

Candidate 1 evidence

Politics Higher Resource Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-47391821 16/11/2024 According to experts from Brown University, the US spent \$2 trillion throughout their time in Afghanistan and also shows the UK and Germany spending \$30 billion and \$19 billion.	
https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9307/#:~:text=The%20Afghan%20Citizens%20Resettlement%20Scheme%20(ACRS)%20was%20launched%20in%20January,one%20of%20three%20referral%20pathways. 15/11/2024 The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) was launched in January 2022 with the aim of resettling up to 20,000 people in the UK over the following few years. Around 11,500 people had arrived under the scheme up to 31 March 2024.	
https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/afghanistan/key-figures.html 20/11/2024 The government of Canada have done this through several programs including, the Special Immigration Measures Program for Afghans who assisted the Government of Canada, a humanitarian program and a permanent residence pathway for extended family members of interpreters. Since November 1 st 2024, Canada have welcomed 55,195 Afghani refugees.	

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To what extent have the West abandoned Afghanistan?

The United States entered the Afghanistan War after the 9/11 attacks because the Taliban were hosting Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and allowing them to practice military procedures. The United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom with the support of the British army which included targeted airstrikes on the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. President Barack Obama in 2014 was the first US President, to announce plans to leave the Afghanistan war, but they did not leave until the Presidency of Joe Biden who had continuously stated throughout his career his disagreement for the Afghan war. In February 2021, the Taliban regained control over Afghanistan and rights quickly began to deteriorate, with more than 84% of female journalists stopping working. The Taliban's control also led to mass malnutrition amongst families, especially in girls, with reports showing girls having a 90% higher mortality rate than boys. When referring to the West, this includes countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Canada and Germany. This assignment will discuss this very important issue by exploring the removal of western troops, the position of women in Afghanistan today, asylum and refuge offered to Afghani citizens and the validity of the West's reasons for leaving. This assignment will argue that the West have abandoned Afghanistan to a large extent.

One key way in which the West have abandoned Afghanistan is by the removal of troops. The West had been continuously supporting Afghanistan in many different ways and keeping the country peaceful and safe to live in. They had been rebuilding the economy without benefitting the Taliban and supporting areas specifically lacking in food security, health, education and agriculture. However, eventually the West decided to leave Afghanistan and in 2021 the United States held peace talks with the Taliban in Abu Dhabi. These peace talks aimed to resolve four main issues; the safe removal of Western troops, initiating a national peace, reducing levels of violence and ensuring that never again would Afghanistan become host to international terrorists. This led to the removal of Western troops over a period of 14 months. This should have meant that Afghanistan was not being abandoned by the West because although they were leaving, they were leaving with a peace contract signed and should have meant that Afghanistan would continue to be a safe place for all Afghani citizens to live in. Whilst Taliban attacks on Western troops quickly began to stop, attacks on Afghani citizens and the Afghan National Defence and Security Foundation (ANDSF) continued to rise and become even more violent. Throughout these attacks, the United States who were the main Western Country to have dealt with the peace talks, did very little to condemn the Taliban even though it was thought to have gone against their peace agreement. This shows the West having abandoned Afghanistan as once they were leaving and the Taliban had stopped attacking Western troops, the US did nothing to help Afghanistan even though this was a clear sign that the Taliban were returning to pre 2001 violence. It was then revealed in

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May 2021 by the US envoy to Afghanistan, foreign policy expert and key creator in the Taliban peace agreement Zalmay Khalilzad that the agreement "did not necessarily call for the Taliban not to attack Afghan forces." This shows the West having abandoned Afghanistan to a large extent because they left Afghanistan quickly with an extremely weak peace deal, allowing Afghanistan to once again be taken over by the Taliban. It was however, embedded in the agreement that the Taliban must hold peace talks with the Afghan Government. This should have meant that the country would be able to continue peacefully, however the peace agreement only specified that the Taliban hold peace talks and did not mean that there had to be an agreement came to amongst both parties. This clearly shows the West having abandoned Afghanistan because not only did they leave the war with an extremely weak peace deal, but they also left in pretence that the Taliban would be working with the Afghan government, however this was clearly not the case.

Another key way which shows how the West have abandoned Afghanistan is the position of women in Afghanistan today. Despite, the Taliban's promises to hold up women's rights in line with Shahira law, women's rights have been deteriorating quickly ever since they regained control in 2021. The Taliban have banned women from taking part in very basic and normal day-to-day activities, restricting their rights and freedoms massively. For example, the Taliban have banned women from; speaking in public, speaking loudly in their own homes, wearing bright clothes, working for the civil service, attending protests, wearing high heels, looking at men in public, looking at men who aren't their husbands, driving a car, travelling without a male companion, reading the Quran, seeing a male doctor and having an education at high school or university level. This shows the West having abandoned Afghanistan, and particularly Afghani women as they are being forced to live under such strict and freedom removing rules, however it can be argued that the West can take little legal action because the Taliban isn't a part of international law, the United Nations cannot take any sort of legal action against them, their only possible source of action is to condemn them. However, it has been shown that this removal of access to health resources, (cannot have an education that meets the requirements to be a doctor but cannot see a male doctor meaning women have been banned from health care), has had a detrimental effect on the health and well being of women in Afghanistan. For example, a UN report from November 2024 estimates that maternal mortality (whilst already very high) has increased by 50%. This shows the West having abandoned Afghanistan because in just four years since their exit, innocent women are dying, simply because of the Taliban's prejudice towards them. The Taliban have also attacked prominent female figures in Afghanistan, specifically women who have spoken out against or acted against them. A specific example of this is female judges who had sentenced Taliban officials to jail time. For

