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# Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2025

March 2026



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Rawadari is an Afghan human rights organisation that aims to deepen and grow the human rights culture of Afghanistan, ultimately reducing the suffering of all Afghans, especially women and girls. Rawadari helps build an Afghan human rights movement, monitors human rights violations, and pursues justice and accountability for violations. Rawadari works with individuals and collectives inside and outside Afghanistan.

*Note: This report was originally written in Dari/Persian and has been translated to English.*

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## List of Acronyms

CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
DFA	De-facto Authority
GDI	General Directorate of Intelligence
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MOIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MPVPV	Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice
NDS	National Directorate of Security
NLF	National Liberation Front
NRF	National Resistance Front
PD	Police District
PTWA	People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

# Introduction

This report is based on the information and evidence gathered from primary sources inside Afghanistan, including direct interviews with victims, survivors, eyewitnesses, and informed local actors. It examines the state of human rights in Afghanistan in 2025. The report covers civil and political rights, women's rights, and the condition of vulnerable ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan in 2025, identifying trends and patterns of violations as well as referencing verbal or written decrees by the De-facto authorities (DFA) impacting the human rights situation in this period.

**Based on Rawadari's findings, major violations of civil and political rights as well as the rights of women and ethnic and religious minorities have continued and intensified in 2025. The restrictions have additionally taken on a more systematic and organized character partly due to the implementation of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) law, instated in August 2024.** Targeted and extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, and other cruel and degrading treatment have increased significantly compared to 2024. The findings also indicate that former government employees, journalists, human rights defenders, and individuals accused of cooperating with opposition groups continue to be targeted for extrajudicial killings, detention, enforced disappearance, and other retaliatory actions, without any significant, concrete steps from the DFA to end these violations.

**The human rights situation of women has further deteriorated in 2025 owing to increased local restrictions and implementation of the PVPV law. This deterioration is driven by the continued denial of access to education, employment, freedom of movement, and justice, along with more hard-line enforcement of restrictions by the DFA. With the enforcement of the PVPV law, discrimination, restrictions, and social control over women have become more organized and far-reaching, extending into many more aspects of their personal and social lives.** As confirmed by the People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>, the violations of women's rights amount to gender persecution as defined under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

At the meantime, the Taliban courts, during this reporting period, have implemented or upheld a wide range of corporal punishments, including flogging and other forms of degrading punishment. These practices clearly conflict with fundamental principles prohibiting torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

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<sup>1</sup> People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan. Judgement.  
<https://afghanistantribunal.com/documents/judgement-peoples-tribunal-for-women-of-afghanistan/>

Ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan have faced discrimination in access to employment and economic opportunities, public resources and services, as well as restrictions on the freedom to practice their religious rituals.

The absence of independent monitoring mechanisms such as independent human rights bodies or independent judiciary inside the country, along with the continued impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations, has led to the persistence and expansion of various forms of abuse, while denying access to justice to victims' and survivors. We call for immediate and concrete action by the DFA, international community, the United Nations (UN), and other relevant stakeholders to protect the fundamental rights of the people of Afghanistan.

## Methodology

Rawadari has engaged in collecting information and documenting cases of human rights violations in Afghanistan throughout 2025. **Our monitoring team have conducted interviews with victims & their family members, eyewitnesses, human rights defenders, activists, journalists, school teachers, university professors, government employees, defence lawyers, local elders, health sector workers, and relevant national and international organizations in 30 provinces of the country.**<sup>2</sup> The data and evidence, after analysis and verification, has been compiled it in the form of monthly reports and recorded and stored in a secure database.

The process of collecting information, documents, and evidence related to human rights violations has been carried out by Rawadari's local monitors under the direct supervision of our research and documentation team. In addition to interviews with sources, our team on the ground has collected supplementary evidence such as official correspondence, judicial documents, photographs, audio files, hospital and clinic records and reports and information published by the DFA ministries and institutions. Furthermore, to ensure the credibility, accuracy, and quality of the information, Rawadari's research team has provided specialized training and guidance to local monitors throughout the year.

The findings of this report include verified information obtained directly from primary sources. There were reported cases where due to security limitations and access challenges, it was not possible to credibly verify information or obtain sufficient evidence. Such cases have been excluded from this report.

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<sup>2</sup> Herat, Nimroz, Farah, Ghor, Daikundi, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Kabul, Parwan, Panjshir, Maidan-Wardak, Samangan, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Takhar, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kandahar, Urozgan, Zabul, Helmand, Bamiyan, Logar, Faryab, Balkh, Jawzjan, Nuristan, Laghman and Sar-e-Pul

This report compares the findings of 2025 with numbers of violations in 2023 and 2024 as documented by Rawadari. The report aims to present a clear, comparative picture of prominent patterns of human rights violations, the type and nature of violations, as well as the characteristics of victims and targeted groups.

Given the risks of human rights documentation under the DFA, the limitations imposed on access to information, the censorship and restrictions imposed on local media and security concerns of survivors and their families, it is hard to verify every reported case. Thus, the number of violations presented in this report might be lower than the number of actual cases.

The first section of the report is dedicated to assessing the situation of civil and political rights, and subsequent sections examine the human rights situation of women and vulnerable ethnic and religious groups. Since Rawadari has already published the human rights situation report<sup>3</sup> for the first half of 2025, the examples and cases described in various sections of this report primarily include the examples recorded in the second half of the year.

## Limitations on Access to Information

Our findings indicate that the DFA in Afghanistan have continued to adopt and implement more restrictive measures on access to information in 2025. **The General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention Vice (MPVPV), and the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) are the three entities that primarily monitor the activities of media as well as ordinary citizens who are social media users for compliance with restrictions and censorship imposed by the DFA. These entities, in numerous cases, have exerted pressure, threats, detention, torture, and mistreatment against those who have published information relating to human rights violations.**

Furthermore, human rights defenders, journalists, and local and national media outlets are not permitted to collect or publish information about security incidents, criticism of the de-facto authorities and cases of human rights violations without written permission from the MoIC and its provincial departments. As documented by Rawadari throughout 2025, the DFA have arrested and tortured human rights defenders and journalists who acted in defiance of this directive, charging them with “espionage for foreigners” or “propaganda against the system.” This situation has caused widespread self-censorship and underreporting of human rights violations in the country. It has also had a direct impact on the personal freedom and security of human rights defenders and journalists to the extent that a number of local journalists were compelled to leave

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<sup>3</sup> Rawadari. Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January- June 2025. <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-mid-year-human-rights-situation-reportjanuary-june-30-2025/>

their places of residence and relocate to other provinces in 2025.

Additionally, the DFA continue to threaten and exert pressure on victims and their family members, eyewitnesses, and other informed local sources to hide and obscure evidence of human rights violations. The Taliban have directly threatened family members and relatives of victims regarding major human rights violation incidents, including torture, enforced disappearance, and targeted and extrajudicial killings, to prevent from providing any information in this regard to media or human rights organizations. There are also reports that in some cases related to extrajudicial and suspicious killings, the Taliban have told victims' families to share false and inaccurate testimonies with the media to conceal the truth.

Our findings indicate that the Taliban obtain written commitments from all prisoners and detainees, and especially individuals who have been subjected to torture or other forms of mistreatment during detention, not to talk to any person or entity about their experiences or observations in detention centres. This has severely limited access to direct and open testimonies and indicates the risk of retaliatory actions against these individuals in case they testify about their experiences. Furthermore, there is no regular, independent monitoring of all places of detention in Afghanistan. Additionally, officials and employees at places of detention are strictly prohibited from providing any information to media and human rights organizations.

**All DFA government institutions are prohibited from sharing information with media or other individuals without prior permission from competent authorities. Reports indicate that in some parts of the country, including the south-western region, the government employees are prohibited from the use of smartphones with cameras while in the office. Government employees in this region are also not allowed to conduct interviews or have any cooperation with the Afghan media in exile.**

In this regard, the Taliban's Department of Information and Culture in two provinces, Parwan and Nangarhar, has warned media and local journalists that in case of any cooperation with media operating outside the country they will be arrested and imprisoned by the GDI.

In addition to these restrictions, the implementation of the "PVPV" law has also led to the further expansion of fear among citizens and media and has created serious obstacles to freedom of expression. This law prevents conversation between women and men who are not related to them, it bans the broadcast of women's voice on media as well as broadcasting of images of "living beings". The law further bans the media from broadcasting content contradictory to de-facto laws and regulations or content leading to "humiliation or insult to Muslims". While not all these restrictions are enforced in full, they have created an environment of constant anxiety and fear in local media and journalists and have allowed authorities to further restrict and harass all national

and local media operating inside Afghanistan. The nationwide internet service blackout in September 2025, which was later rescinded, was also carried out with the deliberate aim of imposing sweeping restrictions on the free flow of information.

The Taliban have systematically restricted access to information and have prevented the exposure of human rights violations in 2025, a situation that has limited victims' access to justice and accountability mechanisms and has also led to widespread self-censorship and reluctance to provide information. The findings of this report thus need to be contextualized within this broader environment of severe restrictions on access to information that severely impact human rights documentation.

Part One

# Violations of Civil and Political Rights



Photo (C) Sayed Habib Bidell / Alamy

Civil and political rights are among the most fundamental human rights, recognized under international human rights instruments including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),<sup>4</sup> the Convention against Torture (CAT),<sup>5</sup> and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).<sup>6</sup> Under these instruments, member states are obligated not only to protect these rights but to actively create the conditions necessary for citizens to fully enjoy them.<sup>7</sup> Since the Taliban's return to power, access to civil and political rights has been severely restricted through decrees, policies and actions of the DFA. Additionally, the DFA are involved in numerous violations of civil and political rights. In 2025, Rawadari has documented increases in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, as well as cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment.

## Violations of the Right to Life

The right to life is a non-derogable right, meaning that under no circumstances, not even during war, armed conflict, or other states of public emergency, are states permitted to suspend them.<sup>8</sup>

The findings of this report indicate that during 2025, at least 1,154 people were killed or wounded as a result of targeted and suicide bombings, aerial strikes by Pakistani military forces, landmine explosions and explosive remnants of war, or in targeted, suspicious, and extrajudicial attacks.<sup>9</sup> Of these, 617 were killed and 537 others were wounded. Those killed included 473 men, 53 women, and 91 children, while the wounded included 405 men, 56 women, and 76 children. Victims included former government employees and their family members, journalists, civil society activists, protesters, women, children, tribal elders, and individuals accused of connections to anti-Taliban groups.

In 2024, Rawadari had recorded a total of 767 violations of the right to life.<sup>10</sup> A comparison of the figures reveals that the rate of right-to-life violations during this reporting period has increased by approximately 50.5 percent. Likewise, when compared to the 2023 figure of 772 cases, the data reflects an increase of 49.9 percent.<sup>11</sup>

**Civilian casualties resulting from military strikes carried out by Pakistani military forces on parts of Afghanistan is one of the most significant factors contributing to the rise in violations of the right to life during this reporting period.**

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4 UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (16 Dec 1966), Article 6, 9, 10 and 21.

5 UNGA, Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (10 Dec 1984), Article 1.

6 UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 Dec 1948), Articles 3, 5, 9 and 20.

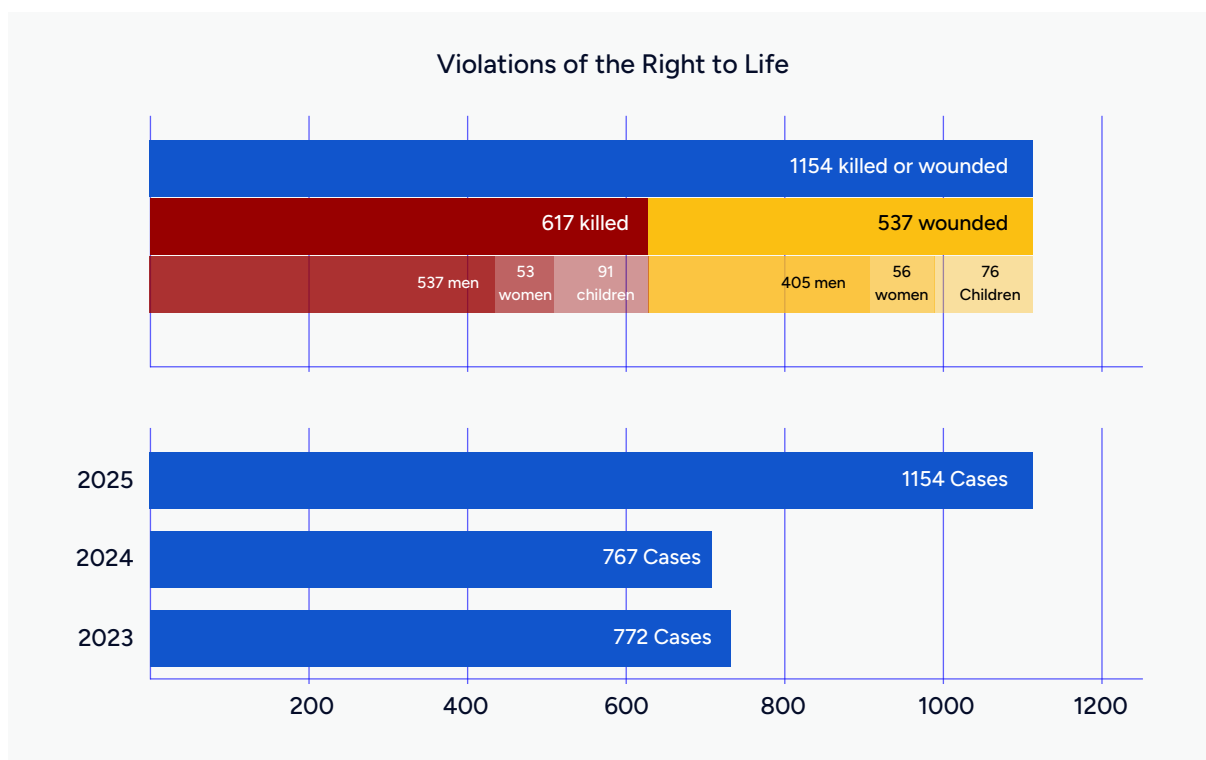
7 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2.

8 Ibid., Article 6

9 Casualty figures for right to life violations pertain to provinces of Herat, Nimroz, Badghis, Ghor, Farah, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Kabul, Parwan, Panjshir, Maidan-Wardak, Kapisa, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, Faryab, Samangan, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Helmand, Logar, Balkh and Jawzjan.

10 Rawadari, Human Rights Situation Report 2024 (March 2025), <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

11 Rawadari, Human Rights Situation Report March 2023, Page 4: [https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RW\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2023\\_English.pdf](https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RW_Annual_Report_2023_English.pdf)



## 1- Civilian Casualties Resulting from Aerial Attacks by Pakistani Military Forces

One of the most significant factors contributing to the rise in civilian casualties in 2025 has been the escalation of armed conflict between Taliban military forces and Pakistani military forces, along with Pakistani airstrikes targeting parts of Kandahar, Helmand, Paktia, Paktika, and Khost provinces.

Our findings indicate that these attacks have violated fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, resulting in widespread civilian casualties including women and children as well as the destruction of public facilities and residential homes.

As a result of armed clashes and airstrikes carried out by Pakistani forces, at least 324 civilians were killed or wounded across the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Paktia, Paktika, and Khost, of these, 90 people lost their lives including 57 men, 13 women, and 20 children while 234 others were wounded, comprising 177 men, 35 women, and 22 children.



The United Nations Assistance Mission (UNAMA) has also reported that during the final three months of 2025, it documented 70 civilian deaths and 477 injuries attributable to Pakistani forces.<sup>12</sup>

Findings by Rawadari indicate that in September, October and December 2025, as a result of Pakistani military airstrikes on the Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province and parts of Helmand province, at least 270 people were killed or wounded of whom 57 were killed and 213 others were wounded. Furthermore, on 27 August 2025, at approximately 10:00 a.m., Pakistani military forces targeted a residential home in the Spera district of Khost province in an airstrike, resulting in 7 members of one family being killed or wounded. The fatalities included 3 children, while the injured comprised 3 women and 1 man.

On 17 October 2025, Pakistani military forces carried out four airstrikes in the Barmal and Urgun districts of Paktika province. Our findings indicate that 8 civilians were killed, including 3 cricket players, and 7 others were wounded. The first bomb struck the Urgun district market, and the second strike targeted a residential home. As local residents gathered to assist the victims, a third strike was carried out, resulting in further casualties. Pakistani authorities announced that the attacks had been aimed at Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) fighters, claiming that 70 of them had been killed in the strikes.

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12 . UNAMA, Civilian Casualties along the border in Afghanistan, October – December 2025, February 2026, P2: <https://unama.unmissions.org/prs/document-library/tlfat-mlky-dr-amtdad-srhd-dr-afghanistan-aktwbr-dsmbr-2025>

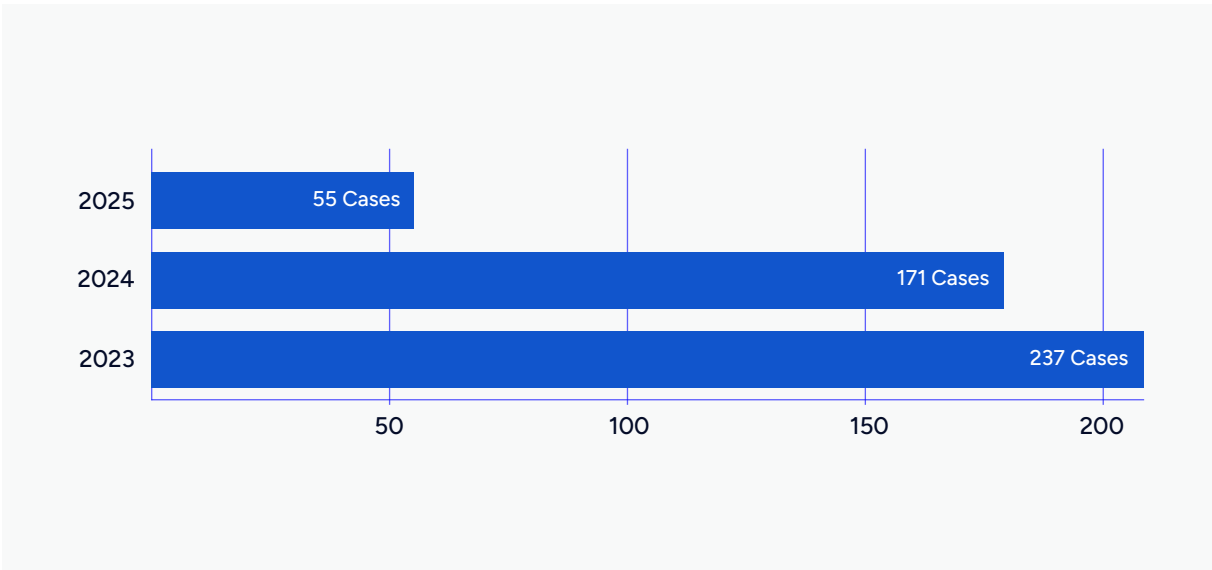
In addition to this, on 25 November 2025, at around midnight, a military aircraft attributed to Pakistani forces bombed a residential home in the village of Mughulgai in the Garba district of Khost province, killing all members of the family inside. Among the dead were 9 children and one woman, while 3 other family members were wounded. A local resident, describing the incident, stated as follows:

“When we heard the sound of the explosion, we could hear the cries and screams of children from a distance. The entire village was in a state of panic and terror. When we reached the site, the house had been reduced to rubble, and amid the smoke and gunpowder, it was nearly impossible to distinguish the bodies of those who had been killed.”

