The Taliban's history of media oppression is exceptionally well known among the international community. *Afghanistan ranks 156th out of 180 countries in Press Freedom.* Media Oppression has perpetrated the Taliban's disregard for the right to freedom of expression, and **journalists have been harassed, intimidated, threatened and attacked** innumerable times during its rule. It has gone to such an extent that journalists in Afghanistan have found

themselves in life-threatening situations.



### **“11 RULES OF JOURNALISM”**

The Taliban issued a directive that contained the “11 rules of journalism”, which were highly restricting. They **prohibit the media from publishing anything contrary to Islam** or anything which opposes the religion. They also prevent them from reporting news that the rulers have not officially confirmed. A more recent directive requires journalists to refer to the Taliban by their official name, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. So, in a way, these rules are so broad and vague that it restricts virtually any criticism about the Taliban.

### **SUPPRESSION OF PROVINCIAL NEWS**

The local media was the worst hit after the Taliban takeover. The local media screened satire shows that criticised officials and brought awareness to the people. After the new regime took over, they have been replaced by religious screenings favoured by the Taliban. Local reporters can no longer pursue stories that took on religious extremism, and departments have been set up in the provinces to monitor local journalism.

### **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**

On several occasions, the Taliban has also resorted to physical violence by beating up the reporters on site. Footage of such incidents remains difficult to be exposed, because of the  **censorship imposed**  by the information and culture department. One such instance was when a  **few reporters covering a women’s protest were beaten up by the Taliban** , and according to the media, the frequency of such incidents remains high.

Not only this but some of the journalists who were unable to leave Afghanistan were taken away and interrogated, and sometimes even tortured. The Taliban have always denied responsibility for this physical violence.

### **LACK OF INCOME AND INSECURITY**

As a result of not being able to do their jobs properly, the foreign journalists working in Afghanistan have faced a loss in income. They have to be on the move constantly and lose focus on their work. In addition to the death threats they sometimes receive, some of the journalists' homes have also been searched by the Taliban. Most of them escape the country, but those who stay there find it impossible to live peacefully unless they comply with the Taliban's directives.

Reporters who reach on-site to report on refugees and women's rights protests are detained, and their camera equipment is confiscated. The Taliban also plan on imposing more strict rules on social media sites such as Whatsapp and Facebook, restricting the citizens' online usage.

### **Refugees and Migrants**

Firstly, who are refugees and migrants and what's the difference between these two? Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, a **refugee** is a person who has been **forcefully displaced** due to circumstances and is unwilling or hesitant to return to their homeland due to fear of repression and suppression based on ethnicity, race, colour, etcetera. While on the other hand, a **migrant** is a person who **chooses to leave** the state or the country.

Afghans are the **third-largest refugee population** globally. There are 2.6 million Afghan refugees worldwide. Additionally, another 3.5 million people are internally displaced. In 2020, almost 1.5 million fled to Pakistan, while Iran accommodated 780,000, according to UNHCR figures.

The European Commission also planned to allocate €600 million to Afghanistan's neighbours like Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to cover up the expenses needed for the thousands of Afghan refugees and €300 million in humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, mainly for the vulnerable groups like girls and women. Like Austria, Poland, and Switzerland, other countries showed no interest in accepting refugees and scaled their border security to thwart those entering illegally.



<https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-airport-images-kabul-plane-b1903709.html>

Thanks to a US-led global airlift, over 125,000 people, including the international passport holders and Afghans, were able to flee on hastily organised evacuation flights from Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport. Unfortunately, most of them who wanted to flee from the Draconian law were not evacuated. Some Afghans seeking visas or asylum based on their fear of persecution due to their identity could get on board, as were those whose family was living abroad.

Under international human rights law, everyone has the right to leave their own country. Restrictions on these rights can be imposed lawfully and for a valid reason only. But the Taliban disallowed the Afghans from leaving the country after a particular date.

