

Biden Moves to Give Half of Afghanistan's Frozen Funds to 9/11 Families

Millions of Afghans are facing starvation, but the US is keeping sanctions on the country

By [Dave DeCamp](#)

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President Biden on Friday took steps to [take half of the \\$7 billion of Afghan funds held by the US Federal Reserve](#) and give it to the relatives of victims of the September 11th, 2001, attacks as millions of Afghans are facing starvation.

Biden signed an executive order that will make \$3.5 billion available for 9/11 families through lawsuits. The other half will be put into a trust with the intent of being used for humanitarian aid for Afghanistan.

The US seized the \$7 billion as the Taliban took over Afghanistan, and another \$2 billion in Afghan reserves held in other countries was frozen. In the wake of the US withdrawal, Afghans are facing a dire humanitarian crisis. [The UN's World Food Program estimates](#) more than half of Afghanistan's population, about 23 million people, are facing extreme hunger.

On top of the frozen funds, the US still maintains sanctions on Taliban leaders who are now part of the Afghan government. The sanctions discourage international companies and banks from doing business in Afghanistan, making it harder for Afghans to find relief.

History shows that sanctions and other economic pressure do little to change the target government and only [hurt the civilian population](#). The Afghan people also had nothing to do with the September 11th attacks, Osama bin Laden just happened to be in Afghanistan when they happened, and [the Taliban had offered to hand him over](#).

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Dave DeCamp is the news editor of Antiwar.com, follow him on Twitter @decampdave.

Featured image: Kathy Kelly and Maya Evans walk with children at the Chamin-E-Babrak refugee camp in Kabul, Afghanistan, January 2014. (Abdulhai Darya)

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