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example, in February 2021 the Hon. Yashini and Hon. Herawi were shot at and killed by masked men on their way to work, this attack also seriously injured two other female judges. This shows how the West have abandoned Afghanistan because women are readily being attacked and killed simply trying to do their jobs, uphold their own rights and serve their country properly.

However, it could be argued that the West have not abandoned Afghanistan, one reason for this would be the asylum and refuge offered to Afghani citizens by the West. The United Kingdom specifically have made great efforts in order to support Afghani's trying to leave their country in order to escape the Taliban. For example, The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) was launched in January 2022 with the aim of resettling up to 20,000 people in the UK over the following years. This scheme is open to anyone who has worked for the HM Government in Afghanistan, no matter their position or how long they worked for. The scheme is also open ended and has no limit on amount of people eligible and supports anyone who has been deemed to be at a serious threat to life by the Taliban or by staying in Afghanistan. Around 11,500 people have arrived under the scheme as of March 31st 2024. This shows how the West have not abandoned Afghanistan because whilst they did leave the country, they have been very supportive of Afghan refugees and have set up secure and tightknit schemes in order to allow them to live in the UK safely without the worry of having to return to Afghanistan. The Government have Canada have also offered many different support schemes for Afghani refugees. For example, they launched the Special Immigration Measures Program for Afghans who assisted the Government of Canada. They have also set up a humanitarian program and a permanent residence pathway for the families of interpreters. As of November 1st 2024, Canada has welcomed 55,195 Afghani refugees. This shows the West having not abandoned Afghanistan because they have offered strong support schemes for refugees, and especially have not abandoned those who have worked for the West during the difficult period of the Afghanistan war.

Another reason people may argue that the West did not abandon Afghanistan is the validity of the West's reasons for leaving Afghanistan. Particularly in America, the Afghanistan war was not popular with the people living there but not just the general population this including prominent political figures such as President Joe Biden, who lost his son in the Afghan war. For example, a Gallup poll from July 2021 shows that 47% of the American electorate felt that it was a mistake to enter the Afghanistan War. Polls from recent years have also shown very similar results and opinions. This shows how the West did not abandon Afghanistan because every government must act on a clear representation of the peoples opinion, and whilst this did cause the West to leave

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Afghanistan it did mean that America was acting democratically in line with its own people who did not agree with or want America to be a part of the war. The War in Afghanistan was also extremely economically challenging on the West, most action taken was being funded by Western countries due to Afghanistan economically struggling. According to experts from Brown University, the US spent \$2 trillion throughout their time in Afghanistan and also shows the UK and Germany spending \$30 billion and \$19 billion. This shows how the West did not abandon Afghanistan because the economic challenge on the West was becoming too much and was likely leading to an increase in taxes to continue funding it, the Western people also were not happy with the amount of financial cost it was causing as it was seen as a war with no end because the West had been there for 20 years and there was no clear sign of an end or resolution until the peace agreements were held. The war in Afghanistan also resulted in the loss of many lives across the whole of the West. Figures show that there was over 20,000 deaths across western troops, including allied fighters, US officials and army generals. This shows how the West did not abandon Afghanistan because the West also had to take into account the rising number of lost lives amongst their own people, and they also had to act upon what was right for their own country, even if it did mean having to leave the War and Afghanistan.

In conclusion, the West abandoned Afghanistan to a large extent. Upon leaving Afghanistan, the West left the people with an extremely weak and self-serving peace agreement with the Taliban, which did virtually nothing for Afghanistan and its people leaving the Taliban in a position to take over the country once again. Even when the Taliban began to return to violent attacks and tactics, the West did almost nothing to support the Afghani people or Government after they had left. Essentially, leaving the country wide open to being controlled by the Taliban, which is exactly what has happened. The West have also left the Afghani women, extremely vulnerable and in an extremely unsafe position. Women are being stripped of their human rights and normal activities which anyone else would take for granted. Women have also been banned from health care, a basic right which is leading to mountainous deaths of innocent women who need health care but cannot receive it because of the Taliban's prejudice and extremely disgusting rules which they are imposing across women all over the country. Even if the men in their families were to stand against the Taliban, this would result in their own murder and possibly the women whom they are related to also. Therefore, Afghanistan is an extremely worrying position at this very moment, as the Taliban are back in full control of the country, people are being murdered daily for simply trying to take back the rights of their country and themselves.