Regular visas were available for Afghans, but practically thinking, it had been tough for them to get the legal documents for their visas because reasons like Taliban checkpoints and closed consulates have all hampered the process.

## **Violation of Laws of Wars**

**International Humanitarian Laws (IHL)** rules state what can and cannot be done during an armed conflict. These laws seek to **protect those** who are **not fighting the war** and those **who are not able to**, like the injured. Those who have been **detained**, like the political prisoners, deserve to have their rights preserved as they can no longer be seen as a threat. They can not be

ill-treated or be subject to any form of torture and must be given food and water and be allowed to communicate with their loved ones. Troops can **not attack medical workers and the sick**, irrespective of their side.

The Taliban committed war crimes in Afghanistan during their earlier reign from 1996-to 2001. The armed Taliban committed torture, looting, rape, abductions, political killings, and kidnappings for ransom.

Prisoners of Wars were kept in inhumane conditions as they were given no food, violating the laws of war. The general public was being attacked for no reason. During their military takeover of Mazar-i-Sharif, the Taliban shot and cut the throats of



Since taking power last year, the Taliban have continued assassinations, detentions and intimidation of journalists, civil society and human rights activists and former government employees. Still, they have forcefully evicted minority Shia Muslims from their homes and lands. Ethnic and religious minorities were tortured and executed. Those captured were given no water, food, or medical aid, hence violating the rules set by the IHL. One such incident happened in Bazarak town and the nearby village of Urmaz.

## **Women's Rights**

Arguably the most criticised and the most restricting aspect of the Taliban's rule is its elimination and extreme suppression of women's rights. **In the Global Gender Gap Index, Afghanistan ranked 156th out of 156 countries**, which is one of the reasons why some call Afghanistan 'the worst place to be a woman'. The strict interpretation of the Sharia law implemented by the administration massively curbs women's rights, and the Taliban's history of crimes against women is very well-known.

It was hoped that the Taliban would pay heed to the calls of women's rights activists and the international community, but the new decrees that they constantly impose show their disregard for these matters. A survey conducted by the WHO shows that 90% of Women in Afghanistan have experienced at least one form of domestic violence.

### **CONDITION OF WOMEN DURING THE FORMER TALIBAN REIGN**

The former Taliban leaders imposed laws that caused immense suffering to the women in Afghanistan, which attracted the attention of numerous human rights activists and NGOs.

They were obligated to wear veils, not allowed to attend school past 6th grade, work jobs and higher education. It was also mandatory for women to wear the burqa, and they were also blocked from travelling without male guardians.



<https://theweek.com/political-satire/1003976/afghan-womens-right>

Their restrictions were not limited to Muslim women. They also made it mandatory for Hindu women in Afghanistan to wear veils which saw strong opposition from Hindu-dominated India. There was not a single woman in the interim cabinet of the Taliban, and women across the country were encouraged to stay at home.

### **GAINS MADE IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS DURING THE US-BACKED REGIME**

The rights that the Taliban took away from Afghan women were returned, to a certain extent, to them after the US-backed regime took over Afghanistan in 2001. The rights given to women included the right to choose what they wear, get employed, and the right to education.

These rights were not extensive, but they were a big step forward that gave Afghan women new hope to rise above the inferior status imposed on them by the extremist Islam regime of the Taliban.



<https://www.thequint.com/neon/as-taliban-takes-over-afghanistan-the-concern-for-womens-rights-is-kaafi-real>

The somewhat encouraging step forward was that 27% of the 250 seats were reserved for women in the House of the People under Hamid Karzai's new government. The situation of women did improve in the major cities and urban areas, but those living in rural Afghanistan still suffered.

Around the same time, a report by the United Nations showed that violence against women had gone up by 20%, whose major contributor was domestic violence in rural areas often justified by religion. However, women were permitted to drive vehicles and represent the country in events such as the Olympic games.