## 2- Civilian Casualties Resulting from Targeted Explosive and Suicide Attacks

Our findings illustrate that in 2025, at least 55 people were killed or wounded as a result of targeted suicide and explosive attacks across Kunduz, Balkh, Paktika, Kunar, Nangarhar, and Nuristan provinces. Eleven people lost their lives and 44 others were wounded in these attacks. The fatalities comprised of 10 men and 1 woman, while all 44 of the wounded were men.

In 2024, Rawadari had recorded approximately 171 violations of civilians’ right to life resulting from targeted suicide and explosive attacks.<sup>13</sup> A comparison of both figures reveals that civilian casualties from such attacks decreased by approximately 67.8 percent during this reporting period. Furthermore, when compared to the 237 cases recorded in 2023, the figures reflect a fourfold reduction.<sup>14</sup>



13 RAWADARI, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, P7: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

14 RAWADARI, Afghanistan Human rights Situation Report 2023, P5: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2023/>

All of these attacks occurred during the first six months of 2025, resulting in civilian casualties across various parts of the country. For instance, on 15 January 2025, an explosion caused by explosives concealed in a street vendor’s cart in Balkh province killed at least 2 civilians and wounded 6 others. No individual or group has claimed responsibility for this explosion to date. Similarly, on 14 April 2025, another explosion near a Shia mosque in the “Se Dokan” area of Mazar-i-Sharif city killed least 3 people, including 1 woman, and wounded 6 men. No individual or group has claimed responsibility for this incident.

### 3 - Civilian Casualties Resulting from Landmine Explosions and Explosive Remnants

During 2025, at least 164 people were killed or wounded as a result of explosions caused by planted landmines, shell heads, and other explosive remnants left over from past conflicts, of these, 79 people were killed, comprising 30 men, 6 women, and 43 children, while 85 others were wounded, including 47 children, 32 men, and 6 women. Compared to 2024, when 162 cases were recorded,<sup>15</sup> this figure represents an increase of 1.2 percent. When compared to 2023, when 107 cases were documented, the figure reflects an increase of approximately 48.6 percent. The recorded incidents occurred predominantly in rural areas and parts of the country that had previously been sites of armed conflict.

**A three-year comparison of statistics in this category clearly indicates that adequate and effective measures have not been taken to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance contaminated areas, and that this threat continues to pose a serious danger to lives of civilians, particularly children.**



15 RAWADARI, <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/> - Page 8

On 15 October 2025, a 35-year-old man from Shindand district of Herat lost his life when a landmine from past conflicts detonated. Likewise, in November 2025, in the Dara area of Khakrez district, Kandahar, a vehicle struck a planted landmine, killing 2 men and wounding 4 others. Our findings indicate that this incident occurred on a public road used by civilian traffic.

**On 24 November 2025, a landmine explosion in Badakhshan province killed 2 people and wounded 7 others. According to a press statement issued by the local security officials, the victims included men, women, and children. Furthermore, on the 26 November 2025, an explosion of a shell in Nahr-e Shahi district of Balkh province killed 3 children and wounded 2 others.**

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025, a grenade explosion in Farah province killed 3 children. In a separate incident in the same province, on the 10 September 2025, an explosion in a residential home in Bala Buluk district killed 5 members of one family, including a father, a mother, and two children.

On 12 October 2025, a mortar shell exploded in the Shir Khani village of Char Chino district, Uruzgan province, killing three brothers. Additionally, on 1 September 2025, a hand grenade explosion in Qarabagh district of Ghazni province killed a teenage boy. The incident occurred in the Baran Qala area of Qarabagh district.

Furthermore, on the 23 August 2025, explosion of an old mortar shell in the village of Lur Khwat in Chak district of Maidan-Wardak province killed a 15-year-old boy, a school student and wounded four other children between the ages of 12 and 16. The incident occurred while the students were playing with the mortar shell.

The contamination of vast areas of the country with landmines and unexploded ordnance continues to pose a serious threat to the safety and lives of civilians, particularly children. The HALO Trust has reported that 6.4 million people in Afghanistan are at risk from unexploded ordnance, and that children account for 80 percent of all casualties and injuries caused by such explosions.<sup>16</sup>

## **4 - Targeted, Mysterious, and Extrajudicial Killings**

In 2025, at least 611 people, including 528 men, 48 women, and 35 children were killed or wounded in targeted, mysterious, or extrajudicial manner by Taliban forces and unidentified individuals. This figure represents an increase of approximately 40.4 percent compared to 2024, when 435 cases were recorded.<sup>17</sup> This also reflects an increase of approximately 42.7 percent compared to the 428 cases documented in 2023.

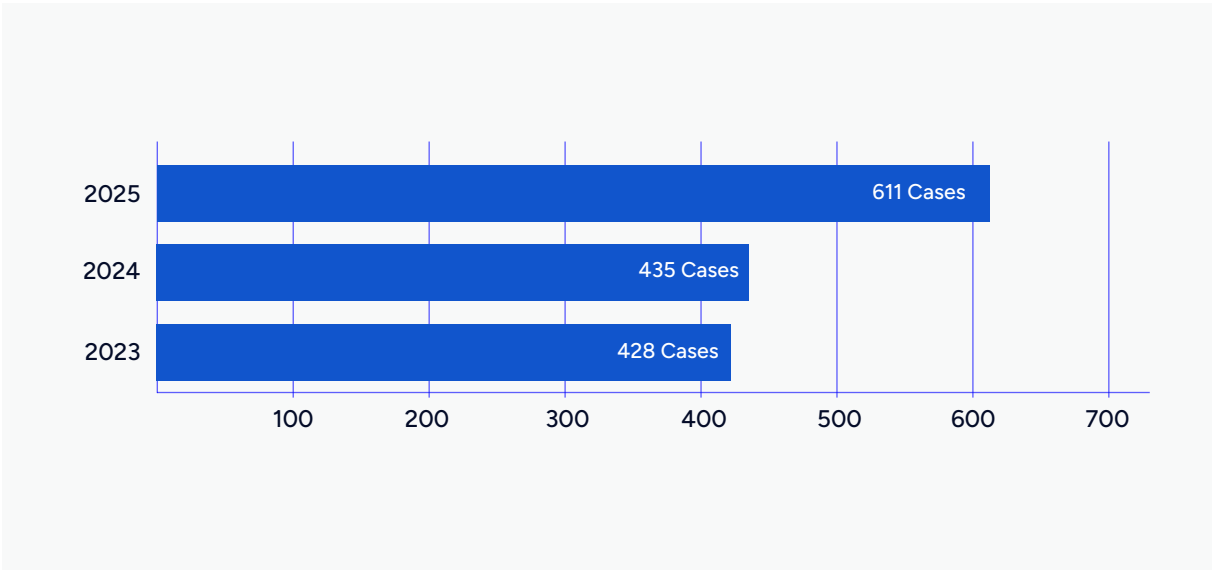
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<sup>16</sup> The HALO Trust foundation, "One in five Afghans at risk of landmines and explosive remnants of war" 10 June 2025: <https://www.halotrust.org/news/one-in-five-afghans-at-risk-of-landmines-and-explosives/>

<sup>17</sup> RAWADARI, <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/> - Page 10

Our findings illustrate that the individuals targeted were primarily former government employees, those accused of membership in or cooperation with groups opposed to the Taliban, protesters, tribal elders, and local community figures. A number of individuals who had personal disputes or enmities in the past with the Taliban were also among the victims.

The methods employed in carrying out these killings included shooting, the use of bladed weapons, beheading, and burning. Furthermore, a number of victims had been kidnapped, detained, threatened, or subjected to interrogation prior to being killed, while others were killed under suspicious circumstances shortly after being released from detention.



The significant increase in figures within this category, when compared to data recorded in both 2024 and 2023, indicates that specific groups of Afghan citizens, including former government employees and other individuals who are critical of or opposed to the Taliban continue to be deliberately targeted and killed in suspicious and extrajudicial manners, driven by a spirit of revenge. The persistent impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators, which will be examined in greater detail in subsequent sections of this report, has heightened the likelihood that such acts will continue.

## Limitations on the Documenting Targeted, Mysterious and Extrajudicial Killings

Targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings represent some of the most complex forms of right-to-life violations in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. The complexity of these cases stems from two compounding factors: on the one hand, the attribution of these killings to unknown individuals or groups by the DFA, and on the other, the systematic efforts of the DFA to conceal or suppress information related to them.

Our findings indicate that the Taliban, through threats, intimidation, and coercion prevent the families of victims and other local sources from providing information about how these incidents occurred. For this reason, the documentation of extrajudicial killings has faced serious obstacles, particularly in cities and provincial centres where there is closer surveillance by the de-facto government. In some cases, documentation becomes virtually impossible due to reluctance of survivors and eyewitnesses, who fear DFA retaliation if they share testimonies or evidence with media or human rights monitors. In rural and remote areas, while levels of fear and direct DFA surveillance have been reported as comparatively lower, access to victims and eyewitnesses remains significantly constrained due to the absence of reliable phone and internet services and risks of face-to-face interviews with survivors that might draw additional, unwanted attention to them in small, close-knit communities.

**Relatives of victims and eyewitnesses fear being monitored by the DFA intelligence and refrain from providing information or commenting on targeted and extrajudicial killings. Furthermore, Rawadari has documented cases where the Taliban have pressured survivors to either maintain silence or to disseminate distorted narratives aligned with the Taliban's own version of events to the public and media.**

Media and journalists also face threats and pressure that prevents coverage of extrajudicial and targeted killings. For example, on 23rd December, a resident of Kandahar province was killed by unidentified armed men on motorcycles. No one has been arrested at the time of this writing; however, the Taliban's security agencies, while confirming the incident to a local media outlet, emphasized that the outlet should avoid providing extensive reporting or precise details about this incident. In the first few months following the Taliban's return to power in 2021, local media, civil society activists, and human rights defenders played a significant role in documenting and reporting targeted and extrajudicial killings. However, the space for media and civil society reporting is considerably restricted and dangerous.

In some provinces<sup>18</sup>, in incidents with significant indications of Taliban's involvement in such killings, the victims' bodies have been transferred to military hospitals, and by imposing strict security measures, the Taliban have prevented access to information regarding the victims' identities and the circumstances surrounding their injury or murder. Additionally, civilian hospitals and healthcare centres have been prohibited from publishing or providing information to media outlets and journalists regarding the victims' identities or the details of these incidents.<sup>19</sup> In the southwestern region of the country, a large number of such killings are not recorded by hospitals. Due to these restrictions, throughout 2025, Rawadari has been unable to obtain sufficient evidence regarding the precise identities of a number of victims in this region and to fully document the incidents.

Another noteworthy point is the methods employed in these killings. In previous years, individuals who were targeted would, in some cases, only sustain injuries or escape with their lives; however, in 2025, these killings have been carried out in a more organized and increasingly brutal manner. For instance, in the southwestern region, perpetrators have first abducted their victims and then, after killing them, discarded their bodies in remote locations. In some cases, victims have even been beheaded or set on fire.

**Despite Taliban's attempts to cover up, in cases involving the killing of former government employees and individuals accused of membership in or cooperation with opposition groups, credible evidence points to DFA involvement or support.**

The Taliban have killed these individuals using various methods and tactics, driven by retaliatory motives, all of which will be examined in detail in the subsequent sections of this report.

## **Lack of Measures to Prosecute Perpetrators of Targeted, Mysterious and Extrajudicial Killings**

Based on the provisions of international human rights instruments, including Articles 2 and 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), states are obligated not only to prevent violations of the right to life and arbitrary killings, but also to effectively, impartially, and independently investigate cases that have occurred and hold those responsible accountable.<sup>20</sup> Failure to fulfil such responsibility leads to the institutionalization of the culture of impunity and continued perpetuation of human rights violations.

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<sup>18</sup> We have withheld the name of provinces to protect the security and safety of local sources.

<sup>19</sup> . Rawadari, Human Rights Situation in 2024, p.4.: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

<sup>20</sup> . International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 2 and 6.

The Taliban, as the de-facto authorities of Afghanistan who bear legal responsibility for protecting citizens, upholding law and administering justice have over the past four years failed to take timely and transparent actions regarding the prosecution and punishment of those responsible for targeted, mysterious and extrajudicial killings. As a result, these cases have remained without any form of legal accountability, a situation that has perpetuated the cycle of revenge and on-going violence and has violated the right of survivors to access justice.

For the 611 targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings committed in 2025, the Taliban have arrested only 4 individuals in Helmand, Kandahar, Bamiyan, and Herat provinces, and no information is available regarding if and how these individuals have been tried and held accountable.

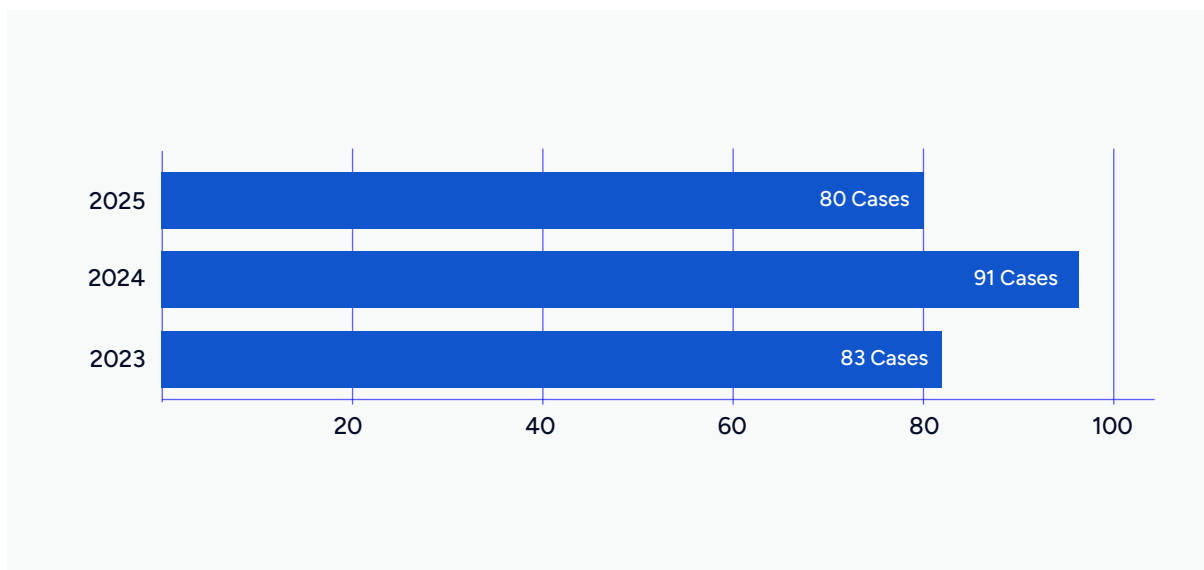
**The Taliban continue to attribute the killings of former government employees, tribal elders, and their political and ideological opponents to unknown armed individuals. After occurrence of such incidents, they promise investigation and prosecution. However, evidence shows that over time, the promises are not followed with action. Additionally, the Taliban prevent any media or human rights investigations into these killings and exert pressure on victims' families through various means to dissuade them from pursuing any form of justice.**

Based on the findings of this report, credible evidence exists regarding the involvement of Taliban intelligence in such killings, and in cases where individuals have attempted to document these incidents and gather information; they have been immediately arrested and imprisoned by the Taliban. This stands in stark contrast to their approach toward killings resulting from personal feuds, family disputes, land conflicts, and other such matters. In those cases, the Taliban security and justice institutions act swiftly and decisively.

The lack of effective legal resolution in these cases reflects the Taliban's failure to uphold their legal responsibilities in ensuring the security and safety of citizens. The lack of investigations and accountability has also led to the perpetuation of impunity and the continuation of an environment of fear and intimidation.

## **A - Targeted Killings of Former Government Employees**

The data in this report indicates that during 2025, at least 80 former government employees were targeted and mysteriously and extrajudicially killed or wounded. This figure represents a decrease of approximately 12% compared to the recorded data from 2024, which stood at 91 cases. Furthermore, the aforementioned figure also reflects a decrease of 3.6% compared to 2023, in which 83 cases were recorded.



As previously explained, given the increasing restrictions on access to information, the process of documenting extrajudicial killings has faced serious and significant challenges. Therefore, the decrease in the recorded figures in this section should not necessarily be interpreted as an improvement in the situation or an actual reduction in extrajudicial killings of former government employees. Rather, it may reflect the existing limitations in access to sources, pressure exerted on witnesses and survivors and fears or DFA retaliation.

The information obtained indicates that the Taliban, and in particular their intelligence agency, target former government employees in retaliatory attacks using various methods and tactics. For example, in February 2025, a former military serviceman in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province was shot and killed by the Taliban following a verbal altercation. Close relatives of this former serviceman told Rawadari that he had been working as a shopkeeper and was killed following a verbal dispute with the Taliban forces. However, the Taliban issued a statement regarding this incident claiming that a thief had been killed in a confrontation with them.

On 21 August 2025, a former military serviceman in Paktika province was shot and killed near a Taliban security checkpoint. Eyewitnesses stated that he was the sole breadwinner of his family, and was killed in front of his mother and children in the market place of Khairkot district. The perpetrators were armed men on motorcycles who fled the scene after opening fire. Furthermore, on 10 August 2025, unidentified armed men killed a former military serviceman in the centre of Khost province. No information is available regarding the identity or motive of the perpetrators, and the Taliban have taken no action to identify or punish these unknown individuals.

**In another incident, on 26 August 2025, a former military serviceman was killed by unidentified armed men in Mohammad Agha district of Logar province, shortly after returning to Afghanistan from Iran. He had served for four years in the security forces of the former government and had taken refuge in Iran following the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. One of this man's brothers had previously been killed by unidentified armed men.**



On 25 August 2025, the body of a former national security employee who was reportedly a collaborator of the Taliban was discovered inside a well in Maidan Wardak province, approximately four years after his disappearance. He was originally a resident of Anaba district of Panjshir province and had travelled to Maidan-Wardak announcing his allegiance to them in August 2021. Members of his family had approached the Taliban on multiple occasions in the past four years, seeking information about his fate, but had received no clear response. Following the discovery of his body, the Taliban announced that they had arrested the perpetrator of this incident; however, the victim's family stated that no information in this regard has been provided to them to date, as of the time of this writing.

