



AFGHAN RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Afghanistan Research Initiative

The University of Central Asia’s Afghanistan Research Initiative (ARI) aims to help sustain the research and capacity gains made over the last decade and continue producing knowledge critical to the country’s present and future. ARI, a programme of the University’s Graduate School of Development, is supported by a three-year grant from Canada’s International Development Research Centre and the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada. ARI is based at the University’s main office in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic (ari@ucentralasia.org).

Youth Voice for Climate Justice Conference in Kabul

The “Youth Voice for Climate Justice: A Dialogue for Afghanistan’s Future” conference was held at Kabul University on January 22, 2025, with 200 participants. The conference discussed sustainable solutions and amplified the voices of communities most affected by climate change, emphasizing the role of young leaders in these initiatives. The event was organized by the Samsoor Watan Environmental Organization and the Faculty of Environmental Sciences at Kabul University, with support from the University of Central Asia.



The conference participants included youth leaders, activists, environmental experts, and representatives from government agencies and non-governmental organizations. The keynote address, delivered by Professor M. Dawood Shirzad on “Silencing Is the Real Crime,” stressed the importance of including youth and indigenous elders in climate discussions, which advances intergenerational responsibility in climate advoca-

cy. Breakout group discussions focused on elaborating various issues and formulating policy recommendations.

The event was initiated by Dr. Mujib Rahman Ahmadzai, a doctoral grant recipient, staff member of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, and Senior Advisor of the Samsoor Watan Environmental Organization.

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The University of Central Asia is a private, not-for-profit, secular, regional university founded in 2000 through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan, ratified by their respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. The Graduate School of Development is the home for multi-disciplinary research on Central Asia’s social, economic, and cultural development conducted by five entities (www.ucentralasia.org).



Dr. Jalal Naser Faqiryar

Dr. Jalal Naser Faqiryar is a scholar, civil engineer, and water resources specialist. He has an MEng in Water Engineering and Management from the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand and a

triple master's degree from Oregon State University, the University for Peace, and IHE-Delft. He began his career with the Western Basins Water Resources Management Project in western Afghanistan, where he contributed significantly to the planning and oversight of hydraulic structures, hydrological analysis, and quality control of water infrastructure projects. Later, he served in key roles at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, undertaking projects that involved designing and reviewing irrigation, and natural resource project work plans (including Qush Tepa National Irrigation Canal) and providing strategic advice to the Deputy Minister for Irrigation and Natural Resources. Dr. Faqiryar was appointed Director General of the Kabul River Basin. He later served as Head of the Palaces and Kabul River Project at the National Development Corporation under the Office of the President of Afghanistan. Currently, he is conducting research for IHE-Delft on water issues in Central Asia and Afghanistan.



Dr. Ahmad Farid Asadullahi

Ahmad Farid Asadullahi was born in Jaghori District, Ghazni Province. He studied Farsi-Dari Language and Literature at Kabul University and completed his master's degree in Farsi-Dari literature

at the State Teachers Training University of Tajikistan. His doctoral dissertation was "The Resistance Poetry in Farsi-Dari of Afghanistan".

Dr. Asadullahi has taught Farsi-Dari literature at Ghazni University and in the Department of Farsi-Dari at Kabul University. To date, he has published a book in Russian titled *The Resistance Poetry in Farsi-Dari* and several academic articles on contemporary Farsi-Dari poetry in scientific journals of Tajikistan. Over the past two decades, alongside his university teaching, he has actively worked on institutionalizing the values of democracy and human rights within civil society organizations.

Dr. Asadullahi is currently an Assistant Professor of Farsi-Dari Language and Literature at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. Additionally, he teaches Farsi-Dari as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Bryn Mawr College.

ARI PUBLIC LECTURES

4 November 2024

Economic Management, Aid Dependency and State Failure in Afghanistan

Speaker: Dr. Kambaiz Rafi, Political Economist, UK.

Discussant: Dr. Lutfi Rahimi, ARI Non-Resident Research Fellow.

This lecture draws on recently completed research to explore a contradiction within the liberal approach to state-building. In postwar liberal state-building efforts, a market economy is often expected to generate sufficient revenue through private sector taxes. However, these tax revenues typically fall short, and tax institutions are frequently overlooked in reconstruction. Consequently, states become heavily reliant on foreign aid managed by external agencies, ultimately undermining the development of the state's bureaucracy. The lecture introduces the concept of a "deferred revenue regime," arguing that this reliance on ODA (Official Development Assistance) encapsulates the inherent contradictions of the state-building model. Watch the full lecture [here](#).

28 November 2024

Preserving the Old City of Herat and its Surroundings

Speaker: Dr. Gulam Mohammad Asim, ARI Non-Resident Research Fellow, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan.

Discussant: Ajmal Maiwandi, Chief Executive Officer, the Aga Khan Cultural Services, Afghanistan.

Herat, the regional capital of Western Afghanistan, is an ancient city with a large historic architectural ensemble which is on the Tentative List of World Heritage sites with UNESCO. The lecture reviews the preservation activities of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture from 2005 to 2011. It presents current research that involved multiple surveys of the city's experts, stakeholders, and selected residents to propose an approach to preserving and restoring the historic landscape of Herat. Protecting the city's architectural heritage as an asset for future generations requires sound policies based on research and a balanced approach. Watch the full lecture [here](#).

ARI PUBLIC LECTURES

25 January 2025

Food Security and Transborder Water Governance: Case Study of the Qush Tepa Irrigation Canal, Afghanistan

Speaker: Jalal Naser Faqiryar, Delft Institute for Water Education, the Netherlands.