### **THE NEW TALIBAN REIGN**

The return of the Taliban in 2021 brought with it its strict law, which hugely limited women's rights and perpetrated their poor treatment. This time around, they promised increased rights for both men and women and promised press freedom. They did not live up to most of their promises. While they did allow girls from grades 1-6 to go to school in segregated classrooms, **higher education for girls** was still **restricted**. Adhering to its former regime, there are no women ministers in the interim government and the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been dissolved.

Any hope regarding the freedom to wear what women want has been dashed after a harsh decree that makes **wearing the veil and burqa compulsory for women**. If the woman chooses not to wear the veil, her father or brother can be imprisoned or laid off from government jobs.

There has also been an internal power struggle within the Taliban in which old, uncompromising leaders have prevailed. This explains the introduction of the new harsh laws against women but does not, by any means, justify them. Domestic violence cases are also back up, even in the urban areas. If the Taliban continue to put pressure on society, the exchanges between them and the international community may come to a stand stop. **With the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the centre stage,**

**International media has also stopped Afghanistan's coverage, which has resulted in the Taliban imposing harsh laws against women without any foreign objections.**



# Sample Position Paper

## Position Paper



**Committee:** United Nations Human Rights Council

**Agenda 1:** The Plight of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang Region of China

**Country:** Islamic Republic of Pakistan

### Agenda 1

#### **Policy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with Respect to the Agenda:**

Recent events as described by the Western world in the Xinjiang province of the People's Republic of China are highly questioned by the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and consider these false allegations to be hypocritical in nature. The People's Republic of China has made significant growth in the previous years when it comes to diverse matters and hence, the delegation acknowledges the People's Republic of China's openness and transparency. A number of diplomats, international organizations officials and journalists were invited by the People's Republic of China to Xinjiang to notice and observe the progress of human rights and the outcomes of counterterrorism and deradicalization there, the observations of which were completely contradictory to reports based on 'studies' by the western world. The delegation from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan believes that all these allegations against the People's Republic of China are a part of the agenda by the western world to defame the People's Republic of China. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been a committed party to international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and believes in ensuring all human rights as enshrined in the Pakistani Constitution as well. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has always taken a stand against religious oppression and Islamophobia across the globe and continues to do so. The government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan maintains their long-standing relationship with the People's Republic of China based on the foundations of trust and hence, accepts the 'Chinese' version of treatment as defined in the Xinjiang Province in the People's Republic of China. The Chinese government has been alleged of severe human rights violations in these camps being said to be made for detention purposes of the Islamic minority in the region, however, the 'educational and vocational camps' as proposed and successfully implemented by the People's Republic of China guarantee all human rights as enshrined in International Human Rights Instruments and as a part of the Chinese Constitution. The delegation, as per conversations with the People's Republic of China believes the current day educational and vocational camps in the nation are complying and are in line with the principles and spirit of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other counter-terrorism resolutions. The current day camps are guided by the spirit

of the rule of law and follow well defined procedures in the same, in such a way where no linkage is made to any religion in specific. The delegation notes that terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism has caused enormous damage to people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, which has severely infringed upon human rights, including right to health, life, and development. Facing this grave problem, the measures taken by the People's Republic of China which include the camps as a part are highly appreciated and are to be noted. The delegation further believes that the People's Republic of China has safeguarded the human rights of the people living in the province and has evidently been efficient as seen in the downfall in cases of terrorism in the nation, preventing citizens from becoming influenced by extremist ideas.

**Recommendations:**

- The delegation from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan believes that the vocational and educational training camps along with other measures to curb extremism in the region are an internal matter of the People's Republic of China and hence, require no international interference. The delegation further recalls Article 2 Sub Clause 7 of the UN charter restricting the international community to intervene on matters within the domestic jurisdiction of a nation.
- Reaffirms the OHCHR, International Treaty Bodies and relevant Special Procedures mandate holders to conduct their work in a transparent and impartial manner as based in their mandate with true and credible information, and value the communication with member states.



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