In three separate incidents in Faryab, on 27 July, 27 December, and 29 December 2025, a former provincial council member and two former military servicemen were killed in different parts of the province. Local authorities have taken no action to identify or prosecute the perpetrators.

Additionally, in July 2025, a former military serviceman and original resident of Panjshir was targeted by unidentified armed men and killed in Kabul city, in front of his home. According to one of this former serviceman's relatives, he had no enmity with any person or group. The relative stated that the Taliban had threatened him on multiple occasions in the past and demanded handover of his weapons.

**A former Afghan National Army soldier was shot in the Kuz Asyab area of Hesarak district in Nangarhar on 15 August 2025 by unknown armed men. He had served in the 205 Attal Corps, a former military unit, and had recently been working as a vaccinator. No information is available regarding the identity or motive of the perpetrators of this incident. Additionally, on 19 August 2025, a former military serviceman was shot by unknown armed men in the Ba'di Abad village of Laghman. He had served as the commander of a police unit in Lashkargah city of Helmand under the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and following the Taliban's return to power; he had been working as a guard in a garden in Laghman.**

On 19 December 2025, a former military serviceman in Badakhshan province was beheaded by unidentified individuals. Based on information obtained from local sources, he was originally a resident of Faizabad city of Badakhshan and had worked in the criminal investigations department under the former government. In recent months, he had been working as a taxi driver. He initially went missing, and two days later his beheaded body was discovered in the Yaftal-e-Payeen area.

UNAMA has also declared in a report that between 1 October and 31 December, it recorded at least 14 cases of killings of former members of the national defence and security forces.<sup>21</sup>

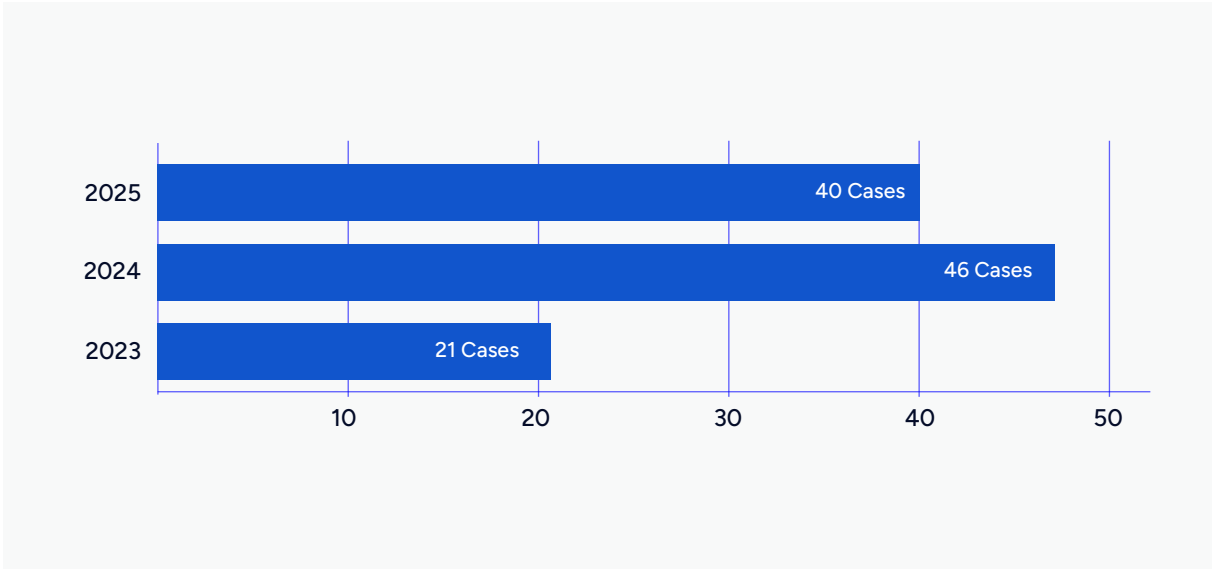
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21 . <https://unama.unmissions.org/en/document-library/update-human-rights-situation-afghanistan-october-december-2025>

The cases discussed in this section represent examples of extrajudicial killings of former government employees, all of which share at least two common characteristics: first, the victims were targeted by unidentified armed individuals; and second, no action has been taken by the DFA to conduct effective investigations, identify the perpetrators, or prosecute them. These two common characteristics, alongside the continued extrajudicial killings of former government employees over the past four years, reveal the organized and targeted nature of the attacks against these individuals.

### B - Killings of Civilians Accused of Membership in or Cooperation with Opposition Groups

Based on the findings of this report, the Taliban killed at least 40 civilians during 2025 on charges of cooperating with or having connections to opposition groups. This figure represents a decrease of approximately 13% compared to the data from 2024, which were 46 cases. Furthermore, the figure recorded for 2025 reflects an increase of approximately 90% compared to 2023, in which 21 cases were recorded.



This multi-year comparison indicates that the Taliban continue to target their political and ideological opponents in retaliatory attacks, without regard for the principles of fair trial or effective accountability mechanisms. This situation raises serious concerns regarding the lack of security for citizens and the on-going violation of the right to life.

In March 2025, Taliban intelligence officers arrested a resident of Injil district of Herat on charges of cooperating with opposition groups, and after three days, handed his body over to his family. This individual had gone to Iran following the fall of the former government, and was arrested by the Taliban and subsequently killed just 10 days after returning to his hometown. Additionally, on 22 August 2025, another

resident of Herat province was arrested by the Taliban on charges of membership in an opposition group and was subsequently executed by firing squad. The body of this individual was hung on the barrel of an old tank at “Kandahar Gate” in Herat city, in a densely populated area, and based on a video circulated on social media, a number of Taliban members were seen kicking the corpse.

A Taliban member linked this second incident to the assassination of the commander of the Police District (PD) 10 in the city of Herat. A group called the “Islamic Liberation Movement of the People of Afghanistan,” had claimed responsibility for the assassination of the commander and it was later alleged by some Taliban that the executed individual had connections to this group. Reportedly, a note bearing the words “Death to the Liberation Movement group” had been affixed to the back of the body. However, the DFA police officials in Herat announced in a statement that this individual had been accused of theft and was arrested and killed during a military operation.

On September 27, 2025, the Taliban executed a resident of Panjshir Province by firing squad on charges of cooperating with the “National Resistance Front”. Sources close to the victim stated that he was a farmer and herder with no connections to any political or military groups. The Taliban even prohibited his funeral and mourning ceremonies; consequently, a few close relatives buried his body without a public ceremony.

Additionally, on June 26, 2025, the Taliban arrested two former government employees in the Bazarak district of Panjshir Province, accusing them of membership in an opposition front (the Green Trend). Authorities held these individuals in prison for one week. Finally, on July 5, 2025, the Taliban executed them by firing squad in the Rakha district while their hands were bound.

## **C - Mysterious and Extrajudicial Killings of Other Civilians**

During this reporting period, at least 378 civilians primarily civil society activists, journalists, protesters, supporters and sympathizers of the former government, tribal elders, and religious scholars were suspiciously and extrajudicially killed or wounded by the Taliban and unidentified armed individuals. Of these, 257 were killed and 121 others were wounded, of those wounded, 107 were men, 7 were women and 6 were children. Of those killed, 217 were men, 24 were women and 19 were children. Furthermore, these figures also include the killing of 39 protesters, which will be addressed in the relevant section. The children included in this section were not direct targets of the attacks and were harmed during the operations or attacks targeting their family members.

In 2024, a total of 298 individuals belonging to the aforementioned groups were killed or wounded in similar incidents.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, a comparison of both figures reveals that during this reporting period, the number of civilians extrajudicially and mysteriously killed has increased by 26.8%. Furthermore, this figure also reflects an increase of 16.6% compared to the data recorded in 2023, which stood at 324 cases.



The significant increase in violations of the right to life compared to 2023 and 2024 indicates that targeted violence against civilians, particularly influential local figures, tribal elders, and religious leaders, continues. Based on the findings of this report, retaliation, lack of accountability, and the continued impunity of perpetrators from punishment are among the most important factors contributing to the rise in such cases. This is because the Taliban do not take action to identify and punish individuals involved, and they do not share information regarding the identities of perpetrators with families of victims and the members of public.

On 16 September 2025, a journalist and civil society activist residing in Said Karam district of Paktia province was killed by unidentified individuals. According to sources close to this individual, he left his home late at night after receiving a phone call, and the following morning his body was found in a dilapidated building near his home. Sources relate that signs of torture were present on the victim's body. At the time of writing of this report, the DFA has not declared any information regarding investigation of this murder.

In an incident in Badakhshan, a civil society activist and member of the religious minority Ismaili community was killed inside his home in the middle of the night by unidentified armed men. He was the consul of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Badakhshan. AKDN founded by the Aga Khan, the religious leader of Ismaili

22 Rawadari, Human Rights Situation Report in Afghanistan in 2024, p. 11: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

Shia Muslims. Information indicates that the Taliban had threatened him several days prior due to a public speech criticizing the Taliban's restrictions on religious freedom of the Ismaili community.

On 23 July 2025, a local elder and former jihadi commander in Herat was killed by unknown armed individuals in the village of Qafsalan, in Injil District. No information is available regarding the perpetrators of this incident.

In August 2025, a businessman in Kandahar was stabbed to death by unknown individuals. According to local sources, he had been a military contractor for the former government. To date, no information is available regarding the identity or motive of the perpetrators. Members of the deceased's family have also refrained from making any statement or providing any information.

Even in cases with clear evidence of direct involvement of Taliban members, no effective measures are taken to investigate the case or prosecute the perpetrators. For example, on 20 August 2025, a resident of Khost was shot and killed in public by members of Taliban. An eyewitness stated: "We were shopping for food when armed members of Taliban shot this man and then left the scene without any concern whatsoever." Following this incident, the Taliban sent local elders to the victim's home to secure a pardon from his family for the perpetrators. Our sources confirm that the family was pressured to avoid publicising the matter and instead to resolve it through informal mechanisms.

**In a similar incident on 21 August 2025, the nephew of a former Taliban governor in Khost shot and killed a man who owned a printing shop, in early evening at Babrak Khan Park. He then left the scene unchallenged by the local authorities and subsequently claimed that he had shot the individual accidentally. The perpetrator then sent the victim's family the sum of two hundred thousand Afghani (equivalent of 3205 USD) asking for a pardon.**

## Enforced Disappearances

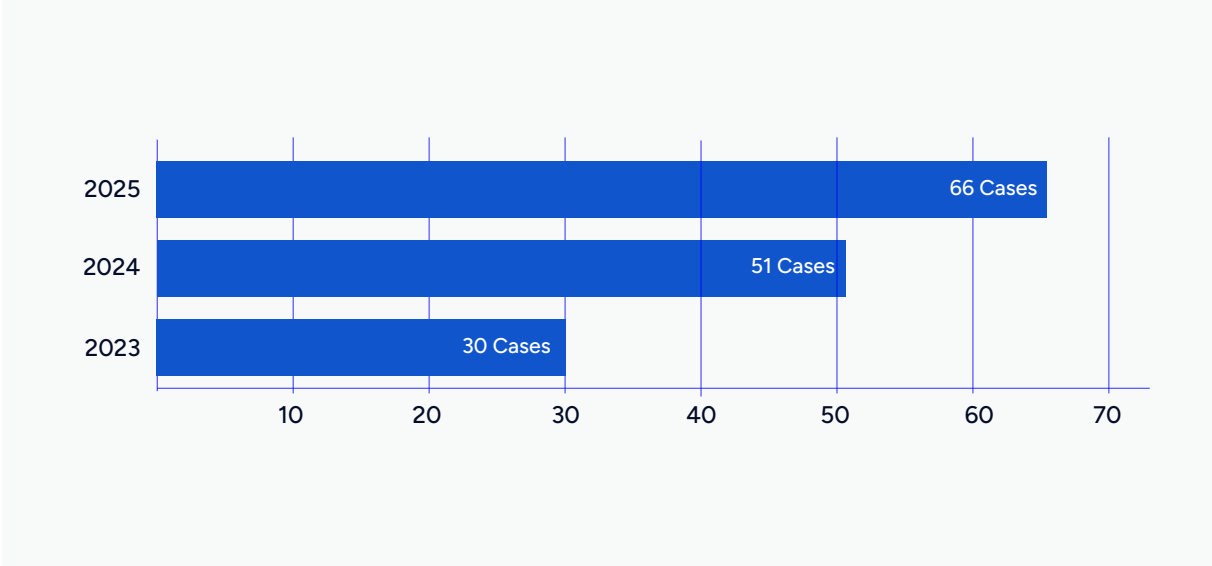
Enforced disappearance refers to the arrest, detention, abduction, or any other form of deprivation of liberty carried out by state agents, or by persons or groups acting with the consent, support, or acquiescence of the state. The defining characteristic of this act is the deliberate refusal to disclose information regarding the reasons for the detention, and the fate and whereabouts of the victims.<sup>23</sup> The occurrence of enforced disappearance is not contingent upon any specific period of time; rather, it begins from the moment of abduction or detention and continues until the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared person remain unknown and they continue to be deprived of the

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23 . United Nations General Assembly, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, (20 December 2006), Resolution 61/177, Article 2.

protection of the law.<sup>24</sup> The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) recognises the enforced disappearance of persons as one of the most serious violations of human rights and as an act constituting a crime against humanity.<sup>25</sup>

Enforced disappearances are among the serious violation of human rights in Afghanistan that has been documented under different regimes. Since the Taliban’s return to power, Rawadari has documented tens of cases of enforced disappearances every year. In 2025, at least 66 individuals across 12 provinces of Afghanistan<sup>26</sup> were forcefully disappeared following detention by the Taliban and unknown individuals. This figure represents an increase of approximately 29.4 per cent compared to 2024, when 51 cases were recorded.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, a comparison of enforced disappearance figures for the current reporting period to 2023, when 30 cases were recorded, shows an increase of more than twofold.



The victims of enforced disappearances have primarily consisted of former government employees, individuals accused of membership in or collaboration with opposition groups, as well as certain tribal or religious elders. Our findings indicate that following their arrest, these individuals were denied access to fundamental fair trial guarantees, including the right to legal counsel, the ability to communicate with their families, and other legal protections. Moreover, the Taliban have deliberately withheld information regarding the whereabouts and fate of these individuals from their families and loved ones. In some cases, detainees have died as a result of severe torture, and subsequently their bodies were found and identified.

24 . Human Rights Council, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Report of the Sixteenth Session, A/HRC/16/48, January 2011, General Comment on Article 1.  
25 . Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, (17 July 1998), 2187 UNTS 90, Article 7(1)(i).  
26 . Ghazni, Herat, Nimroz, Ghor, Badakhshan, Kandahar, Farah, Maidan Wardak, Bamyān, Helmand, Balkh, and Takhar.  
27 . Rawadari, Human Rights Situation in 2024, p. 12: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

Our findings indicate that the GDI has in numerous instances used enforced disappearance as a tool for retribution, suppression, and even physical elimination of opponents, critics, and former government employees. Following their detention, these individuals have been deprived of their fundamental rights, most notably the right to prompt notification of their families regarding their place of detention, and have effectively been left without the protection of the law. In some cases, after having been disappeared for a period of time, the victims' bodies have been found or handed over to their families.

**On 26 July 2025, a former National Directorate of Security (NDS) employee in Allah Yar District of Ghor Province was detained by the Taliban's intelligence department. Our findings indicate that he was arrested by the intelligence unit known as the "Kohestanaat Unit," and two days later his body was found in the "Safid Rakhna" village of the same district alongside another individual, whose identity is yet to be established. It is worth noting that this former official had previously been detained twice by the GDI: on the first occasion he was released upon surrendering a weapon, and on the second occasion he was freed after serving a six-month prison sentence, issued by a Taliban military court. He was a graduate in Economics from India and had worked for the NDS prior to the fall of the Republic.**

In another incident, in November 2025, a former military official from Lal wa Sarjangal District of Ghor Province disappeared. He had previously served as a NDS official in Kabul. According to a statement made to Rawadari by one of his relatives, armed individuals who identified themselves as Taliban members forcibly took him from his home during the night. The armed individuals told him that he was required to accompany them in order to answer a few questions. Since that time, no information has been available regarding his fate or whereabouts. The same source further stated that the family and relatives of the individual in question have approached the local Taliban authorities on numerous occasions, but they have denied any knowledge of the matter. To date no official documentation has been provided regarding the detention or condition of this former military official. Prior to his disappearance, he had been under surveillance by the intelligence department and had been summoned by the intelligence on several occasions.

Likewise, the body of a former military officer from Andar District of Ghazni was found on 19 December 2025 within the jurisdiction of Deh Yak District in the same province. Local sources confirm that he had disappeared ten days before his body was found; however, the local Taliban authorities announced that the individual had been killed in a personal feud on account of an illicit relationship and that his body had been set alight. No information has been made public regarding the arrest or prosecution of the perpetrators of this incident. Local sources have rejected this claim, stating that the Taliban themselves are responsible for the enforced disappearance and killing of this former military official.

On 16 August 2025, the Taliban detained a resident of Helmand Province. Despite repeatedly approaching the local authorities, his family received no information regarding his fate or whereabouts for one week; however, it later emerged that the individual in question had been detained by the Taliban on account of his family relationship with a former police commander. He was ultimately released after providing a guarantee; however, he remains under pressure and surveillance by the Taliban.

In another case, a former military official who was deported from Iran to Afghanistan was detained by the GDI at the Islam Qala border crossing on 2 December 2025 and subsequently disappeared. Since that time, no official information regarding his whereabouts or fate has been provided.

There are also cases in which the GDI has used enforced disappearance as a tool of pressure and financial extortion. For example, a former military official stated that his son was found in a GDI detention facility in Kabul after having been disappeared for four months. The Taliban subsequently demanded the sum of six thousand US dollars from him in exchange for releasing his son alive.

In another case, a former military official in Waras District of Bamiyan Province was detained by the Taliban and transferred to an undisclosed location. He was arrested at approximately 10 AM on 23 November 2025 at one of the hotels in the market place (bazaar) of that district by several Taliban soldiers. The family of this individual has approached the relevant Taliban authorities in Bamiyan Province on numerous occasions; however, they have been unable to obtain any official information regarding his condition or place of detention. This individual had travelled to Iran following the fall of the Republic and had recently returned to Afghanistan.

On 18 December 2025, three former military officials who had recently returned to the country from Iran were detained by unknown individuals at a hotel in Maidan Shahr, the capital of Maidan Wardak Province, and subsequently disappeared. To date, no official information has been published regarding the fate or whereabouts of these individuals. Local sources have stated that these individuals had links to the National Resistance Front (NRF) and that their detention was carried out in connection with this matter.