Discussant: Dr. Arnaud Caiserman, Senior Research Fellow, Mountain Societies Research Institute, University of Central Asia, Tajikistan.

Built in northern Afghanistan by diverting water from the Amu Darya, the Qush Tepa Irrigation Canal is converting approximately 550,000 hectares of desert into

farmland, significantly contributing to addressing the country's urgent food security issues. Initially conceived by Daud Khan's government in 1973, the canal remained unrealized until the Taliban came to power, at which point it became a priority project starting in 2022. Because the canal will reduce the annual water supply to downstream countries by approximately 6.5 billion cubic meters, it has raised significant concerns among countries such as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. This lecture examines the canal's potential impact on increasing agricultural productivity, the management challenges associated with the canal, and the possibilities for regional cooperation. Watch the full lecture [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS



The banner features the logo of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) on the left. The central text reads: "Herat Security Dialogue (HSD-XII) 'Afghanistan: Reviving Hope; Synergetic Efforts' 24-25 February, 2025 - Madrid, Spain". To the right, there is a graphic of several hands holding each other, with each hand decorated with the flag of a different country. Below the hands, there is text in Persian: "دوازدهمین دور گفتگوهای امنیتی هرات «افغانستان: رستاخیز امید؛ تلاش مشترک» ۵-۶ حوت ۱۴۰۳ - مادرید، اسپانیا". A blue button with the text "LEARN MORE >>" is positioned below the main text.



The banner features the RedR UK logo at the top left, with the tagline "people and skills for disaster relief". The main text in a red box reads: "INCLUSIVE APPROACHES IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION". A blue button with the text "LEARN MORE >>" is located at the bottom right.

Online Training Course

Organizer: RedR UK.

This is an interactive online training on inclusive approaches in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Afghanistan.

Date: 25 February 2025, 18:00 - 20:30 GMT+6.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

October 2024: The Taliban Conundrum: Unraveling the Complexities of (non)Recognition.

Lulu Publications.

Author: Ali Ahmadi.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

January 2025: Human Capital Impacts of In Utero Exposure to War Conflict in Afghanistan.

National Bureau of Economic Research.

Authors: Erkmen, G. et al.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

January 2025: In Pursuit of Virtue: Men's views on the Islamic Emirate's restrictions on women.

Afghanistan Analysts Network.

Author: Bijlert, M. V.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

January 2025: Recommended Reads from AAN Writers: The poetry of peace, magical realism in Logar, class in Nuristan, Sufis. *AAN.*

Author: Kate Clark.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

January 2025: Reigniting the Flames of Justice: ICC seeks arrest of the Islamic Emirate's Supreme Leader and Chief Justice. *Afghanistan Analysts Network.*

Authors: Reid, R. & Shapour, R.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

February 2025: Polio Cases on the Increase in Afghanistan: How is the Emirate handling immunisation? *Afghanistan Analysts Network.*

Authors: Bjelica, J. & Himmat, N. K.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

UPCOMING EVENT



MACFEST 2025

Afghani Women Artists

Hello from Afghanistan!

SATURDAY, 3RD MAY
14:00 - 15:30 BST
DIGITAL EVENT

FREE TICKETS:
EVENTBRITE/MACFEST



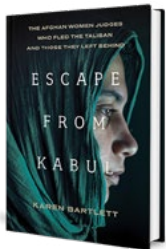
Organizer: **Muslim Arts and Cultural Festival.**

The Afghani women artists will share their individual exhibitions of paintings. They will also discuss what it is like as artists, as women creatives, living in Afghanistan under the Taliban rule.

Date: **3 May 2025 | 06:00 – 07:30 (GMT-7).**

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

NEW BOOKS



Escape from Kabul

By *Karen Bartlett*

When they were murdered, Qadria Yasini and Zakia Herawi were professional, educated women going about their daily lives, but as two out of nearly three hundred Afghan women judges, their role and responsibilities symbolized everything the Taliban despised, and feared.

Publication date: August 2025.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



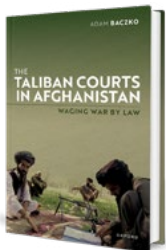
I Try Not to Think of Afghanistan: Lithuanian Veterans of the Soviet War

By *Anna Reich*

This book includes photographs and commentaries from Lithuanian veterans of the Soviet War in Afghanistan, addressing the lasting realities of war and its effects on those conscripted to fight. Anna Reich gives insight into the experiences of not only the Lithuanian veterans from the Soviet War in Afghanistan but also veterans from all countries.

Published: 15 May 2024.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



The Taliban Courts in Afghanistan: Waging War by Law

By *Adam Baczko*

The Taliban gained the trust of the Afghan population and regulated social relations by establishing hundreds of courts in rural areas, offering a predictable and seemingly impartial justice system during decades of conflict. Unlike

the corrupt legal system set up by the international coalition, the Taliban courts emphasized due process.

Published: 23 October 2023.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Undergraduate, Masters, PhD

Fields: Various.

Availability: Afghans and other nationalities.

Fund: Fully funded.

Deadline:

20 February 2025.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



UNIVERSITY
OF THE PEOPLE
Tuition-Free Online University

Study Level: Masters.

Fields: Various.

Availability: Afghans and other nationalities.

Fund: Fully funded.

Deadline:

March / May 2025.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FINLAND GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Bachelors, Masters & PhD



study
inFINLAND.fi

Fields: Various.

Fund: Fully funded.

Availability: International applicants.

Deadline: Open.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



THE WORLD BANK

World Bank Scholarship 2025 An Opportunity Beyond Borders!

Study Level: Masters, PhD.

Fund: Fully funded.

Availability: Non-EU nationalities.

Deadline: 5 March 2025.

[LEARN MORE >>](#)