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I had the chance to speak to Soraya (not her real name), an Afghan student waiting to return to Singapore.

The interview was done over Zoom from her home in Kabul, where she is waiting with her family for the chance to evacuate. It was surreal. (1/8)

She told of how she was told not to come to work as soon as the Taliban took over. Her mother was told to stay at home as well. Her brother, however, could still go to work.

She stayed at home for 8 days when the Taliban took over, afraid to go out. (2/8)

One of the Taliban took over as the CEO of her company, and there are discussions now on how women should work in separate rooms from men.

Outside, most wore traditional attire and images of women on billboards and posters were torn down or vandalised. (3/8)

She was supposed to return to Singapore to start her semester and had applied to enter Singapore since June but could not get approval due to Covid-19.

Then the Taliban came.

"If I had gotten my approval earlier, today I would be back at school just doing my classes." (4/8)

Her family has small bags packed with the bare essentials, always on standby to leave whenever they get the call to evacuate. They are on several evacuation lists.

"We're leaving everything else behind, including our house," she told me. (5/8)

She had her camera turned on and behind her was a house full of furniture, books on shelves, vases. All this will be left behind.

"I'm completely shifting home," she said. "I have never had such an experience so I'm just waiting to see what will happen." (6/8)

She does not know where her new home will be. She wants to return to Singapore to complete her studies, but that, too, is not even a priority.

Covid-19, education, all put on the backburner. It was hard for me to imagine a reality like that. (7/8)

Her hope? That the Taliban will be defeated.

"My biggest hope for now is that even if I leave the country, things will get better and I'll have a chance to come back... I just love this country so much." (8/8)

Read more: <https://t.co/0L95xyMiyw>