Photo (C) Abaca Press / Alamy



# Arbitrary and Unlawful Detention

Under Article 9 of the ICCPR, every individual has the right to liberty and personal security, and no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. Deprivation of liberty is only permissible in cases that are carried out in accordance with the law and within the framework of principles of fair trial.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, any detention without a valid judicial order, or failure to observe the fundamental guarantees of a fair trial, may be considered as instance of violation of the right to liberty and personal security.

Our findings indicate that in 2025, at least 2,559 individuals were arbitrarily and unlawfully detained and imprisoned. In 2024, Rawadari had recorded a total of 885 cases of arbitrary and unlawful detention.<sup>29</sup> A comparison of both figures reveals that the rate of arbitrary and unlawful detentions has doubled during the current reporting period. Likewise, a comparison of the 2025 data with that of 2023, when 623 cases were recorded, indicates a fourfold increase.



The enforcement of the PVPV law and in particular the granting of broad powers to officials of MPVPV to deprive citizens, both women and men of their liberty and carry out arbitrary arrests is one of the most significant factors contributing to the increase in arbitrary detentions.

In addition, retaliatory measures against opponents and critics, the widespread suppression of civil engagement and protest, failure to observe fair trial principles, and the continuation of extrajudicial conduct are among the other contributing factors to the rise in cases of arbitrary and unlawful detention.

<sup>28</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9.  
<sup>29</sup> Rawadari, Human Rights Situation in 2024, p. 11: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

The considerable increase in arbitrary detention leads to serious concerns regarding citizens' right to liberty and personal security. The restrictions imposed by the Taliban and the lack of access to places of deprivation of liberty under their control have made it difficult to fully document cases of arbitrary detention and grasp the full extent of this violation in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

Former government employees and their family members, individuals accused of membership in or collaboration with military and political opposition groups, activists and journalists, social media users, religious scholars, tribal elders, protesters and other members of the public were among the groups arbitrarily detained and imprisoned by the Taliban in 2025.

The charges brought against men mainly included carrying weapons, cooperation with military and political opposition groups, criticizing or spreading propaganda against the Taliban, defying the PVPV law requirements regarding beard and hair length, listening to music, failing to attend congregational prayers, speaking with women, selling goods to women in shops and holding or participating in protests. The charges brought against women, mainly included defying regulations related to male guardianship [mahram], dress code, and presence in public places.

## Perpetrators of Arbitrary & Unlawful Detentions

The vast majority of arbitrary detentions during this reporting period were carried out by two agencies: the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV) and the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI).

Intelligence forces have predominantly detained and imprisoned former government employees, dissidents and protesters, religious scholars, journalists, activists and social media users, without presenting any official documentation, issuing formal charges, or observing human rights standards and the principles of a fair trial. During the period of their detention, these individuals have been deprived of their fundamental rights, including the right to be promptly informed of the reasons for their arrest, access to legal counsel, and the ability to communicate with their families. Furthermore, Rawadari has documented cases where a number of individuals, having already served their designated sentences ranging from six months to two years have nonetheless remained in detention and have not been released.

MPVPV has also carried out widespread detentions of citizens, without adhering to the international and legal standards and principles, on the grounds of non-compliance with the institution's stringent regulations.

**Following the announcement of the PVPV law in August 2024, there has been a marked increase in the detention of women in public spaces including restaurants, public transport, hospitals, shops, and cities across various parts of the country. Depending on the nature of the charges brought against them under this law, these women have been held in custody for periods ranging from several hours to several months, without access to their fundamental rights.**

Additionally, some institutions and local officials including police units, provincial governors, district governors, and heads of administrative institutions have, in certain instances, arbitrarily violated citizen's rights to personal liberty and security, holding them in unofficial detention facilities. For example, the head of the Taliban's local agricultural office in one district had imprisoned a person in his own office for ten days, on account of failure to pay land rent. These cases demonstrate that, in the absence of effective oversight and accountability, officials at various administrative levels can detain and imprison individuals arbitrarily and outside of legal processes.

Lawlessness and the prevalence of corruption are among other significant factors contributing to the rise in arbitrary and unlawful detentions. One interviewee recounted:

**"in July 2025, whilst I was on my way to work, I received a call from the anti-crime department of the Border Police, asking me to go to their office. When I went there, they confiscated my phones and, without offering any explanation, threw me into a container, where I remained for approximately one week. Whenever I asked what the reason for my detention was, they would reply that an investigation was under way and that I have to wait. After roughly a week and a half, someone came and told me I was free to go, and that they had detained me by mistake."**

## **A - Arbitrary Detention of Former Government Employees**

In 2025 at least 138 former government employees both civilian and military were unlawfully detained and imprisoned, primarily by the GDI. Compared with 2024, in which 142 cases were recorded, this represents a decrease of approximately 2.8 per cent. However, when compared with 2023, in which 118 cases were recorded, the figure reflects an increase of approximately 16.9 per cent.



On 1st September 2025, the Taliban arrested a former military serviceman in Khwaja Omari District of Ghazni Province and imprisoned him for three nights. He was asked to hand over weapons that he held from the Republic era or pay their equivalent in cash. This individual had previously been detained and tortured by the Taliban, and had ultimately been released after providing a guarantee. He has since been ordered to present himself at the police station whenever summoned by the Taliban.

Likewise, on 9 and 10 November 2025, two former military officials were arrested from Jaghori and Ab Band Districts of Ghazni Province. The authorities demanded both individuals to surrender weapons and ammunition belonging to the former government. These individuals remain in detention.

The allegation of gun/weapon ownership is one of the common ways the Taliban exert pressure on employees of the former government. This has happened repeatedly in the past four years and in fact precedence of such harassment exists from the first time Taliban were in power in 1990s. In many cases, the allegations lead to arbitrary detention and harassment and those arrested have often had to pay Taliban some money in lieu of weapons.

On 3 August 2025, a former military official was arrested from Khwaja Do Koh District, and on 17 November, another former military officer was arrested in the city of Sheberghan, Jawzjan Province. They remain in detention at the time of this writing.

On 26 September and 3 October 2025, a former military officer and a former member of the provincial council in Faryab Province were arrested by the Taliban. Similarly, on 30 December 2025, the Taliban arrested a former military officer from Bamiyan Province. The Taliban announced the charge against this individual as theft; however, a number of local residents have disputed the accusation, viewing it as an attempt to justify the detention of employees of the former government. Our sources confirm that since the fall of the republic, this individual was engaged in farming and agricultural activities.

Furthermore, in 2025, Rawadari documented cases of detention that extended beyond former government employees to target their family members. For example, on 18 October 2025, the GDI arrested the father of a former military officer in Kajran District of Daykundi Province. This 70-year-old man was held in detention for seven days and he was subjected to torture during his detention. The Taliban had demanded from him to surrender 12 weapons.

In a separate incident, in November 2025, the GDI in Uruzgan Province raided home of a former police commander, and detained his three sons on the charges of possessing weapons. These individuals were released after three days and declared innocent, without any formal charges.

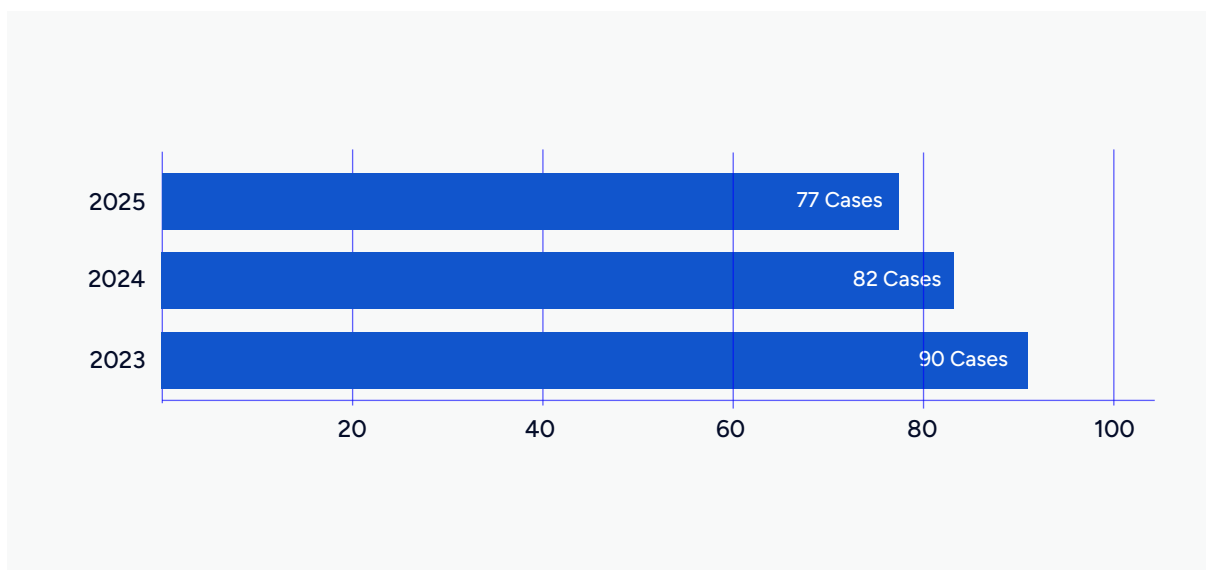
Meanwhile, in August 2025, in the south-western zone, the Taliban raided home of a former local government official and seized his personal vehicle. Information obtained indicates that the brother of this former local official was also beaten during the raid. He subsequently went to the police station to reclaim the vehicle, but, by his own account, he was detained and beaten by the Taliban. In his statement to Rawadari, he said: "When I went to retrieve my brother's vehicle, one of the members of Taliban grabbed my arm, threw me into a container, and said, 'You are the brother of an infidel employee of the Republic.' They then began to beat me. After a few days I was released, but no one listened to me."

In another similar incident, a group of armed Taliban raided the home of a former military officer in Paktika Province and severely beat his brother. This incident took place in the Saganai village of KhairKot District.

## **B - Arbitrary Detention of Activists and Human Rights Defenders**

Based on the findings of this report, in 2025 the Taliban arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned at least 77 civil society members and human rights defenders, including 7 women. The charges brought against these individuals primarily included organising education and training for women and girls, propagating against the Taliban, and criticising DFA restrictions on women's rights.

In 2024, Rawadari recorded a total of 82 cases of arbitrary and unlawful detention of civil society members, human rights defenders and journalists. A comparison of these figures indicates that the rate of arbitrary and unlawful detention of civil society members, human rights defenders and journalists in 2025 decreased by approximately 6 per cent. Similarly, this figure represents a 14 per cent decrease compared with 2023, in which 90 cases were recorded.



During this reporting period, the majority of arbitrary and unlawful detentions of civil society members, journalists, and human rights defenders were carried out by the GDI. These individuals were primarily arrested and imprisoned for engaging in peaceful protest and criticising Taliban policies, particularly with regard to the restrictions imposed on the fundamental rights and freedoms of women. Those detained have been imprisoned without regard for the principles of a fair trial, including the notification of charges, the formal referral of cases to competent authorities, and the completion of judicial proceedings.

The DFA have used arbitrary and unlawful detentions as a tool to restrict and suppress critical and dissenting voices, responding to any form of opposition to their policies, at whatever level or scale, through the use of force and violence. The GDI seems to continuously monitor the activities of journalists, civil society members, human rights defenders, and generally social media users, which has in certain cases led to arrest, summons, or other forms of pressure and intimidation.

In 2025, Rawadari documented numerous cases in which individuals were detained and imprisoned solely for publishing critical posts on social media. For example, on 4 August 2025, the head of a news agency in Herat Province was arrested by the Taliban. The charges brought against this individual included publishing reports on crime without prior approval from the relevant Taliban authorities. Likewise, on 27 October 2025, a woman from Herat Province was arrested by the officials of the PVPV for her human rights activities. She was released after a few hours after providing a guarantee by her family that she would discontinue her activism.

In another case, on 25 June 2025, the GDI arrested a male civil society activist and university lecturer in Bamiyan Province. The stated reason for his arrest was the publication of critical content on social media and protesting restrictions on women's rights. He was released from Taliban detention after 12 days, following mediation and guarantee provided by local elders.

The GDI arrested a social media influencer in Khost Province. Sources close to this individual stated that the reason for his detention was his criticism of the Taliban on social media. He had previously been summoned on several occasions by local Taliban officials on account of publishing critical content.

On 15 April 2025, the Taliban arrested the editor of a local media outlet in Ghazni Province on charges of “propagating against the system” and sentenced him to three months’ imprisonment. He was released from prison on 3 July, and according to local sources, the reason for his detention was highlighting existing problems and criticism of Taliban policies on social media.

On 15 September 2025, the Taliban arrested a resident of Shuhada District in Badakhshan Province for publishing a Facebook post. This man is still in detention, for a period of nearly six months. In another case, on 30 October 2025, the GDI arrested a civil society activist from the city of Faizabad, Badakhshan for publishing critical content about the Taliban on social media, and imprisoned him for one month.

Rawadari has also documented numerous instances of human rights activists being arrested for providing educational programmes to women and girls, which will be elaborated upon in detail in subsequent sections of this report.

### C - Arbitrary Detention of Individuals on Charges of Cooperating with Anti-Taliban Groups

During this reporting period, the Taliban arrested and imprisoned at least 192 individuals on charges of collaborating with and having connections to military and political opposition groups. This figure represents a decrease of approximately 31.9 per cent compared with 2024, in which 282 cases were recorded. Furthermore, the data for this reporting period reflects an increase of approximately 54.8 per cent compared with 2023, in which 124 cases were recorded.



These individuals were detained on the charges of membership or collaboration with the National Resistance Front (NRF), the Liberation Front (LF), or membership of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, by the GDI and police. Among these individuals, there is also at least one woman who has been arrested on charges of cooperating with groups opposed to the Taliban.

Our findings confirm that the standards and principles of a fair trial, including access to legal counsel and the adjudication of cases within a reasonable timeframe were not observed in these arrests and detentions. For example, a number of political and ideological opponents of the Taliban in the provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Paktia, Paktika, and Khost have been held in detention for periods ranging from six months to two years, without their cases having been referred to court.

On 24 May 2025, the Taliban arrested a resident of Panjshir Province in the city of Kabul on charges of having connections with the NRF. A family member of this individual stated that he had recently returned to the country from Iran and had no affiliation with any party or political movement.

In August 2025, a former military officer was arrested by the GDI in Helmand on charges of having connections with groups opposed to the Taliban. Our sources confirm that he was subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment during his detention.

On 8 October 2025, a resident of Herat was arrested and imprisoned by the GDI on charges of collaborating with groups opposed to the Taliban. He was released from prison on 3 November upon provision of a guarantee. This individual was severely beaten during his period of detention. Likewise, on 7 October 2025, a former female military officer was detained in Herat by the GDI on charges of collaborating with groups opposed to the Taliban. She was released from the women's prison at the provincial centre after 10 days, due to the charges against her being unsubstantiated.

In another incident, on 5 November 2025, a former Afghan National Army (ANA) officer was arrested from Karukh District of Herat Province by the officials of the DFA Ministry of Defence on the charges of collaborating with groups opposed to the Taliban. He was subsequently transferred to the "Al-Farooq" Army Corps; however, no information is currently available regarding his current condition.

There are other cases in which individuals having already served their designated sentences, still remains in detention and have not been released. Information obtained from Kandahar indicates that Taliban courts have sent official correspondence to prison officials ordering the release of such individuals; however, the implementation of these orders has been delayed or ignored.

The detention of individuals on charges of membership or collaboration with groups opposed to the Taliban, without observance of the fundamental principles of a fair trial, constitutes a violation of the right to personal liberty and security, and is a breach of the obligations set forth in international human rights instruments.

## D - Arbitrary and Unlawful Detention Due to Non-Compliance with the PVPV Law

During 2025, at least 2,125 individuals, including 88 women, were arbitrarily detained and imprisoned with disregard for legal standards. Our findings indicate the charges attributed to these individuals primarily relate to non-compliance with the PVPV law, including regulations concerning dress code, the style and length of beard and hair, failure to wear a turban, listening to music, non-attendance at congregational prayers, not complying with Taliban prescribed hijab, absence of a male guardian, speaking with men who are not mahram, and similar violations of the PVPV law.

The findings of this report indicate that the arbitrary and unlawful detentions on grounds of PVPV violations have increased more than fivefold in 2025. In 2024, Rawadari had recorded approximately 379 cases of arbitrary and unlawful detention of civilians. Furthermore, the data from 2025 shows increase of more than sevenfold compared with the figures recorded in 2023, in which 291 cases were documented.



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One of the principal factors behind the rise in arbitrary detentions is the expansion of extra-legal measures and the widespread interference of the PVPV employees and officials in the public and private lives of citizens, and women in particular. Given the broad scope and manner of their implementation, these measures have given rise to serious concerns regarding violations of privacy, individual freedoms and personal security.

**Our findings illustrate that in 2025, the officials of the MPVPV conducted day and night patrols in hotels, restaurants, shops, shrines, mosques, public and private schools, and bazaars. During these patrols, they have subjected citizens to harassment and in certain instances detained them in groups.**

For example, on 7 August 2025, the MPVPV employees detained 27 students from a secondary school in the centre of Daikundi Province on charges of not having beard and having Western haircuts, and imprisoned them for three days and nights. On 8 August 2025, at least 46 shopkeepers from the “Bazar-e-Kohna Nili” in Daikundi Province were detained and ill-treated by the officials of PVPV on charges of failing to attend congregational prayers.

**In December 2025, officials of the PVPV in Daman District of Kandahar detained 10 individuals from two hotels in a single day on charges of abandoning congregational prayer and trimming their beards. In Helmand, in July 2025, 17 local residents, aged between 20 and 30 years, the majority of whom were farmers by occupation, were detained on charges of performing folk music. After imprisoning these individuals, the officials of the PVPV subjected them to beatings and torture.**

In another case, on 16 September 2025, the officials of PVPV department detained a woman in the Jibrail township of Herat Province on charges of not wearing the Taliban prescribed Hijab. She was released after five days from the women’s prison in the centre of Herat city, upon provision of guarantee. According to this woman, she was subjected to humiliation, insult, and ill-treatment during her detention. She stated that the employees of the PVPV had called her a “dirty Hazara,” “infidel” and “ugly.”

On 16 December 2025, employees of the PVPV detained and imprisoned 5 young women from the centre of Bamiyan Province on charges of not wearing the Hijab. These individuals spent one week in detention and were ultimately released upon provision of guarantee by their families. In another case, on 8 October 2025, a resident of Parwan Province was detained near his home on charges of failing to attend congregational prayers. He was released from Taliban detention after one day and night; however, due to fear of being harassed again, he was forced to relocate with his family to another province.

