

Environmental Issues

Current Environmental Issues

The war in Afghanistan has incurred severe physical and socioeconomic effects, which have, in turn, aggravated its existing environmental problems. Of these problems, the most acute include the following:

- deforestation -- due to the demand for fuel for heating in harsh winters
- desertification
- soil degradation and erosion
- water pollution due to contamination from unsanitary living conditions
- water scarcity as a result of decimated irrigation systems
- contamination of food sources -- as a consequence of the use of banned agro-chemicals

Natural Hazards

Major natural hazards in Afghanistan include damaging earthquakes that tend to occur in the Hindu Kush mountains, and flooding.

Environmental Jurisdiction and Regulation

Regulation and protection of the environment in Afghanistan come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture (Interim Minister of Agriculture: Sekander Qiyam) and the Ministry of Water and Power. The Taliban Militia suspended activities under both organizations in September 1996 after the seizure of Kabul. The Taliban Ministry of Rural Development was established after the seizure in September of 1996.