



## [G20 Leaders Take Part in a Virtual Summit to Address the Ongoing Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan](#)

In a virtual summit this week, world leaders from the Group of Twenty (G20) nations and other important stakeholders pledged continued support and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, as the country deals with the aftermath of the recent Taliban takeover there. The circumstances are particularly dire, as the United Nations has warned that Afghanistan is on the brink of a full-scale economic collapse. The nation's economy prior to the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces was around 75% dependent on foreign aid, and now with the respective troop pullouts being finalized, a void has been left regarding the assistance efforts as well. Debate within the G20 was complex as the United States and others expressed concern over the Taliban's role in receiving the aid, however, consensus was reached during the virtual summit to ensure that financial support can be distributed without the re-entering of foreign forces into Afghanistan. The G20 nations and their organizational allies are keen on abiding by the withdrawal commitment, so leaders agreed that they were willing to coordinate assistance efforts with the Taliban if necessary to avert a humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan.

Nations pledged various amounts of aid, with Germany for example committing a substantial 600 million Euros as the European Union (EU) itself pledged 1 billion Euros. As Afghanistan remains on the brink of collapse, the aid's timing is crucial to prevent the situation from deteriorating – as warned by the United Nations Secretary General who called on all nations to support the rebuilding. With much of the international community unwilling to recognize the Taliban as the sovereign government of Afghanistan, the nation has not been able to join the international economy. This therefore prohibits them from certain beneficial economic programs such as trade deals or loans from the World Bank in order to boost development, and makes the country even more dependent on foreign aid and assistance. As a result of nearly 20 years of internal conflict which has decimated Afghanistan's infrastructure, a considerable amount of aid is needed to elevate the nation to a functioning state which can service its civilian population.

The G20 virtual summit made progress in creating a framework to administer aid programs into Afghanistan. While consensus was met to have assistance be done in part via contact with the Taliban, the Italian prime minister – who is the current sitting chair of the G20 – stated that this did not mean formal recognition of the newly formed Taliban government. Multiple nations, in addition to key international organizations, pledged aid and opened the door for continued financial relief. The United Nations Secretary General also called on the removal of the \$9 billion freeze in assets for Afghanistan, and expressed the need for liquidation as opposed to mere aid in order for the Afghan economy to grow in the long term.

While the G20 virtual summit proved to be productive in allowing for a channel of dialogue in order to assist the struggling nation, it is clear that further work is needed beyond the simple distribution of international aid to Afghanistan. Complicated international debate remains over the potential recognition of the newly formed Taliban government, and advocates and human rights organizations continue to warn that the country is at a serious make-or-break point regarding what it will look like in the years to come.