On 18 September 2025, officials of the PVPV in Ghazni detained the father and brother of a bride during a wedding ceremony. A member of this family recounted:

**“It was my sister’s henna night (a part of the wedding ceremony) and we had been playing music at home. At around midnight, a vehicle of the PVPV department stopped in front of our door. They asked for the bride’s father. My father introduced himself and tried to apologise for playing music, but they forcibly pushed him into the vehicle and detained my elder brother as well. Despite the pleas and mediation of those present, the officials took both of them away. That night, the wedding celebration turned into distress and anxiety, and my sister wept until morning. The following day, a number of local elders went to the PVPV, and my father and brother were released on guarantee.”**

Another interviewee in Ghazni Province stated that on 1 December 2025, as they held his brother’s wedding ceremony in one of the city’s wedding halls, the employees of the PVPV arrived at the hall and attempted to take his father away for playing music in the women’s section and filming the ceremony. He recounts that his father was allowed to remain at the ceremony and attend to the guests through the mediation of elders. However, the PVPV department employees took him away in his father’s place. Having spent three nights in detention, he says: “During the day, several of us were kept inside a single container, and every day new individuals were brought in.”

## **Violation of the Right to Human Dignity**

Human dignity is considered an inherent right and the foundation of the equal rights of all human beings. Respect for human dignity requires the observance of a series of rights, including protection from all forms of torture, humiliation, insult, and other forms of cruel treatment.<sup>30</sup> Rawadari’s findings indicate that during 2025, the Taliban subjected individuals to torture and ill-treatment with the aim of intimidation, punishment, humiliation and to extort information or forced confessions. Additionally, the Taliban courts have widely issued and carried out cruel, inhumane, or degrading punishments.

### **A - Torture and Ill-Treatment of Detainees**

Protection from torture is amongst the absolute, inalienable, and non-derogable rights of individuals, which cannot be violated under any circumstances, even in exceptional situations such as the threat of war, internal instability, insecurity, or any other state of emergency.

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30 . Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble and Article 1.

The International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), both prohibit the infliction of torture and ill-treatment upon individuals.<sup>31</sup>

At present, there is no specific legal framework for the criminalisation of torture in Afghanistan, as the Taliban have suspended the former constitution, the Penal Code and the Anti-torture Law<sup>32</sup>. Currently, torture and ill-treatment are used as common practices within the judicial institutions and detention facilities in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the absence of independent and effective mechanisms for holding perpetrators accountable and addressing complaints related to torture and ill-treatment has resulted in the perpetuation of impunity and the denial of victims' access to justice.

Due to lack of direct access to places of deprivation of liberty, Rawadari is not in a position to present exact statistics regarding torture or ill-treatment of detainees. However, based on information obtained through interviews, it is clear that torture is widely used by the DAF for punishment of prisoners and exerting information or confessions. The victims of torture and ill-treatment are primarily former government employees, individuals accused of having connections with groups opposed to the Taliban, journalists, and civil society members.

## 1 - Types and Methods of Torture in Taliban Detention Facilities

Rawadari's findings indicate that in 2025, conditions in certain public prisons in provincial centres have improved in terms of prisoners' access to basic facilities, as well as with fewer cases of torture and ill-treatment reported in these locations. The highest incidents of torture and ill-treatment have occurred in the detention facilities of the GDI and the police, and in particular police stations and police detention centres at district levels.

Some of the torture methods utilized in detention facilities are as the following: electric shocks, chapeh walchak (reverse handcuffing), hanging heavy objects from the genitals of male detainees, forcing the consumption of intoxicating substances, placing victims' heads in plastic bags to cause suffocation, water boarding, , suspension by the hair or limbs from windows, ceilings, or ropes; forcing individuals to stand or sit for prolonged periods in painful positions, beating with sticks, fists and kicks, rifle butts and cables; pulling out hair and fingernails, throwing individuals into wells, deprivation from water and food, denial of access to toilet facilities, prolonged solitary confinement, verbal

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<sup>31</sup> . International Convention Against Torture, Article 1. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7.

<sup>32</sup> Rawadari, The State of Access to Justice in the Taliban's Justice System, p. 13, <https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RW-Highlight-2023.pdf>

abuse on sexual, ethnic, and religious grounds; strangling, threatening to kill prisoners and members of their families.

## Testimonies of Interviewees

Based on information and evidence obtained, the Taliban have used torture as a tool for punishment, intimidation, humiliation, and the extraction of information and confessions and have even subjected individuals who were detained on the basis of incorrect and mistaken information to torture and ill-treatment. For example, **a former detainee from Helmand stated: "In the early morning of 8 June this year, whilst I was on my way to the district marketplace, I was detained by the Taliban. They took me to the police station. Every night they beat me with rifle butts, fists, and kicks. I was there for one week and knew nothing whatsoever about the charges against me. After one week they released me and said they had mistaken me for someone else."**

Another victim from one of the southern provinces, who had been tortured in the GDI detention facility, recounted the following in an interview with Rawadari:

"...on the third night, a man who spoke Pashto with great difficulty and appeared to be Pakistani told me that I had until the following day to confess, otherwise I will be killed. He said they had arrested my friends too, and that all of them had confessed to their crimes. I had absolutely no idea what they were talking about or what my crime was, because I had not committed any crimes. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when two men began to torture me. When they gave me electric shocks, my skin burned and I could smell the burning. They continuously attached electric wires to my feet, the soft part of my ears, and various parts of my body, telling me to confess that I was an American spy and had worked for them. Each time I gave a negative answer, they tortured me with greater intensity. They held my eyes in front of intense light, in such manner that I was unable to see anything for up to two hours. I had not eaten for two days, and water was given to me in a dirty glass that was half filled with soil. I was truly exhausted and had no answers to their questions. Day after day they tortured me using different methods; hanging a heavy weight from my genitals, something that was even difficult to imagine... On one of the days when a doctor had come to examine the prisoners, I noticed that sixteen years old teenage boys were also amongst the prisoners. One of them, whose eyes were lined with kohl and whose condition appeared abnormal, approached me and said, 'Uncle, you should confess too, otherwise they will do the same to you.' I asked, 'Do what?' Gesturing towards his bruised and wounded body, he indicated that he had been subjected to sexual abuse and assault. He had lost control of his bowels as a result of severe torture. Witnessing that scene was deeply shocking for me. I never imagined that a human being could be subjected to such violation and degradation."

A resident of Kandahar, who had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment on charges of membership of a group opposed to the Taliban and had recently been released, told Rawadari in an interview:

"There were three of us, and we were tortured in the GDI detention facility using the most severe methods, to the extent that I was unable to sleep for 14 days and nights. My nerves no longer function properly and I have been left with serious psychological problems. I cannot sleep without medication and my memory has also been affected. In order to extract confessions, they beat us severely with cables, to the point that I lost 10 kilograms in weight during this period." He also stated that one of his friends had fallen ill in prison because the Taliban had subjected him to extreme heat as a form of torture.

**Another interviewee from Ghazni Province, who had spent three months in Taliban detention, said: "The method of torture was such that prisoners' hands were tied to the ceiling so that their feet were lifted off the ground. They would then beat them on the back, legs, and hands with sticks, chains, and rifle butts. The wing supervisor was the one who tortured us. He was an illiterate man and someone else signed for him (he couldn't even sign his own name). He was extremely cruel and every single day he would torture three to four prisoners using the same method."**

A resident of Herat who was released from Taliban detention in November 2025 said that he had been severely tortured in the GDI detention facility and also in Central Prison in Herat, to the extent that he is currently unable to control his bladder, has lost his sexual function, and is now in a poor psychological state.

A Taliban court employee, whilst confirming the use of torture by the GDI and police, stated that individuals who are tortured in these institutions are only brought before the courts once they have fully recovered. According to this source, the Taliban use various methods to conceal cases of torture and prevent human rights organisations from accessing victims. For instance, in the past, victims of torture in Kandahar were transferred to Mirwais Regional Hospital, a civilian hospital; however, more recently they are transferred to military hospitals so that no evidence of the torture becomes accessible to external individuals or organisations. Furthermore, victims of torture are threatened to maintain silence regarding their experiences in detention.

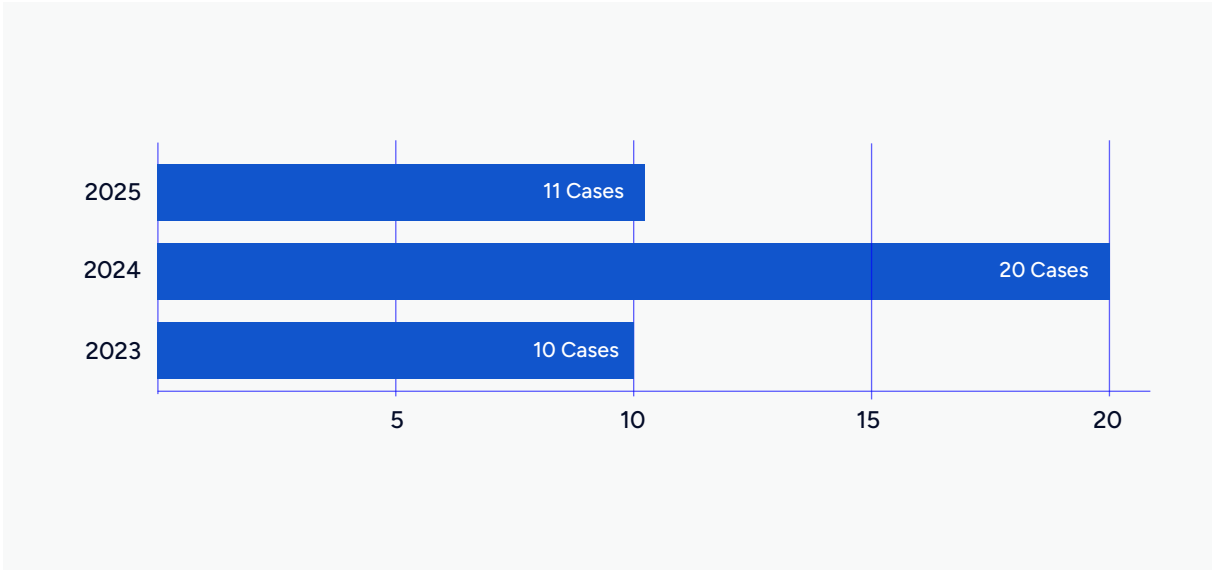
The testimonies above are from the torture cases that Rawadari documented in 2025. In an in-depth Special Report based on first-hand accounts from victims, Rawadari has examined in detail the conditions of detention facilities and the manner in which the Taliban treat individuals from the moment of arrest until their release from places of detention.<sup>33</sup>

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33 Rawadari, Torture and Ill-Treatment: The State of Prisons in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, (June 2025); <https://rawadari.org/reports/torture-and-ill-treatment-the-state-of-prisons-in-taliban-controlled-afghanistan/>

## 2 - Killing of Prisoners

Our findings indicate that during 2025 at least 11 individuals were killed in Taliban-controlled prisons following severe torture. In 2024, Rawadari had recorded a total of 20 incidents of torture resulting in death. A comparison of both figures indicates that the killing of prisoners in 2025 decreased by approximately 45 per cent. Furthermore, this figure represents a 10 per cent increase compared with 2023, in which 10 cases were recorded.




In 2025 the greatest number of torture cases resulting in death occurred in detention facilities run by the GDI. The victims were predominantly former government employees and individuals accused of membership or collaboration with opposition groups.

For example, in December 2025, employees of the GDI raided home of a former military officer in Helmand and detained him on suspicion of stealing a motorcycle. The individual was held in a darkened room within an intelligence detention facility, where he died three days later allegedly as a result of severe torture. Following the incident, the Taliban threatened the victim’s family, demanding that they remain silent and refrain from speaking to the media or others about the circumstances of his death. Local Taliban officials also instructed the family that, should anyone enquire about the incident, they were to say that the victim had died of a heart attack. A relative of the victim stated that visible marks of torture and severe physical abuse on his body convinced them that his death was the result of torture sustained whilst in the custody of the GDI.

On 30th December 2025, a former military officer in Andar District of Ghazni was detained by the Taliban and killed under severe torture. The body of this man was discovered and identified by local residents several days later. Eyewitnesses have said that they observed clear marks of torture on the victim's body. However, local Taliban officials in Ghazni Province have made no public comments regarding the incident.

In a separate incident on 21st August 2025, a former military officer died following arrest and severe torture at a Police Station in Ghazni. Upon handing over the body of the former military officer to his family, the Taliban announced that he had been killed during an altercation with a drug addict. The victim's family rejected this claim, saying that he had been detained by the Taliban and that signs of severe torture were visible on his body. On 30th October 2025, a 17-year-old boy died in the central prison of Ghazni, and the Taliban subsequently handed his body over to his family. The victim's relatives said that he had been detained and imprisoned on suspicion of murdering a man. Upon hand-over of his body, Taliban announced that he had committed suicide, a claim that the victim's family has refused to accept.

These and further documented cases demonstrate that DFA have not only failed to take action to investigate, prosecute, or punish those responsible for murder and severe torture, but have also sought to silence the victims' families through denial, attribution of these deaths to other causes, and the use of threats and intimidation.



In October 2025, a resident of Khadir District in Daikundi died just one day after of his release from prison. He was 19 years old and had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment on charges of drug trafficking. According to information obtained, he had served only three months of his sentence; however, after severe torture, he was released from prison before completing his term and died the following day.

### 3 - Absence of an Effective Monitoring Mechanism for Places of Deprivation of Liberty

One of the contributing factors to the continuation of torture and ill-treatment in detention facilities is the lack of independent monitoring mechanisms and the absence of any means for the effective and impartial handling of prisoners' complaints.<sup>34</sup> In accordance with international human rights standards, including obligations arising from the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, states are required to facilitate independent monitoring of detention facilities and to establish effective mechanisms for the recording, examination and prosecution of complaints of torture.<sup>35</sup>

The Taliban currently permits no independent domestic or international body to have effective access to monitor detention facilities and prisons, nor does it itself adhere to any transparent, accountable or effective mechanism for addressing prisoners' complaints regarding torture and other forms of ill-treatment. In practice, this situation has created the conditions for the continued perpetration of serious human rights violations against detainees and the on-going impunity of the perpetrators.

**Our findings illustrate that the MPVPV Departments and the Department for Enforcement of Decrees and Edicts (DEDE), in certain provinces, undertake measures to record and address complaints relating to torture; however, security institutions i.e. GDI, police and Ministry of Defence mostly regard this as interference in their work, and demonstrate no willingness to cooperate on addressing complaints of torture.**

According to information obtained by Rawadari, in first six months of 2025 alone, in Kandahar, the MVPV Department recorded 160 complaints relating to allegations of torture within security institutions. However, there are currently no reports or information regarding the manner in which these 160 complaints have been handled, and in particular concerning the prosecution of those responsible for torture.

**There are instances of follow up of complaints in some provinces. Rawadari has confirmed reports that in Khost, complaints submitted by families of detainees to MPVPV Department, are followed up and acted upon.**

In Parwan, the Department for the Enforcement of Decrees and Edicts, the PVPV Department, and courts, whilst conducting monitoring visits to detention facilities, have requested that prisoners submit any complaints they may have to them in writing. However, no information is made available regarding the methods by which complaints may be submitted to these authorities.

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34 . Rawadari, Report on Torture and Ill-Treatment, p. 62: <https://rawadari.org/reports/torture-and-ill-treatment-the-state-of-prisons-in-taliban-controlled-afghanistan/>

35 . Convention Against Torture (CAT), Articles 2 and 11

Concurrently, the Prison Authority has a monitoring division within its structure that periodically conducts oversight visits to General Prisons in the provinces. In a number of other provinces, including Bamiyan, PVPV commissions are formed to monitor prisons, primarily monitoring the general living conditions of prisoners and their access to food and other basic amenities. In certain instances, the Court of Appeal or the provincial governor assigns a delegation to assess the condition of prisons. These bodies never publish their reports. Rawadari's information indicates that these institutions monitor only the general situation and detainees' access to basic amenities, and lack authority to address complaints relating to non-processing of cases, lack of access to defence counsel, torture, and ill-treatment.

Furthermore, the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), within the framework of its monitoring mandate, visits and monitors certain Taliban-controlled detention facilities. This monitoring primarily covers detention centres and General Prisons in provincial capitals both for men and women. Our local sources report that UNAMA's monitoring is conditional upon prior coordination and permission from the relevant authorities, and UNAMA cannot conduct unannounced visits without prior arrangements. These restrictions significantly affect the effectiveness of monitoring and limit the possibility of independent documentation of cases of torture and ill-treatment.

In the meantime, the detention facilities belonging to the GDI and MPVPV, as well as Police Districts (PDs) across all provinces that account for the greatest number of reported cases of torture and ill-treatment remain beyond the reach of UNAMA. UNAMA is not permitted by the DFA to independently monitor these facilities.

## **B - Imposition of Cruel and Inhuman Punishments**

Article 7 of the ICCPR stipulates that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The Human Rights Committee (HRC) emphasizes that states cannot justify these punishments—including corporal punishment and public execution—under any circumstances, as they are inherently horrifying and degrading to both the individual and society.

Despite these international prohibitions, Taliban courts issued and implemented various cruel and inhuman sentences during this reporting period. These punishments included executions, stoning, and public floggings. Because Taliban judicial bodies deny defendants access to legal counsel and rely on confessions obtained through torture, the imposition of these verdicts is even further alarming.

In 2025, the Taliban courts have flogged at least 857 people, including 114 women on charges of running away from home, extramarital relations, theft, sodomy and trafficking, production, buying, selling and consumption of narcotics and alcoholic beverages. Furthermore, they have carried out the death penalty by qisas against 6 men accused of murder, and have issued a sentence of stoning against 1 woman accused of an extramarital relationship.

## 1- Stoning and Qisas Punishments

In 2025, Taliban courts carried out at least 6 qisas sentences in the provinces of Khost, Nimroz, Farah and Badghis, and also issued a sentence of stoning against a woman in Daikundi Province.

**On 2nd December 2025, the DFA Supreme Court issued a press release announcing that “the divine qisas ruling against a murderer” had been carried out. The sentence was carried out at the sports stadium of Khost Province following confirmation by Mawlawi Habatullah Akhundzada, the Taliban’s supreme leader. The Supreme Court’s press release specified that the individual who was executed had been convicted of intentional murder of a man.<sup>36</sup>**

On 16th October 2025, the Taliban’s Supreme Court announced the execution of a man at the sports stadium of Badghis. According to a press release issued by the Taliban’s Supreme Court, the individual had been convicted of murdering a man and a woman, and his qisas sentence was carried out in the presence of spectators following confirmation by the Taliban’s supreme leader.<sup>37</sup>

On 11th April 2025, the Taliban’s Supreme Court implemented qisas sentences of four men convicted of murder across three provinces of the country. According to a press release issued by the Taliban’s Supreme Court, two individuals were executed in the city of Qala-e-Naw of Badghis, one in the city of Zaranj, the provincial capital of Nimroz, and another in the provincial centre of Farah. All sentences were implemented by way of shooting, in the sports stadiums and in the presence of hundreds of spectators. These sentences were carried out following confirmation by the Taliban’s Supreme Leader, and the individuals were executed with their hands and eyes bound.<sup>38</sup>

In Kandahar, a qisas sentence against an individual accused of murder had been issued by the Appellate Court but the victim’s family subsequently pardoned the suspect, and as a result the qisas sentence was annulled by the Supreme Court. Furthermore, the Primary Urban Court of Daikundi Province issued a sentence of “amputation of the hand” against a 15-year-old child from the provincial centre of Daikundi on charge of

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36 . Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), Supreme Court, Press Release, 2 December 2025.

