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The Afghans have a new president, but hopes for better times are still distant.

The new president, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, entered office on Sunday after a bruising campaign. He is seen by some as a symbol of change, but his presidency is the latest in a series of promises to improve the country's lot that have failed to materialize.

Ghani's victory was cheered by many Afghans, who had become fed up with the corruption and violence that have long characterized their country. But the challenges facing the new president are daunting.

The Taliban, who have been fighting a guerrilla war against the government for more than a decade, have said they will not recognize Ghani unless he is sworn in at a ceremony in Kabul.

The president-elect has also been criticized for his lack of experience in politics and for his ties to the Taliban. Some fear that he may be too willing to compromise with the militants in order to achieve peace.

Ghani has promised to fight corruption and to bring stability to the country, but it remains to be seen whether he will be able to deliver on these promises.

The United States and other Western nations have offered support to Ghani, but there are concerns that he may not be able to rely on the international community to help him.

For now, the focus is on the upcoming elections for the lower house of parliament, scheduled for September. If Ghani is to have a chance of implementing his promises, he will need to win the support of the people and the parliament.

But with the Taliban still active in many parts of the country, and with the economy in a state of flux, it is unclear whether Ghani will be able to tackle the challenges facing Afghanistan.

The future of Afghanistan remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: it will take a lot more than a new president to bring about a lasting peace.