



# Afghanistan Weekly

15 JUNE – 21 JUNE 2026

*BY Sakshi | FORESIGHT Research*

## POLITICS

- Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada's Sharia-governance directive continues to frame Taliban messaging through the week, as officials reject renewed international criticism over Herat
- Herat remains under heavy militarisation as morality police enforcement of dress codes continues despite international condemnation of the June 9 crackdown
- Taliban Vice and Virtue Ministry doubles down on dress-code enforcement nationwide, with fresh sweeps reported in Kabul, Kandahar and Balkh following Friday sermons
- Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob's recent Moscow trip and Russia security pact continue to shape commentary on the Taliban's diversifying external partnerships

## ECONOMY

- USD/AFN swings sharply this week, spiking to a multi-month high of ~64.6 on Jun 17 before partially retracing, as Pak-Afghan trade disruption squeezes import flows
- ACAPS and UNDP warnings on compounded Pak-Afghan conflict and regional trade-corridor disruption continue to weigh on the import-dependent economy
- Da Afghanistan Bank holds its benchmark lending rate steady this week even as currency volatility persists, prioritising exchange-rate stability over rate cuts
- Afghanistan's \$11.3bn trade deficit (UNDP, ~60% of GDP) remains the dominant economic narrative as traders report customs delays at Torkham and Spin Boldak

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

- UN Security Council's June 17 deadline for UNAMA's mandate renewal arrives this week; Council weighs a shorter, conditional extension pushed by Washington against China's preference for a fuller renewal
- Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions persist alongside informal Uzbekistan-and-China-mediated backchannel contacts; no formal ceasefire framework emerges this week
- Russia continues to deepen its military partnership with the Taliban following Defence Minister Yaqoob's Moscow visit, drawing renewed Western scrutiny
- China reiterates calls for "calm and restraint" from both Kabul and Islamabad, citing risks to regional connectivity and Belt and Road-linked transit routes

## INTERNAL SECURITY

- Herat remains under tank and checkpoint lockdown for a second week following the June 9 and June 13 crackdowns; sporadic smaller protests continue to be dispersed
- UNAMA and UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett continue pressing for release of detained women and an end to house-to-house searches in Herat
- Pakistan continues mass deportations through Torkham and Spin Boldak, straining Taliban reintegration capacity for returning Afghan migrants
- Sporadic skirmishes continue along the Durand Line even as informal contacts proceed; Taliban forces remain on heightened alert in border provinces

## DEFENCE

- Taliban Ministry of Defence keeps armoured units, including tanks and checkpoints, deployed across Herat for a second consecutive week as the largest urban deployment in months continues
- Cross-border friction with Pakistan persists at a lower intensity this week as both sides keep forces on alert pending the outcome of backchannel mediation
- Taliban one-way attack drone capability remains a point of regional concern, with analysts noting continued use of armed drones near border posts
- Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob's Russia security pact continues to draw attention as a signal of the Taliban's evolving defence-cooperation posture

## HEALTH

- UNDP's 4.7 million food-insecure figure for 2026 continues to anchor humanitarian appeals, with agencies warning of a further deterioration heading into the lean season
- Reports persist of wounded Herat protesters avoiding hospitals for fear of arrest, as MSF and UN continue to flag healthcare-access concerns in the city
- The funding-driven closure of 440+ health clinics nationwide continues to be cited as access to healthcare falls further short for millions of Afghans
- Returnee health crisis continues, with the bulk of 2025's 2.9 million returnees still reporting inability to secure basic necessities amid weak absorption capacity

## EDUCATION

- The Taliban's ban on secondary and higher education for girls remains firmly in place, with the UN's 3.8 million out-of-school girls estimate still framing this week's advocacy
- UN officials reiterate the ~250,000-additional-girls-excluded-per-year figure as the secondary-education ban completes its fifth year without policy change
- UNAMA's concerns over Taliban Decree No. 18 on marriage principles continue to draw international criticism over implications for child marriage
- Drought and water-access strain continue to be linked to education disruption in rural provinces, compounding the climate-driven access gap flagged on World Environment Day