37 . Ibid <https://supremecourt.gov.af/ps/all-news?page=30>

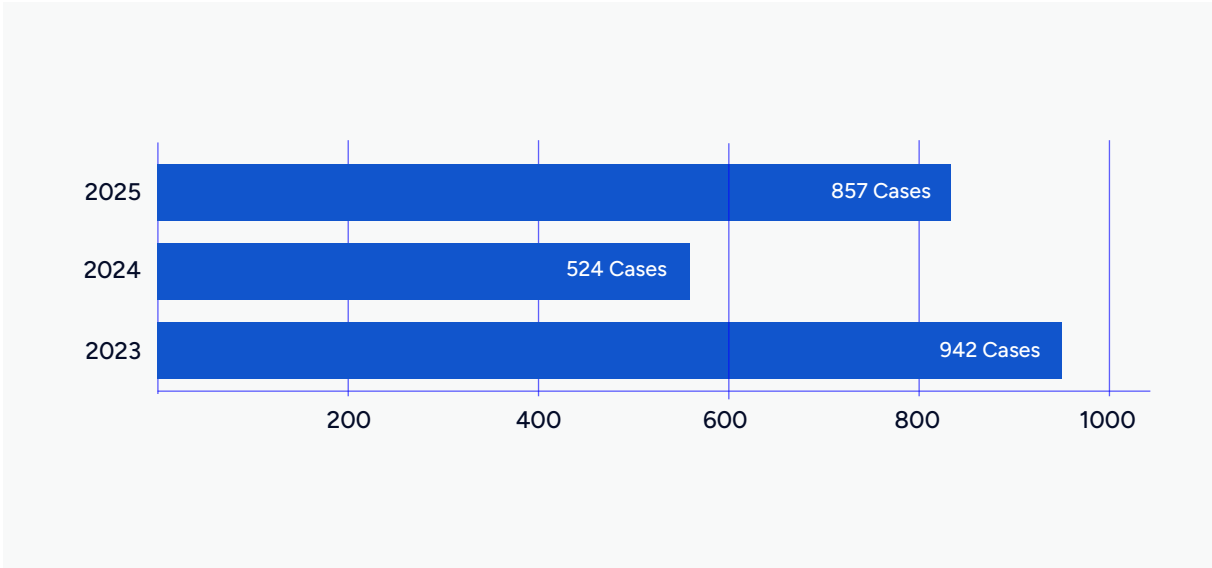
38 Pajhwok News Agency, “Retaliatory punishment was carried out on four men in three provinces”, 11 April 2025 [https://pajhwok.com/ps/2025/04/11/retaliatory-punishment-was-carried-out-on-four-people-in-three-provinces/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://pajhwok.com/ps/2025/04/11/retaliatory-punishment-was-carried-out-on-four-people-in-three-provinces/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

theft; however, this was reduced on appeal and instead the child was sentenced to detention at the youth rehabilitation and training centre.

On 19th March 2025, the Taliban’s Primary Court in Ishtarlay District of Daikundi Province sentenced a woman to stoning on charges of giving birth to an illegitimate child. The woman lodged a formal appeal and the sentence has not yet been carried out and remains suspended.

## 2 - Corporal Punishment

In 2025, the Taliban courts flogged at least 857 individuals, including 114 women, on charges of fleeing from home, sodomy, extramarital relations, theft, and the production, buying, selling and consumption of narcotics and alcoholic beverages. This figure represents an increase of 63.5 per cent compared to 2024, when 524 cases were recorded. In comparison to 2023, this figure represents a decrease of more than 9 per cent, when 942 cases were recorded.



The Taliban courts issue flogging as a supplementary punishment in the majority of offences. Many floggings are carried out away from the public view. In certain cases, particularly in relation to what are termed ‘moral offences’, this punishment is carried out publicly, and officials of the MPVPV and mosque imams call upon people to attend the flogging. Rawadari’s findings indicate that a considerable number of those in attendance are comprised of teachers and students from madrassas, including children.<sup>39</sup>

39 Rawadari, Report on the Human Rights Situation in 2024, p. 20.: <https://rawadari.org/reports/afghanistan-human-rights-situation-report-2024/>

Information from Taliban courts in Kandahar indicates that authorities carry out floggings daily, typically in a non-public manner. For instance, in just one-month, provincial courts flogged 78 individuals in the presence of judges, witnesses, and court attendees.

In most cases, DFA courts apply flogging as a supplementary punishment alongside mandatory imprisonment. In December 2025, for example, the Primary Urban Court of Herat —following confirmation by the Taliban’s Supreme Court—flogged eight individuals, giving each 39 lashes for producing and trading alcoholic beverages. The court also sentenced each of these individuals to two years of imprisonment.

On December 10, the Taliban publicly flogged two individuals in the Muqur district of Ghazni on charges of extramarital relations. One individual received a three-year prison sentence, while the other received five years.

**Similarly, in the Azra district of Logar, authorities publicly administered 20 lashes each to a woman and a man for fleeing their homes and sentenced them to one year of discretionary imprisonment (tazir).**

The DFA usually announces the identities of those accused of moral offenses and theft before carrying out floggings. This practice conflicts with the principle of the presumption of innocence and violates the privacy and dignity.



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### 3 - Other Forms of Inhuman Punishment

Data and evidence obtained indicate that in 2025 the Taliban carried out other forms of inhuman and degrading punishment. For instance, in January 2025, in Nad Ali District of Helmand, the Taliban bound a drug addict accused of theft to long pole and placed him before public view.

Likewise, in July 2025, the Taliban in Dishu District of Helmand paraded another individual throughout the town, who had been detained whilst burgling a house, in order to put him on display before the public.

Such measures imposed by the Taliban for the purpose of punishment can be considered as example of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments, which stand in direct contradiction to the provision set out in international human rights instruments and constitute a violation of the right to human dignity.<sup>40</sup>

## Suppression of Peaceful Protests and Assemblies

Holding peaceful gatherings is one of the fundamental human rights guaranteed under international instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This right encompasses the holding of public or private gatherings for the purpose of freely expressing views, staging protests, or advocating for common goals.<sup>41</sup> Under international human rights instruments, states are prohibited from all types of interference and arbitrary prevention of holding of gatherings. Additionally, states are obligated to provide the necessary conditions for the safe assembly and peaceful protest. Any restriction upon this right is permissible only when prescribed by law and deemed necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety, public order, public health or morals, or for protection of the rights and freedoms of others.<sup>42</sup>

Despite this, the Taliban currently do not permit any form of peaceful protest or assembly and suppress such gatherings through the use of force and violence. In 2025 alone, the DFA violently suppressed at least 29 protests, detaining a minimum of 140 demonstrators, killing 7, and injuring 32 others. The assemblies and gatherings that took place were held in protest against increased taxes, the harassment and oppression of women and girls, ethnic discrimination, the destruction of agricultural land, land seizure, and unfair exploitation of natural resources. The methods employed to suppress these protests have included firing into the air, shooting directly at protestors, and arresting and imprisonment of protestors.

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40 . International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7.

41 . International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 21.

42 . Ibid.

On 8th June 2025, the Taliban detained at least 50 Uzbek demonstrators in the village of Qozi Bai Qala in Dawlatabad District of Faryab. The incident occurred after two Taliban members harassed local girls, which subsequently led to a confrontation between local youth and the Taliban. The Taliban detained the young men. Villagers gathered in protest against this detention, and this assembly subsequently expanded into criticism of the Taliban's discriminatory approach. The Taliban used aerial gunshots and physical assault to suppress the protest, and charged those detained with protesting against the "Islamic government" and "the religion of Islam." These individuals were subsequently released through mediation of local elders.

**In the first three months of 2025, during 5 protests in the districts of Khash, Jurm, Arghanj Khwah, Baharak and Warduj in Badakhshan, at least 7 protesters were killed, 51 were wounded, and a further 32 were detained. These protests were held in response to the destruction of poppy fields, land seizure, the inequitable exploitation of natural resources, and disputes over land and grazing pastures. which were organized The Taliban suppressed these gatherings by firing directly at protesters.**

On 11th August 2025, a number of street vendors in Gereshk District of Helmand attended the municipal offices to protest against increases in rent and taxation. In response, the municipality officials detained three of them and imprisoned them in a shipping container. These demonstrators were released after 24 hours. On 5th August 2025, roadside money exchangers in the city of Lashkar Gah in Helmand peacefully gathered in protest against a decision by Da Afghanistan Bank (the national bank) that had prohibited them from continuing their work. The Taliban dispersed this gathering by aerial gunfire and violent conduct, and detained three of the demonstrators. Those detained were released after three days upon the provision of a guarantee.

**In a separate incident, following the imposition of new restrictions on the movement of three-wheelers within the city of Herat, drivers gathered in protest outside the governor's office. The Taliban forces dispersed them by firing aerial shots, preventing the demonstrators from approaching the building of the provincial administration. Local authorities had recently announced a complete ban on three-wheelers operating along busy main roads.**

On 28 December 2025, a number of local elders held a protest in response to the Taliban's decision to construct a lorry park on the "Dasht-e-Talkhak Zaar-e- Rawza" site in the centre of Ghazni. The project is to be carried out on privately owned land and on land containing kariz/qanat. The Taliban violently suppressed the gathering and detained two of the protesters for several hours.

Whilst the Taliban have violently suppressed citizens' protests and gatherings throughout 2025, they have in certain instances compelled people to attend rallies aligned with DFA policies. For example, on 25th January 2025, the governor of Bamiyan used threats and coercion to force government employees including teachers from schools and universities to participate in a protest against the International Criminal Court's (ICC) announcement on application of arrest warrants for the Taliban leaders. Likewise, in a number of other provinces, the local authorities had encouraged people to hold demonstrations and rallies in support of Palestine.

Part Two

# Human Rights Situation of Women and Girls



Photo (C) Sayed Habib Bidell / Alamy

The findings of this report indicate that throughout 2025, the Taliban have continued to deprive women of fundamental rights such as education, employment, freedom of movement, and access to justice and they have also broadened the scope of discrimination, restriction, and social control over women and girls' lives by adopting an increasingly stringent approach, most notably through the enforcement of the PVPV law. These restrictions have resulted in the further stripping away of women and girls' freedoms and have had a severe impact on their personal and social lives.

## 1 - Increased Restrictions on the Right to Education

The right to education is regarded as one of the most fundamental of all human rights, one that international human rights instruments have formally recognised, emphasising the necessity of equal access to educational opportunities for all individuals.<sup>43</sup> Any form of discrimination in the enjoyment of this right on the basis of gender or any other grounds constitutes a violation of human rights.

Continuing with their education ban on women, the Taliban have failed to take any steps towards reopening the schools and universities to women and girls and have additionally adopted an even more stringent policy, imposing greater discrimination and further restrictions upon women's right to education in 2025.

Throughout 2025, MPVPV has been actively identifying and shutting down clandestine educational centres across various parts of the country, whilst also prohibiting the teaching of modern subjects that had previously been offered in a number of religious schools [madrassas].

Additionally, information obtained from Kandahar indicates that the Taliban intend to convert a number of girls' schools into madrassa. Two girls' schools in PD5 of Kandahar city have already been converted. Furthermore, in a recent measure, DFA have issued instructions to all higher educational institutes to refrain from teaching books authored by women.

**Among the most significant actions taken by the Taliban on a wider scale across various parts of the country during this reporting period are: the tightening of strict regulations relating to the hijab and the requirement of a *mahram*, for female teachers and even for female students at levels below Grade Three; the prohibition on female teachers teaching male students above Grade Three; the banning of women and girls from participating in vocational training programmes including drawing and calligraphy; the closure of training programmes such as tailoring and embroidery; the shutting down of dozens of educational courses that had been secretly providing learning opportunities for women and girls; and the arrest of teachers and students from such centres.**

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43 . Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 26. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 13.

## Compulsory Hijab and Mahram for Young Girls

Among the restrictions that have been significantly intensified following the enforcement of the PVPV law are: the compulsion of girl students below Grade Six (i.e. children younger than 12 years) to wear a larger scarf and full-length clothing; the compulsory use of face mask for girls in a number of provinces including Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Parwan, Badakhshan, and Herat; and the prohibition on the use of cosmetics and jewellery, nail varnish, and the wearing of long nails. Rawadari's findings indicate that students who have defied these stringent regulations have been subjected to punishment, humiliation, and verbal abuse and in some instances have even had their clothing torn or have been expelled from school.

In a number of provinces, including Bamiyan, the Taliban have held educational and propaganda programmes to promote the PVPV law, particularly to enforce regulations concerning the dress code of women and girls and their conduct in public spaces. Additionally, the officials of the MPVPV maintain a continuous presence in both state and private schools to monitor compliance with these regulations, including the outfit of women and girls.

**Furthermore, in Kandahar, the PVPV department has been distributing "mahram cards" to girl students below Grade Six, including 9-year-old girls, requiring them to be accompanied by a male guardian when travelling to and from school. In addition, in certain schools in Helmand and Ghazni, girls below Grade Six who have reached the age of nine and are physically tall or of a bigger build have been barred from attending classes. These measures have been carried out on the basis of the Taliban's interpretation of the age of puberty for girls under Hanafi jurisprudence.**

In enforcing these restrictions, officials of the MPVPV are checking the identity documents of girl students in order to identify nine-year-old girls and prevent them from continuing to attend classes, a move that carries the risk of depriving an even greater number of girls of their right to education. As many children in Afghanistan begin school at the age of seven, with this measure from the Taliban, a great number of girls will only be able to continue their education up to Grade Three.

In Ghor, girls are permitted to attend school during very limited hours, and are at times prevented from entry under the pretext of gender mixing or inadequate hijab.

One interviewee gave the following account of how the PVPV officials treated female students and the school principal in a private school in Ghazni:

"We were in the middle of a lesson when PVPV officials entered the school and harshly criticised the outfit of a female student who had recently returned from Iran. They subjected both the student and the teachers to humiliation and verbal abuse using obscene language. This student, who had been secretly studying in Grade Seven, responded to the officials' behaviour by saying: 'Why are you concern with how we dress and, and why don't you allow girls to study?' These words enraged the Taliban, and they attempted to take the girl away with them but she resisted. The PVPV officials then went to the other classrooms, removed all the girls from the school, and sealed the premises. The students were terrified and in tears. The Taliban detained the school's head teacher and took him away, though he was released after two days from the detention facility of the PVPV, upon the guarantee of the teachers. They returned to the school and announced that any student who had protested must be expelled. In addition, they expelled 16 girls who had been informally studying in Grade Seven."

## Testimonies of Interviewees

Another student from Ghazni Province said:

“After midday, during the third lesson, three officials from the PVPV entered the school. We were all frightened, as girls above Grade Six had been informally and secretly studying at our school. The principal immediately moved a number of these girls into the Grade Five and Six classrooms, and hid others in the school basement. The officials said that the Head Teacher and the Principal both of whom are men, no longer had the right to work at this school, and that if they were found here again, they would be imprisoned.”

Furthermore, the principal of a school in Kandahar has stated that when the PVPV officials inspect a school, they ask questions from female student on religious rulings, prayer, and other religious matters and even when students provide correct answers, they are still subjected to humiliation and verbal abuse.

## The Arrest of Teachers for Providing Educational Services to Women

Our findings indicate that in 2025, Taliban have shut down at least 15 private educational centres, 41 English language classes, and 11 computer classes. All these facilities provided education to girls and women. The DFA have detained at least 13 teachers, including 8 women. Furthermore, during this same period, they have closed at least 267 classes in Paktika Province in which more than 800 girl students were enrolled as well as two literacy schools in Bamiyan Province. The literacy schools served adult women.

In 2025, the PVPV in Herat has shut down a number of courses in Districts 2, 5, 7, and 10 of Herat city, in Jabra'il township, and in Zindajan, Ghoryan, Karkh, Injil, and Guzara districts. Officials of PVPV has warned those responsible for these centres that they will face serious consequences should they continue operating. For example, in December 2025, the officials of PVPV, along with intelligence and police officers, identified and shut down two educational centres in the Zindajan district and Jabra'il township of Herat. These centres were secretly established by women in their own homes. Although the Taliban refrained from detaining these women upon the guarantee of local community representatives and elders, they warned them that should such activities continue, they would be arrested and imprisoned. MPVPV officials have since visited these women's homes on several occasions, gathering information from local residents about whether these educational centres have continued to operate.

In September 2025, an educational course in Khost that had been secretly teaching girls aged 10 to 18 was identified and shut down by the Taliban's Department of Education. At this centre, all teachers were women. In a separate incident in the same province, the Taliban detained the man running a private school that had been teaching girls above Grade Six. He was subsequently released from Taliban detention upon making a payment.

On 23rd December 2025, the Taliban identified and shut down two educational centres in the Lal wa Sarjantal district of Ghor Province. At these centres, girls had been secretly studying subjects above Grade Six. The Taliban threatened those responsible for these educational centres that should they continue operating, they would be arrested and imprisoned.

On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the Taliban shut down 46 English language and computer classes in Bamiyan and detained six individuals, including four women teachers. These individuals were charged with providing educational services to girls. Likewise, in Ghazni Province, an English language centre and a calligraphy and drawing centre were closed on account of providing educational services to women. The Taliban detained those responsible for these two centres for several hours.

On 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025, MPVPV officials in Ghazni expelled a number of girl students from two private schools and physically beat several of them. These girls had been secretly studying in Grade Seven when they were identified by the MPVPV. The officials expelled these girls and beat four of them with sticks during an altercation over the deprivation of girls' right to education. The father of one of the students said that the marks of the stick were visible on the back of his 15-year-old daughter, who returned home in tears. The Taliban have warned those responsible for both schools that should they continue teaching girls above Grade Six, their schools will be shut down and they will be imprisoned.

## 2 - Discriminatory Working Conditions

Equal access to the right to work and fair working conditions is every person's human right, as guaranteed by numerous international human rights instruments. For this reason, any form of discrimination or exception on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, religion, or language in enjoying this right is legally prohibited and constitutes a violation of human rights.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the findings of the present report indicate that in 2025, the Taliban have not only continued to maintain discriminatory working conditions for women, but have also proceeded to impose and enforce increasingly discriminatory restrictions. These include: requiring female teachers and female healthcare workers to have a mahram

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44 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 23. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Articles 6 and 7.

and to wear the burqa [veil]; compelling certain women teachers to leave their jobs; prohibiting women's employment in professions such as embroidery and tailoring; and refusing to issue licences for small businesses in Kandahar, Helmand, and Uruzgan provinces. These measures are indicative of the DFA's intensification of restrictive and discriminatory policies with regard to Afghan women's right to work.

