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Interview with the Federation of Anarchism Era about the situation in Afghanistan

ANIKA

24 January 2022

In August 2021, international troops left Afghanistan after about 20 years of military deployment. In a very short time, the Taliban took over province after province without a fight. Predictable, yet seemingly surprising to many. Even during the withdrawal and the accompanying takeover of power by the Taliban, many people were desperately trying to leave the country. The chaos at the airport in Kabul and the handling, especially of so-called local forces, drew international attention to Afghanistan.

At this time we also received an appeal for donations from the Federation of Anarchism Era, in order to be able to bring the local people to safety. Donations were also collected in Karlsruhe to support the people in Afghanistan.

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We contacted the Federation of Anarchism Era at the end of August 2021. We asked them to tell us something about their federation and to give us an insight into their view of the current situation, including explicitly the situation of women and children. Last but not least, we wanted to know how we can support the people on the ground.

At the end of December 2021 we received the answer to our questions, which we have translated into German and reproduce in the English part in the original wording.

“The Afghan anarchist network is small but active. They have always been striving for an anarchist life in whatever situation they were in. For example, if they were teachers and journalists, they could convey the real anarchist message to children and young people. Unfortunately, the fact that this network was able to expand very slowly was mainly due to the harsh situation in Afghanistan. The low economic prosperity of the people, the youth’s unemployment, the lack of regular electricity, and the physical distance between our members caused us to do sporadic activities together. But, even our irregular activities have led many young people to realize the true meaning of anarchism.”

“Afghanistan is a country that has never been at peace without a war. We have always witnessed civil and foreign-instigated wars.

We, the anarchist activists, and others with a political analysis of the situation in our country expect the end outcome would be even worse than what’s unfolding today. Still, for most Afghans, it came as a surprise. In general, the arrival and taking over of the Taliban was discussed during the same agreement between the Taliban and

the United States. During this agreement, the Taliban stated they were ready to negotiate with the government of the Republic of Afghanistan, yet that was postponed every day during the second year of negotiations. The talks were just a delaying tactic readiness of the Taliban's military to take over the country four months after the first foreign troops withdrew from Afghanistan. And war first broke out in the provinces, and they took control of all the provinces very quickly. The people of Afghanistan expected that the Taliban might capture Kabul with much resistance after at least six months of fighting. But unfortunately, the news of the capture of the neighboring province of Kabul was announced in the morning, and it didn't take many hours later for Kabul to fall in the hands of the Taliban's troops, as they say, a bloodless death, in the afternoon. Without even a single shot being fired, panic swept through the city in a matter of hours after the Taliban took over. Most embarrassingly, the ousted Afghan president left the presidential palace by the same evening. And as a result, all groups, statesmen, and politicians fled to every which country. What remained was a fearful city full of helpless people, the victims of Afghanistan, and terrible people with guns who spilled the blood of our compatriots.

Afghanistan is currently going day and night in terror, not knowing what the future holds. The Taliban-held offices have all closed private and government offices, shops have been closed, and despair is evident in the faces of all people. But, politicians and the Taliban are still making deals and allocating power, but uninterested that

the country's people are losing their lives, their children, and their pride due to leaving their homeland. The main perpetrators of this situation are the same rulers and politicians who have always bargained with the blood of the Afghan people and sold them out in order to gain power."

"From the day the talks began, many Taliban opponents were not optimistic about the arrival of the Taliban and did not see their lives as safe at all. All these people, especially women activists, are currently trying to leave Afghanistan. Because the Taliban have destroyed, both through those years of direct rule or indirectly by targeting women and other community activists, what was built in 25 years. The slick words of the Taliban, ostensibly to attract the attention of world governments and prevent chaos, are unbelievable and should not be believed. According to the Taliban, there is a guarantee for women's freedom and relative rights, gained after the efforts and sacrifices of many brave women. Personally, I see my social status and that of other activist women in grave danger by the very existence of Taliban rule."

"As the first step, the most significant help for the people of Afghanistan, especially the women and youth of this country, is for the people of the western countries to put pressure on their governments not to expel any immigrants from their country and to accept all refugees. No happy person wants to leave their home. Today, the people of Afghanistan are forced to do so; they have to live, they have to feed themselves and their children, but there is no bread for satiate hunger and no shelter to hide them from the enemy's

bullets. In the second step, you can donate, not in a generalized way but for a few individuals, so that they can get out of hell called Afghanistan and help their families leave Afghanistan themselves. As we have heard, Europe, especially Germany, has given up on accepting immigrants and has not committed to doing so at all. So I do not know how effective the invitation letter to Germany can be."

In the meantime, Germany has also taken in some of the so-called local forces from Afghanistan. Public attention was attracted, among others, by the initiative Airlift Kabul, which was able to help more than 1100 people to flee by the end of December.

Unfortunately, fears that the Taliban's promised freedoms are nothing but empty words have also become reality. Hundreds of Taliban opponents have been murdered and women's rights have been rapidly eroded.

Afghanistan is in the midst of a humanitarian catastrophe. Not only is the Taliban oppression, the collapsed food supply is hitting the population hard.

Support initiatives like the Kabul Luftbrücke, initiatives that are active on the ground, make people in your environment and politics aware that you care about the people.