## SOCIETY

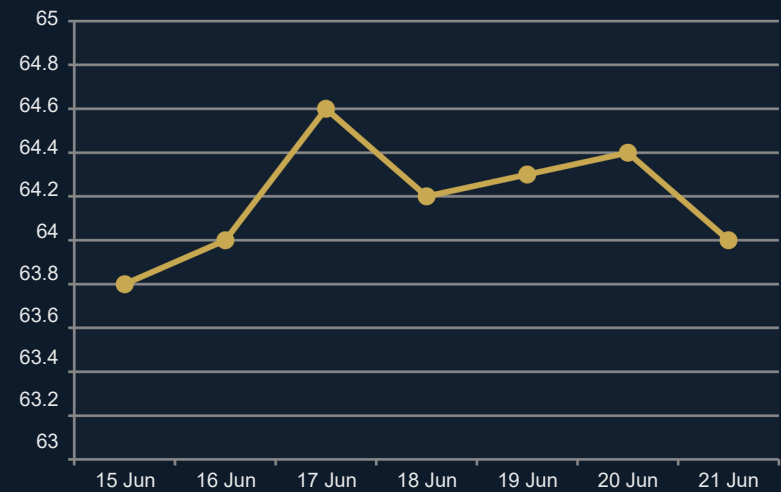
- Solidarity protests in support of detained Herati women continue internationally, including a large diaspora demonstration in Stockholm against Taliban policy
- UNAMA and UN Special Rapporteur Bennett continue to call for accountability over the use of force against the June 9 and June 13 Herat protesters
- Afghan civil society and diaspora groups press European governments for travel restrictions on Taliban officials in response to the Herat crackdown
- Concerns persist over reintegration of mass returnees from Pakistan, with humanitarian agencies flagging strained services in border provinces

| Sr No | Date   | Sector            | News Headlines                                                                                                                            | Source                         |
|-------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 15 Jun | Foreign Affairs   | <a href="#">UN Security Council weighs shorter, conditional UNAMA mandate extension ahead of June 17 deadline as US pushes for review</a> | Security Council Report        |
| 2     | 15 Jun | Internal Security | <a href="#">Herat remains under tank and checkpoint lockdown for second week as Taliban maintains heaviest urban deployment in months</a> | Human Rights Watch             |
| 3     | 16 Jun | Economy           | <a href="#">USD/AFN climbs toward multi-month high near 64.6 as Pak-Afghan trade disruption squeezes import-dependent economy</a>         | Wise / Trading Economics       |
| 4     | 16 Jun | Society           | <a href="#">Solidarity protests for detained Herati women continue internationally as diaspora groups press for accountability</a>        | Radio Pakistan / Diaspora Desk |
| 5     | 17 Jun | Foreign Affairs   | <a href="#">UNAMA's mandate deadline arrives; Security Council negotiations continue over scope and duration of renewal</a>               | UN Peace Operations            |
| 6     | 17 Jun | Politics          | <a href="#">Taliban Vice and Virtue Ministry extends dress-code enforcement sweeps to Kabul, Kandahar and Balkh after Friday sermons</a>  | NBC News                       |
| 7     | 18 Jun | Defence           | <a href="#">Taliban Defence Ministry keeps armoured units on alert along Durand Line amid continuing informal mediation efforts</a>       | RFE/RL                         |

| Sr No | Date   | Sector            | News Headlines                                                                                                                                         | Source                                         |
|-------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 10    | 19 Jun | Education         | <a href="#">UN reiterates that roughly 250,000 additional Afghan girls are excluded from secondary education every year under Taliban policy</a>       | <i>UN News / Wikipedia 2026 in Afghanistan</i> |
| 11    | 19 Jun | Economy           | <a href="#">Da Afghanistan Bank holds benchmark lending rate steady even as afghani volatility persists through the week</a>                           | <i>DAB Exchange Rates</i>                      |
| 12    | 20 Jun | Foreign Affairs   | <a href="#">Russia-Taliban military partnership continues to draw scrutiny following Defence Minister Yaqoob's recent Moscow visit</a>                 | <i>The National Interest</i>                   |
| 13    | 20 Jun | Society           | <a href="#">Hundreds of Afghan refugees rally in Stockholm demanding EU entry-visa ban on Taliban leadership over Herat crackdown</a>                  | <i>Radio Pakistan</i>                          |
| 14    | 20 Jun | Internal Security | <a href="#">Pakistan continues mass deportations of undocumented Afghans through Torkham and Spin Boldak, straining Taliban reintegration capacity</a> | <i>Wikipedia 2026 in Afghanistan</i>           |
| 15    | 20 Jun | Health            | <a href="#">Returnee health crisis deepens further as the bulk of 2025's 2.9 million returnees still report inability to secure basic necessities</a>  | <i>UNDP / UN News</i>                          |
| 16    | 21 Jun | Politics          | <a href="#">Taliban officials dismiss renewed international criticism over Herat, reaffirming Sharia-governance directive issued by Akhundzada</a>     | <i>CFR Global Conflict Tracker</i>             |

| Sr No | Date   | Sector    | News Headlines                                                                                                                                | Source                        |
|-------|--------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 19    | 21 Jun | Society   | <a href="#">Civil society and diaspora groups continue pressing European governments for accountability measures over the Herat crackdown</a> | UN News                       |
| 20    | 21 Jun | Education | <a href="#">Drought and water-access strain in rural provinces continue to compound education disruption flagged on World Environment Day</a> | Wikipedia 2026 in Afghanistan |

USD / Afghan Afghani (AFN) Exchange Rate



AFG Gold Price per Ounce (15 - 21 June 2026)

