

Ugly truth about foreign aid in Afghanistan

By [Global Research](#)

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Exorbitant sums of international aid to Afghanistan are being lavished by Western aid agencies on their own officials in the conflict-stricken country.

“In the United States, Britain, and other countries, people work and taxpayers pay money that goes to help Afghanistan to build roads, dams, and electricity lines,” Ramazan Bashardost, an Afghan parliament member and former planning minister, said.

Bashardost added, “But when the money comes to Afghanistan, it’s spent on those people who have cars costing USD 60,000 and who live in houses with a USD 15,000 monthly rent. This money goes to these expenses — 90 percent logistics and administration.”

The high expenditure on paying, protecting and accommodating Western aid officials in palatial style helps to explain why Afghanistan ranks 174th out of 178th on a UN ranking of countries’ wealth.

Districts across Afghan capital city, Kabul, have been taken over or rebuilt to accommodate Westerners working for aid agencies or embassies.

“I have just rented out this building for USD 30,000 a month to an aid organization. It was so expensive because it has 24 rooms with en-suite bathrooms as well as armored doors and bullet-proof windows,” Torialai Bahadery, the director of Property Consulting Afghanistan said.

The cupidity of aid agencies and the foreign contractors that every bedroom should have an en-suite bathroom comes despite the fact that 77 percent of Afghans lack access to clean water.

At a time when extreme poverty is turning young Afghans to fight for the Taliban, foreign consultants in Kabul can command salaries of USD 250,000 to USD 500,000 a year.

The high degree of wastage of aid money in Afghanistan has even troubled the Afghan government.

“I was in Badakhshan province in northern Afghanistan, which has a population of 830,000, most of whom depend on farming,” said Matt Waldman, the head of policy and advocacy for Oxfam in Kabul.

“The entire budget of the local department of agriculture, irrigation and livestock, which is extremely important for farmers in Badakhshan, is just USD 40,000. This would be the pay of an expatriate consultant in Kabul for a few months.”

The ugly truth about foreign aid in Afghanistan surfaces at the time when the country has seen rising levels of violence in recent months. Taliban insurgents have carried out a string of deadly attacks and now control large parts of the countryside where Afghan and international forces do not have enough manpower to maintain a permanent presence.

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