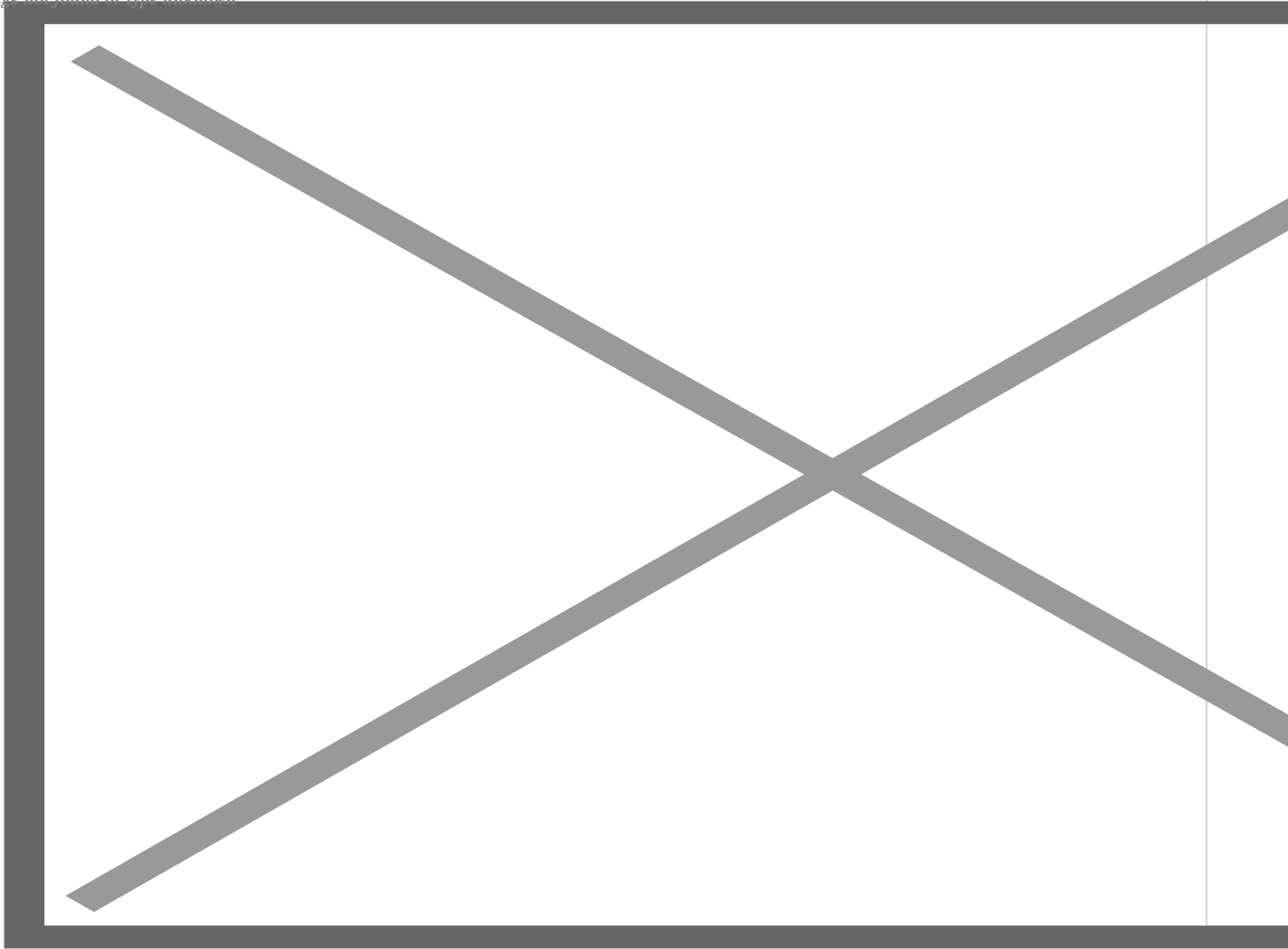


UN calls on Afghanistan's neighbors to keep borders open

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The United Nations has urged countries neighboring Afghanistan to keep their borders open

United Nations, August 14 (RHC)-- The United Nations has urged countries neighboring Afghanistan to keep their borders open as conflict escalates, warning of impending food shortages and the need of many Afghans to seek refuge internationally.

On Friday, the UN warned of an impending humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan as conflict intensifies there amid a highly effective Taliban offensive. Speaking at a briefing in Geneva, Switzerland, a spokesperson for the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) urged states around conflict-ridden Afghanistan to keep their borders open.

“An inability to seek safety may risk innumerable civilian lives. UNHCR stands ready to help national authorities scale up humanitarian responses as needed,” Shabia Mantoo stated. Citing concerns from the World Food Programme that food shortages in Afghanistan were “quite dire” and worsening, she noted that the situation had the hallmarks of a humanitarian crisis.

On Friday, the Taliban claimed that Afghanistan’s second-largest city, Kandahar, had fallen to the militant group. The Islamic fundamentalist organization said it had captured hundreds of weapons and vehicles, as well as large amounts of ammunition during the operation.

With vast swathes of the country now under the control of the Taliban, and an assault of the capital Kabul likely, there is an increasing concern for the people of Afghanistan, particularly those who worked alongside allied forces during the two-decade-long conflict.

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