MPVPV has made it obligatory for women working in the education and healthcare sectors to be accompanied by a mahram when travelling to and from their place of work and whilst carrying out their duties. In addition to being related to the women as brother, son, husband or father, having a long beard, a turban, and outfit conforming to Taliban requirements are among the principal conditions for a man to qualify as a mahram. Men who do not have a short beard and attire meeting the standards of PVPV are not eligible to receive a mahram card. Mahram cards are increasingly required for men accompanying women to their places of work. These restrictions are a direct consequence of the enforcement of the PVPV law, which has further curtailed women's access to their right to work.

## Compelling Women to Leave Their Jobs in the Healthcare and Education Sectors

The intensification of stringent restrictions, including the requirement to have a male guardian mahram and to wear the Taliban-prescribed hijab (i.e long dress in dark colours, big scarves and face mask/covering) is turning into a precondition for women's continued employment in the education and healthcare sectors; a situation that has compelled a number of women teachers and healthcare workers to abandon their jobs.

For example, a teacher from Helmand Province told Rawadari: "The MPVPV has announced to all women staff and teachers in primary schools that they do not have the right to be present at school without being accompanied by a mahram"

A nurse from Parwan Province said: "Every day, officials from the department of intelligence and PVPV visited the clinic to monitor our behaviour and outfit. They turned the environment into something resembling a prison for both healthcare workers and patients. They constantly asked questions about the type of hijab we have, how we travelled to work, and whether we had a mahram. For this reason, I was forced to give up my job."

**Another interviewee from Bamiyan Province: "I worked in the maternity ward of a hospital, but when the new restrictions were imposed, conditions became extremely difficult for us. For instance, they said we had to come to work accompanied by a mahram. I could not manage under these conditions, as no one in my family was able to accompany me. When they told me I was not permitted to go to work without a mahram, I was forced to give up my job."**

In cases where women have not observed the dress code prescribed by the PVPV, or have attended their work place without a mahram, they have faced harassment and, in some instances, they have been dismissed from their jobs. For example, on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025, a woman employee at a local NGO in Ghor was dismissed by the Taliban on account of not having a mahram. She was the sole breadwinner and head of her household, yet she was removed from her position simply because she had no male guardian. Likewise, in Herat and Badghis, the Taliban have dismissed several midwives, nurses, and vaccinators on the grounds of not having a mahram.

In November 2025, in Daikundi, the Taliban declared the employment of women in private healthcare institutions including pharmacies, specialist departments, midwifery, and nursing fields to be prohibited, and dismissed at least two women from their jobs.

**In Ghazni, MPVPV has instructed private schools to refrain from hiring women teachers. On 30<sup>th</sup> August 2025, the Department of Information and Culture in Ghazni informed all local media outlets that they must prevent women from continuing to work and from having their voices broadcast.**

On 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025, in Ghor, the Education Department transferred dozens of women teachers who had been working in schools in the Lal wa Sarjangan district to villages and remote areas. This decision has effectively made it impossible for these teachers to travel to their workplace, forcing them to leave their jobs.

### **3 - Challenges in Accessing Healthcare Services**

Various international instruments and treaties have recognised and guaranteed effective access to healthcare services and medical care as a human right for all individuals. The deliberate deprivation of individuals of this right, particularly on the basis of gender or other discriminatory grounds is legally prohibited and constitutes a violation of human rights. Accordingly, states party to these instruments are required to adopt and implement the necessary measures and arrangements to facilitate citizens' access to healthcare services.<sup>45</sup>

Our findings indicate that conditions of access to healthcare services for women have deteriorated in 2025. At present, the receipt of any form of healthcare by women particularly in districts and remote areas is conditional upon compliance with stringent regulations relating to hijab and the requirement of a mahram. Employees of PVPV continuously monitor hospitals and other healthcare centres, subjecting women who are without a mahram or who are not adhering to the dress code prescribed by the Taliban to humiliation and verbal abuse, and preventing them from entering these facilities.

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<sup>45</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 12.

UNAMA has also reported that officials of PVPV have instructed health clinics, shops, markets, government offices, and taxi drivers not to provide services to women without a mahram.<sup>46</sup>

Our findings illustrate that the MPVPV officials lack a consistent approach to enforcing hijab regulations for women. In certain provinces including Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan, Herat, Badakhshan and Parwan they adopt a considerably stricter stance, treating any form of dress other than the burqa as an instance of being “without hijab” or “improperly veiled.”

There are instances where women needing medical care in critical and emergency situations have been denied access to healthcare services on account of their outfit. For example, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the PVPV in Ghazni detained a male doctor and imprisoned him for one day on the grounds that he had treated two women who did not have a mahram. Furthermore, in a number of provinces, several medical practices have been shut down by the Taliban on the grounds of violating PVPV regulations.

**In certain parts of the country including the south-western region, in cases where women doctors are unavailable, female patients are examined collectively by a male doctor in the presence of female healthcare workers. Should no female member of staff be present at these centres, male doctors are not permitted to examine women patients. Furthermore, in accordance with restrictions imposed by the PVPV, male patients are not permitted to consult women doctors under any circumstances.**

The widespread enforcement of these restrictions has created serious obstacles to women’s equal, effective, and timely access to healthcare services. These restrictions have also compelled a number of women doctors and nurses to abandon their jobs. Although exact numbers are hard to verify, anecdotal evidence points to decrease in numbers of women doctors and nurses across the country, driven by these restrictions.

In addition, throughout 2025, the Taliban have abolished mental health counsellor positions in hospitals. At least 300 of these positions were held by women.

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46 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan: Latest Report April–June 2025, p. 2, <https://unama.unmissions.org/human-rights-monitoring-and-reporting-0>

Likewise, an administrator of a hospital in the south-western region said:

“Pressure and restrictions on women doctors have increased. They have been told that a male guardian must accompany them at all times, and this restriction is particularly difficult for doctors who work night shifts. Many of them are unable to attend their work places and had intended to quit. In the end, we managed with great difficulty to persuade the PVPV to station an elderly woman outside the women doctors’ consulting rooms to prevent anyone other than patients from entering (as a substitute for mahram for women doctors). Even so, we remain under pressure from the PVPV.”



## Testimonies of the Interviewees

A civil society activist from Helmand said:

“The same stringent restrictions such as the compulsion to wear burqa and the hijab prescribed by the Taliban are being enforced with regard to women doctors. This situation, which grows worse with each passing day, has led to a reduction in the presence of women doctors at healthcare centres. A further problem is that the Taliban do not administer examinations to women graduates of medical faculties (or issue diplomas to them), and for this reason they are unable to be employed in the healthcare sector.”

A 50-year-old woman from Ghazni spoke about her own experience of seeking medical care:

**“I used to go to the clinic once a week for an injection. One day, my husband had gone to the local market for work, and I was obliged to go to the clinic on my own to receive my injection and have my blood pressure checked. But when I arrived, they would not allow me in (on account of not having a mahram). I explained that on previous occasions my husband had been with me, but that today he was not at home and I had come alone. No matter how much I insisted, they refused. Then a woman doctor came out and said: ‘Auntie, go away and don’t cause a fuss.’ I said OK but just give me the injection here at the door but they still refused.”**

Another interviewee from Parwan said that on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025, when she had gone to see a doctor for treatment, she was not permitted to enter the consulting room due to not having a male guardian. This interviewee said that she is over 50 years old and that her only son has migrated to Iran for work. She recounted: “I pleaded with the doctor to examine me, but he became irritated and said loudly: ‘Where is your male guardian? The MPVPV had already closed my practice once because I had examined women without a male guardian.”

The aforementioned restrictions have, as noted, had a direct impact on women’s ability to access basic healthcare services. Majority of births are now taking place at home. This is compounded by the fact that in certain parts of the country, the Taliban have also prohibited access to contraceptives.

## 4 - Violation of the Right to Freedom of Movement

The right to freedom of movement is one of the most fundamental human rights, guaranteeing that every individual can travel within or outside their country and freely choose their place of residence without unjustified or discriminatory restrictions.<sup>47</sup> States party to international treaties are obliged to refrain from any discriminatory measures. They are required to guarantee and protect women's right to freedom of movement on an equal basis with men.<sup>48</sup>

Restrictions arising from the enforcement of the PVPV law in 2025 have curtailed women's freedom of movement to an unprecedented degree and have drastically reduced their presence in public life.

**At present, in many parts of the country, women even when wearing the hijab and accompanied by a male guardian do not have the right to access recreational and sports facilities, shrines and religious centres, parks, wedding halls, shops, and other public spaces. In the south-western region, women are not permitted even when accompanied by a male guardian to visit ice cream and dessert shops, to go to water canals, or even to walk outside their homes.**

Employees of the MPVPV monitor compliance with the restrictions and regulations governing women's movement through urban patrols and establishment of checkpoints in certain areas. Owner of a restaurant in one of Kandahar's districts told Rawadari:

**"The Taliban have banned women from going to restaurants, even where restaurants have set aside separate areas for families and women. Since this restriction has had a negative impact on our business and income, we are forced to pay money to the Taliban. In exchange for payment, they turn a blind eye."**

Drivers who transport women without a male guardian, or vendors who sell goods to women, are subjected to interrogation and detention. Furthermore, in Kandahar, women who have gone into the city or to the market to purchase goods or food have been subjected to humiliation and verbal abuse by the MPVPV patrols.

**A shopkeeper from the Aino Mina town in Kandahar Province told Rawadari: "Some MPVPV employees behave in an extreme manner. On several occasions they have told us that we must not allow women to enter our shops and we must create a physical barrier at the door so that no one can come inside. One of them even said that we should place a separate bowl on the shop counter so that when women make a purchase, they put their money into it rather than handing it directly to us."**

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47 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 12.

48 United Nations General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (18 December 1979), Article 15.

According to the findings of this report, officials of the PVPV particularly in Badakhshan, Takhar and Kandahar promote burqa as the only acceptable form of hijab for women and refuse to accept any other form of modest clothing. For this reason, they have encouraged shopkeepers to sell burqas whilst prohibiting the offering of other types of clothing or alternative forms of hijab. Furthermore, in October 2025, the PVPV launched a campaign in mosques across Kandahar to emphasise on the necessity of women wearing burqa. This campaign was carried out in collaboration the mosque imams, who delivered the message during Friday prayer sermons.

Additionally, we have documented cases in the south-western region of women facing humiliation and verbal abuse and occasionally detention by the MPVVP employees when shopping for essential items. For example, in February 2025, an elderly woman who had gone into the city to purchase basic items was detained by the Taliban and transferred directly to the public prison.

In Ghazni, in two separate incidents on the 21<sup>st</sup> July and 25<sup>th</sup> August, employees of MPVVP detained three young women on charges of not having proper Hijab. The young women were released after several hours upon the guarantee of local elders and their families. In Herat, in a single day, officials of the PVPV detained ten women from the shrine of Khawaja Abdullah Ansari. They were released after several hours upon the provision of guarantee.

UNAMA has also reported that it has documented instances of women being harassed or beaten at checkpoints for not observing the hijab in accordance with the interpretation of DFA, as well as instances of women being ordered to return home from the market for not having a male guardian.<sup>49</sup>

Sources in Kandahar report that the Taliban have recently prohibited women from morning and evening exercise walks that are in some cases recommended by doctors for health reasons. Should women leave their homes to exercise, they are subjected to humiliation and harassment by the PVPV.

## **Testimonies of the Interviewees**

On 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025, MPVVP detained a woman in the centre of Ghazni city on charges of not wearing the hijab. An eyewitness to the incident said:

“Yesterday, a man and his wife, who were travelling on a motorcycle, were stopped by the officials of the PVPV Department. After a brief exchange and altercation, the officials attempted to put the woman into their vehicle, which was met with resistance from her husband. He pleaded, but the officials of MPVVP refused and took them both away in their vehicle.”

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49 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), No Safe Haven: People Involuntarily Returned to Afghanistan Face Human Rights Risks, July 2025, p. 8, <https://unama.unmissions.org/human-rights-monitoring-and-reporting-0>

Another interviewee from Herat, who had travelled with her husband from one of the districts to the provincial centre to obtain a passport, spoke about her experience of being harassed by the Taliban: “Because I was not wearing a burqa, an official of the PVPV refused to allow me to enter the passport office. I told him that we had come from far away and had no one here from whom I could obtain a burqa. The official said to me: ‘You prostitutes have ruined this country.’ When he insulted me, I answered back with an insult, at which point he slapped me across the face and prevented me from entering the passport office.”

On 13<sup>th</sup> April in Bamiyan Province, the Taliban detained a student on charges of not wearing appropriate hijab. She recounted: “I was in the market and did not have a chador, but I was wearing a headscarf and a long dress, when a vehicle belonging to the PVPV pulled up beside me. Three men got out, and one of them shouted: ‘Why is your face uncovered? You should be ashamed of yourself.’ I tried to explain to them but they did not care, they forced me into the vehicle, and took me to the PVPV Department. They summoned my father and threatened that if I appeared in public in such a manner again, they would detain me once more and flog me. They released me after obtaining a written guarantee letter from my father.”

## 5 - Lack of Access to Justice

International human rights instruments protect the right of all individuals both women and men to access independent and impartial courts, legal representation, and other fair trial standards.<sup>50</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) obliges member states to adopt legislative and executive measures to guarantee women’s equal access to justice, legal protections, courts, and judicial institutions for the purpose of addressing grievances and defending their rights.<sup>51</sup>

However, after returning to power, the Taliban have dismantled the legal framework that once guaranteed human rights and protected women, by suspending the enforcement of previous laws. As a result, there is no effective legal mechanism to ensure justice for women who are victims of violence and human rights violations. Furthermore, the severe restrictions and discriminatory conditions in place have caused women who are victims of violence to suffer doubly a situation that has perpetuated a culture of impunity and, consequently, led to proliferation of various forms of violence, abuse, and human rights violations against women.

The findings of this report illustrate that the enforcement of the PVPV law has led to a widening of discrimination and structural gender inequality in Afghanistan, severely restricting women’s access to justice.

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<sup>50</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 14.

<sup>51</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Articles 15 and 18.

## Failure to Address Violence Against Women

The de-facto judicial institutions, operating on the basis of a strict interpretation of Islamic rulings and adopting a discriminatory approach, frequently fail to address complaints relating to violence against women, particularly in applications for divorce and separation. In practice, this approach has resulted in women being deprived of legal protections, subjected to further violence, and denied justice.

Women victims of domestic violence also struggle with the challenges of lack of access to legal representation, the absence of safe-houses/shelter and lack of any support programmes. As a result of this situation and in particular the absence of safe-houses, victims are frequently returned to their husbands' families, and in cases where they refuse to return to the marital home, they are sent to women's prisons or detention centres of MPVPV.

Furthermore, under the PVPV law, women are unable to approach judicial and legal institutions directly and must always be accompanied by a mahram in order to file complaints and seek redress. Should women fail to comply with this requirement, their complaints are disregarded and they are also subjected to humiliating treatment, violence, and abuse.

## Testimonies of the Interviewees

An employee of judicial and legal institutions from the south-western region said:

**"Women who file complaints of domestic violence in Taliban courts are met with indifference from judges, and religious rulings are not issued in many cases. Instead, the judges advise them to withdraw their complaints and continue living with their husbands, even if they are enduring extremely difficult and harsh circumstances."**

Another interviewee from the same region provided the following information:

**"Women who are victims of violence have no access to legal representation to enable them to defend their legal and human rights. Furthermore, in accordance with current practice in Taliban courts, the right of women to judicial separation is not recognised meaning that if a woman files a complaint in this regard, the judge compels her to reconcile with her husband and disregards her complaint entirely. At present, the only matter that receives any degree of attention is women's right to inheritance."**

**A male eye witness from Badakhshan said:**

**"A 22-year-old woman who had approached a Taliban court seeking judicial separation on account of severe domestic violence was told by the judge that she would have to pay AFN 800,000 Afghani (\$12,800) for her application to be considered. I had gone to the court to follow up on a separate legal matter and witnessed this scene personally. I asked the judge why such an exorbitant sum should have to be paid in exchange for a divorce application. He replied: 'If we do not impose these harsh**

conditions on women seeking divorce, a great many women might separate from their husbands.' He said they do this so that women endure whatever hardships and difficulties they face and continue with their lives."

Another interviewee from Daikundi stated:

"Women who are victims of violence and approach Taliban courts are met with a negative response from judges, as in their view a woman who abandons her home is not a 'good woman.' Furthermore, even if women have been subjected to violence, they are unable to prove it, since proceedings in Taliban courts are largely based on witness testimony. Many women particularly in rural areas are unable to produce witnesses or pursue their cases due to social restrictions and the financial costs involved."

Information gathered indicates that judges, even in the most serious cases of human rights violations against women, have issued rulings that are contrary to the fundamental principles of fair trial and effective protection of victims. For example, an interviewee from the south-western region stated: **"In June 2025, a man had given his 7-year-old daughter in marriage to a man aged over 50 in settlement of a debt. The matter caused considerable uproar on social media, which ultimately compelled the Taliban to detain both parties. The case was subsequently referred to a Taliban court, where the judges ruled that the girl should be given in marriage to this man once she reaches the age of nine"**

Meanwhile, according to recent decision jointly made by the Police Command, the provincial PVPV Department, the Hajj and Endowments Department (HED), the local provincial administration, and tribal elders in Paktika, the dowry (mehr) to be paid by a man has been set at AFN 500,000 (\$8,000) for a second wife, AFN 300,000 (\$4,800) for an unmarried woman, and AFN 200,000 (\$3,200) for a widow. This decision, which conflicts with women's legal rights and their autonomy to determine the terms of their marriage contracts, has raised serious concerns about a rise in second and third marriages and the further weakening of women's legal standing within matrimonial contract.

Part Three

# The Human Rights Situation of Vulnerable Ethnic and Religious Groups



Photo (C) KYRYLO KULAHIN / Alamy

The findings of this report indicate that throughout 2025, the behaviour of the DFA across various administrative, economic, and religious spheres has led to the continuation and intensification of discrimination against vulnerable ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan. Our findings illustrate that Taliban policies and actions have led to discrimination in access to employment opportunities, public services, humanitarian assistance, and national resources. The DFA has disregarded the principle of equality and non-discrimination in citizens' enjoyment of economic and social rights.

Additionally, in 2025, we have documented restrictions on freedom of religious practice, forced imposition of Hanafi religious education upon children of other religious backgrounds, and attempts at forced conversion by the DFA.

