

## **Abstract**

### **EVALUATING UNHCR'S CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN TALIBAN-LED AFGHANISTAN**

Abstract of the thesis by

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*"We brought blankets to protect them from the cold, only to realize they had no roofs to shelter under."*

Linda Polman

The main objective of this thesis is to analyze the main obstacles that UNHCR faces while putting monetary support programs for IDPs in Afghanistan under Taliban rule into action. Cash-based interventions (CBIs) have been a popular choice for providing humanitarian relief because of their adaptability, effectiveness, and capacity to empower beneficiaries. The distinct socio-political and economic terrain of Afghanistan, however, presents formidable challenges to the effective implementation of these initiatives. UNHCR's cash assistance has become a critical element of humanitarian efforts in numerous crisis-affected countries, including Yemen, Syria, and Afghanistan. By offering direct financial support to displaced individuals, these programs strive to meet urgent needs while empowering beneficiaries with greater autonomy in managing their resources. The UNHCR has been putting monetary aid programs into place in a number of nations that are experiencing humanitarian crises, such as Yemen, Syria, and many more. These initiatives give displaced people the crucial help they need to satisfy their basic requirements in a flexible and dignified manner. UNHCR has provided monetary aid in a number of countries as part of its humanitarian response, Afghanistan being one of them. This kind of financial assistance is not brand-new; it has been extensively utilized in many areas to successfully meet the various demands of marginalized people. These comparisons provide valuable insights into how local economic

conditions, security environments, and cultural dynamics affect the implementation and success of cash-based interventions in Afghanistan.

Using a case study methodology, the study will take a qualitative research approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of UNHCR's financial aid initiatives. Semi-structured interviews with UNHCR employees, aid beneficiaries, and pertinent NGOs will be used as data-gathering techniques. Program documentation and reports will also be reviewed. In addition, content analysis will be used to look at scholarly and media sources related to the topic. A comprehensive grasp of the operational difficulties and the real effects of financial aid on the ground is made possible by this dual approach. While document evaluation and content analysis give a broader perspective on the program's efficacy and opportunities for development, qualitative interviews provide depth and context by illuminating the complex experiences and perspectives of people participating. The results show that while CBIs play a crucial role in promoting local economic development and offering immediate relief, their effectiveness is largely dependent on their capacity to successfully negotiate the challenging operating environment. In particular, banking regulations make it more difficult to conduct the financial transactions required for these initiatives, and security issues seriously impede the timely and secure provision of monetary assistance. The purchasing power of cash transfers can be impacted by market volatility, and access to aid is influenced by sociocultural issues, particularly those related to gender.

Recommendations for improving the efficiency of financial aid in Afghanistan are included in the thesis conclusion. To make sure that aid does not unintentionally lead to inflation or market reliance, these proposals highlight the necessity of thorough market evaluations. To further secure beneficiaries and aid workers, security protocols need to be reinforced. To address gender issues and other sociocultural variables and guarantee that all vulnerable populations have fair access to help inclusive aid techniques are essential. By offering practical insights to policymakers and humanitarian organizations, this research seeks to further the conversation on humanitarian aid in conflict-affected areas and enhance the planning and execution of cash-based initiatives.