## **1 - Discrimination Against Ethnic and Religious Groups in the Provision of Public Services and Development Projects**

Whilst international human rights instruments have emphasised the protection of individuals from any form of discrimination on grounds of race, sex, language, and religion and in particular the guarantee of equal access to resources and opportunities<sup>52</sup> the findings of this report indicate that the Taliban have discriminated against vulnerable ethnic and religious groups in distribution of public services, development projects, and humanitarian assistance. Certain specific areas of the country in particular those regions that were under Taliban control during the period of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan have received a disproportionately greater share of public services and economic resources.

The districts of Siah Gird, Shinwari, and Koh-e-Safi in Parwan received the greatest number of development projects in 2025. For example, in 2025, 136 development projects were specified for Shinwari district alone, whilst other districts in Parwan had significantly less access to such programmes.

Likewise, between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025, cash assistance and food packages including AFN 2,900 (\$46.40) in cash were distributed to 9,820 families in Andar, Gilan, Qarabagh, Ab Band, and Muqur districts in Ghazni. However, information gathered indicates that among the recipients of aid packages, primarily Pashtuns, there was not a single family from the Hazara, Tajik, Bayat, or other ethnic and religious communities. In another example, in early 2025, the Taliban announced the commencement of 98 development projects worth more than six million US dollars in Ghazni to be implemented over the next four years in various sectors including; agriculture, livestock, water reservoir, and animal husbandry across three districts of Zanakhan, Khugiani, and Rashidan. These districts were previously areas under the Taliban control in the Republic era. However, the share allocated to the remaining districts of Ghazni in 2025 amounted to merely three projects worth US\$ 46,000.

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<sup>52</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Charter of the United Nations (UNGA – CUN) (1945), Article 1(3), Article 55(c), and Article 3(9). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 2(1) and Article 2(2).

Likewise, in Badakhshan, Ismaili-populated areas have been deprived of balanced access to resources and public services. A significant proportion of development projects in 2025 have been implemented in Wardooj district, the birthplace of two local Taliban commanders. Similarly, in Daikundi Province, allocated development projects such as road construction program have been implemented largely in districts and areas that were previously strongholds of Taliban activity and influence.

The Taliban have justified these discrepancies in development budget allocation to the need to prioritize areas that are underdeveloped due to the armed conflict.

## 2 - Discrimination in Employment

Under international human rights instruments, guaranteeing the right to work and providing fair working conditions, job security, and protection against the hiring or dismissal of public employees on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, or religious characteristics are among the fundamental and basic rights of all individuals.<sup>53</sup> States party to these instruments bear responsibility for enacting domestic legislation and implementing other measures to provide fair working conditions for all citizens regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, or religious affiliation.<sup>54</sup>

Based on the findings of this report, the Taliban disregard merit, professional expertise, and the principle of equal opportunity and instead apply ideological allegiance and a history of collaboration and loyalty as the primary criteria for hiring and dismissing government employees. In the past four years since their return to power, the Taliban have largely dismissed and replaced former government employees from all ethnic and religious backgrounds and have instead appointed people affiliated with and loyal to Taliban.

A Shia representative from Helmand Province told Rawadari: “The Taliban, when hiring individuals, favour those who have a history of cooperation with them, and it makes no difference to them which ethnic group, religion, or region a person is from. Even for hiring staff in lower-ranking posts, their condition is that the applicant must not have served during the republic government.”

**Although the Taliban’s approach to hiring and dismissing individuals from government offices has affected all ethnic and religious groups as noted, the consequences of this policy have disproportionately impacted the access of ethnic and religious minorities. Specifically, this policy has restricted their access to employment opportunities in government institutions more severely than others.**

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<sup>53</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Articles 6, 7, and 8.

<sup>54</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Article 7.

In 2025, the DFA made redundancies in the organisational structure of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) including academic and administrative posts at Kabul, Panjshir, and Bamiyan universities that were largely held by individuals belonging to vulnerable ethnic and religious groups.

During 2025, in Ghazni, at least 19 positions occupied by Hazara and Tajik employees were removed from the provincial local administration. Additionally, evidence gathered from Nimroz indicates that ethnic and religious minorities have been excluded from employment opportunities particularly in the field of border trade and customs, while these opportunities are being allocated predominantly to the relatives and associates of local officials. Reports from this province also indicate that government employees have changed their religion or language in their state identity documents (e-Tazkira) in order to avoid dismissal.

**In Ghor, a job applicant at one of the local government institutions said: “three months ago, when an administrative post was advertised at one of the local government offices, I applied, as all of the requirements matched my experience and qualifications. I held a bachelor’s degree and had worked in government institutions for several years. I passed the written test, but on the day of the interview, when they asked about my place of birth, they realised I was Hazara, and their tone changed. One of the officials told me directly: ‘We need someone who is aligned with us.’”**

Similar cases have been reported in Herat. A dismissed male teacher said: “I worked as a teacher at a school and, without having committed any mistake, I was dismissed by the Education Directorate solely for belonging to the Hazara ethnic group. The head of the Education Directorate replaced me with one of his own relatives who had been educated at a madrassa.” Another interviewee, a woman, from Ghoryan district of Herat said: “Four months ago, I was dismissed from my teaching post at a state school without any reason, purely because I am a Tajik. The head of the Education Directorate subsequently appointed a woman from his own relatives, who does not hold a higher education qualification.”

### **3 - Imposition of Restrictions on Religious Freedoms**

According to international human rights instruments and treaties, religious freedom encompasses freedom of belief and freedom to practise religious teachings and rites.<sup>55</sup> The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) recognises freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs, whether individually or collectively, whether in public or in private, and freedom to engage in worship, observance, practice, and religious teachings.<sup>56</sup>

Additionally, persons belonging to racial, ethnic, and religious minorities have the right,

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55 . Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 7.

56 . International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18.

in community with other members of their group or individually, both in public and in private, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language.<sup>57</sup>

Our findings illustrate that throughout 2025, the Taliban have enforced widespread restrictions on freedom of religious practice across Afghanistan. For example, during the ten days of Muharram, restrictions were imposed on Shia mourning ceremonies in various parts of the country, including Kabul, Ghazni, Herat, Parwan, Nimroz, Bamiyan, and Daikundi provinces. The Taliban forces removed mourning flags and symbols from city streets, prevented mourning processions from taking place, and in some instances destroyed the sites where food and charitable offerings were distributed.

An interviewee from Helmand said: “Shia Muslims are able to hold their religious ceremonies inside mosques, but there are restrictions on holding public events outside mosques, and in some areas even the use of loudspeakers in Shia mosques has been restricted.” Similar cases have been reported in Nimroz, where Shia residents have been prohibited from holding their religious ceremonies in public spaces and have been told that such rites may only take place in enclosed venues.

**More recently, Shia mosques have been informed that they must either synchronise the timing of their call of prayer with Sunni mosques or refrain from broadcasting it altogether, despite the fact that there is approximately a fifteen-minute difference between the Shia and Sunni call of prayer timings.**

In early 2025, in Ghazni, the Taliban formed a committee comprising of representatives of government institutions and informed Shia mosques and religious centres that the use of loudspeakers is prohibited throughout the day and night, and that mourning ceremonies must not be held in open spaces.

Likewise, our sources report from Daikundi that MPVPV officials, whilst monitoring Shia religious madrassas, have mistreated the administrators of these institutions and they continuously interfere in their curricula. In Badghis, the Taliban have compelled male students in schools to attend the midday or afternoon congregational prayers regardless of their religion, with the threat of expulsion from school for non-compliance.

**Additionally, officials of the PVPV Department in Ghazni detained three Shia religious scholars for holding Eid prayers one day after the Taliban’s official Eid announcement. In Jaghori and Malistan districts of Ghazni, a number of Shia citizens who were fasting in accordance with their religious beliefs were forced by the PVPV officials to break their fast and drink water. Prior to this, the PVPV Department in Ghazni had summoned members of the Shia Scholars’ Council and announced that Ramadhan must commence in accordance with the Taliban’s official declaration and on the basis of Hanafi jurisprudence.**

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57 . International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18.

## Forcing Ismaili Shias to Change their Religion and Study Hanafi Jurisprudence

The Taliban have continued to exert pressure and compel Ismaili Shias to convert in Badakhshan. At present, in all Ismaili-populated districts, the Taliban have established active madrassas and are forcibly teaching Hanafi jurisprudence to Ismaili children. This constitutes the most severe violation of human rights, and in particular a violation of religious freedom. In some cases, Ismaili individuals have been pressured to convert through intimidation, threats, detention, and torture.

In December 2025, Rawadari published a Special Report on the human rights situation of Ismailis. The findings of this report revealed that in parts of Badakhshan and Baghlan the Taliban have systematically and deliberately imposed compulsory Hanafi jurisprudence education on Ismaili children, and have also coerced members of this community into abandoning their faith and religious beliefs through public declarations of apostasy (*takfir*) and organised pressure campaigns.<sup>58</sup>

UNAMA has also reported that the DFA in certain districts of Badakhshan are pressuring members of the Ismaili community to convert to Sunni Islam. The same report states that the Taliban have made the receipt of government assistance conditional upon adherence to the Sunni faith.<sup>59</sup>

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58 Rawadari, The Human Rights Situation of Ismaili Shias in Afghanistan, December 2025.  
<https://rawadari.org/reports/the-human-rights-situation-of-ismaili-shias-in-afghanistan/>

59 United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan: Latest Report July–September 2025, p. 6.  
<https://unama.unmissions.org/update-human-rights-situation-afghanistan-july-sept-2025>

Part Four

# Conclusion and Recommendations

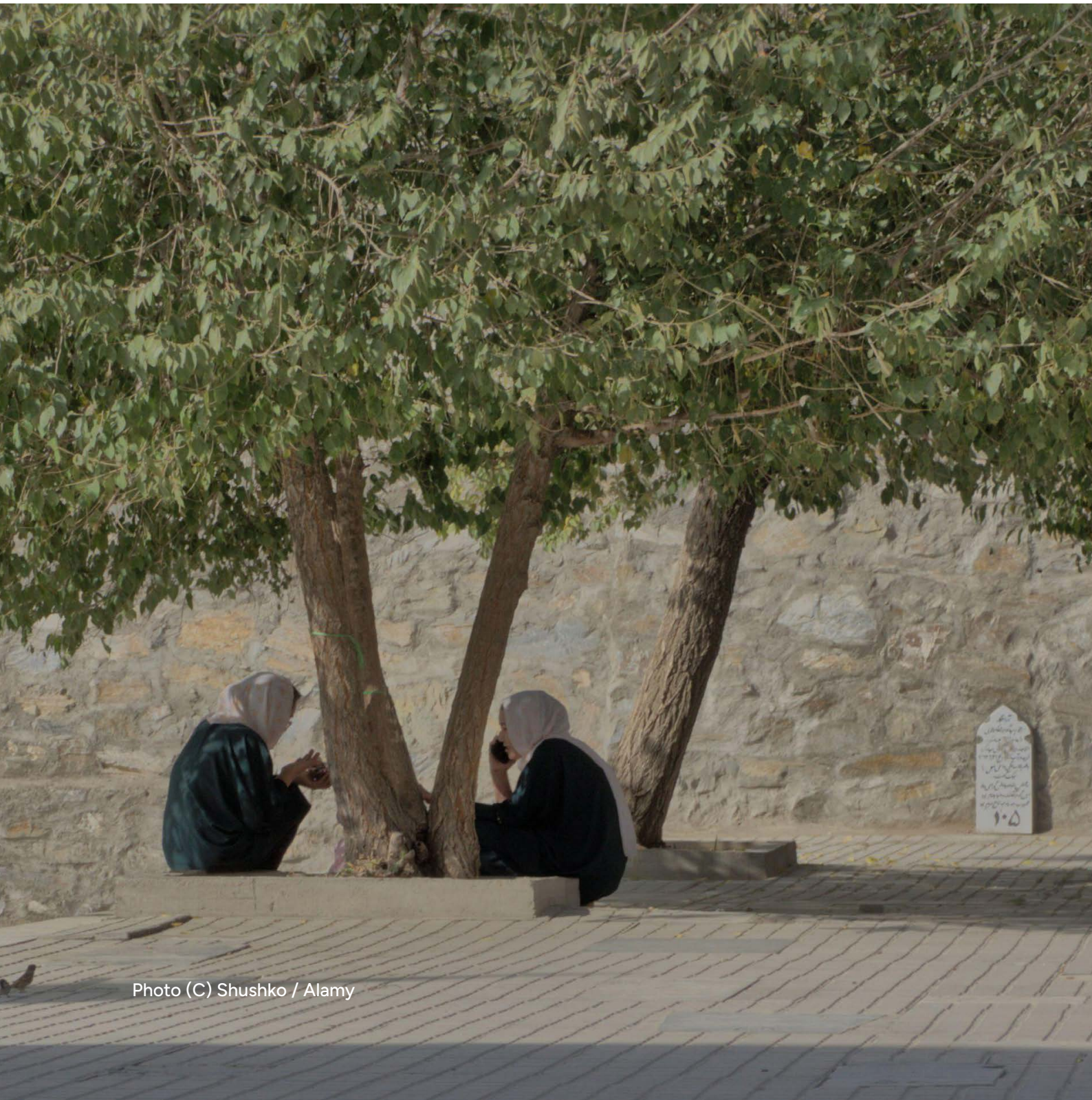


Photo (C) Shushko / Alamy

## Conclusion

A significant increase in targeted and extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, the infliction of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments as well as the imposition of discriminatory restrictions on various aspects of women's individual and social lives, have been among the most prominent human rights violations during 2025.

The de-facto authorities, during this reporting period have intensified gender discrimination in the areas of education, employment, freedom of movement and access to justice through strict enforcement of the PVPV law. This has led to further violations of women's rights and has had a profound impact on women and girls' individual and social lives.

Vulnerable ethnic and religious groups have also been deliberately and discriminatorily deprived of fair access to employment opportunities, national resources and facilities, and development projects. The Taliban have also imposed strict restrictions on freedom of religious practice.

Former government employees, opponents and protesters, human rights defenders and journalists have been subjected to violent and retaliatory attacks, and have been arbitrarily and unlawfully detained, forcibly disappeared, tortured, and even killed. Likewise, the Taliban have suppressed gatherings and protests through the use of force and violence, detaining, injuring, and killing protesters.

In 2025, there has been an increase in the number of cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishments including public executions and floggings.

In 2025, the efforts for international accountability for violations gained a welcome momentum and inspired hope in millions of survivors, including women and girls. In July 2025, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Taliban's Supreme Leader Habatullah Akhundzada, and Chief Justice, Abdul Hakim Haqqani. In October 2025, the first People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan (PTWA) held its hearings in Madrid, Spain, centring survivors and holding the Taliban accountable for the crime against humanity of gender persecution. Additionally, in October, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted a resolution establishing the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Afghanistan (IIMA). This was a welcome news for survivors and the Afghan human rights community who had advocated for a strong, comprehensive accountability mechanisms for over four years. In December 2025, the People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan announced its landmark judgement<sup>60</sup>, a powerful instrument to hold the Taliban as well as the international community accountable and counter the normalization of the Taliban's repressive policies.

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<sup>60</sup> People's Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan, Judgement, December 2025.  
<https://afghanistantribunal.com/documents/judgement-peoples-tribunal-for-women-of-afghanistan/>

## Recommendations

Rawadari offers the following recommendations to the de facto authorities and the international community to address the catastrophic women's rights and human rights situation in Afghanistan.

To the De Facto Authorities:

- **Uphold International Obligations:** We urgently call on the de facto authorities to cease human rights violations and fulfil their responsibilities under the international human rights treaties to which Afghanistan is a party.
- **Repeal Discriminatory Laws:** The deliberate and targeted exclusion of women from their fundamental rights and freedoms inflicts permanent damage on the country's political, economic, social, and cultural development. We demand the authorities protect the dignity and freedom of Afghan women and girls by repealing all discriminatory decrees, policies, and laws, including the PVPV law. Women and girls right to school and university education, work, free movement and political participation must be fully restored.
- **Protect Children from Explosives:** To safeguard children's right to life, the authorities must clear areas contaminated by mines and war remnants and cooperate effectively with national and international non-governmental organizations working on this challenge.
- **End Extrajudicial Killings:** Authorities must fulfil their legal duty to ensure security for all by immediately ending the extrajudicial killings of former government employees, opponents, critics, and human rights defenders. Furthermore, they must report to the victims' families and the public on the judicial prosecution and punishment of those responsible for these murders.
- **Grant Monitoring Access to Places of Detention:** We call on the authorities to provide human rights organizations with effective access to places of detention and to immediately stop the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners.

## To the International Community:

- **Condition Engagement and Counter Normalization:** The international community must strictly condition any diplomatic engagement or normalization of relations with the Taliban on verifiable improvements in human rights. Governments should refrain from granting the Taliban legitimacy as long as they maintain repressive laws and policies, which systematically violate the rights of women and religious minorities.
- **Establish Robust Protection and Resettlement Pathways:** We urge the international community to create urgent, streamlined, and dedicated protection and resettlement

pathways for human rights defenders, journalists, women lawyers, and judges at risk inside Afghanistan and in the region. This is essential to protect them from the documented threats of arbitrary arrest, torture, enforced disappearance, and extrajudicial killings.

- **Provide Sustained, Flexible Support to Civil Society:** International donors must provide long-term, predictable, and flexible funding to civil society organizations and women’s rights groups operating both inside Afghanistan and in exile. This support is vital for continued human rights monitoring, advocacy for justice, and the provision of essential services under a regime that actively criminalizes dissent.
- **Support Human Rights Defenders:** The international community must stand in solidarity with human rights defenders—particularly women and girls—and effectively address cases of arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture, and the killing of protesters.
- **Protect Former Government Employees:** As this report demonstrates, former government employees and their families remain targets of revenge attacks by the Taliban and unidentified armed groups. We request that the international community take practical steps to pressure the authorities to ensure the safety of these individuals and their families.
- **End Impunity:** Combating the culture of impunity and holding the Taliban accountable are essential prerequisites for ending systematic human rights violations. We urge the international community to use all political, diplomatic, and judicial instruments to support survivors’ access to justice and accountability.
- **Recognize and Uphold the Judgement of People’s Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan:** We urge the international community to formally recognize and act upon the judgment of the People’s Tribunal for Women of Afghanistan which found the Taliban’s systematic oppression of women and girls to constitute a crime against humanity. The Tribunal’s judgement should inform all future diplomatic engagements and judicial proceedings to ensure that gender-based persecution is met with a proportionate diplomatic and legal response.
- **Fully Resource the Independent Investigative Mechanism:** We call on the United Nations and member states to fully operationalize and adequately resource the newly established Independent Investigative Mechanism for Afghanistan (IIMA). This body must have the technical expertise and financial and political support to serve its mandate and ensure accountability for past and ongoing violations.
- **Investigate Targeted Killings:** We call on the United Nations to conduct a comprehensive investigation into targeted, extrajudicial, and suspicious killings—specifically revenge attacks against former government employees—and share the findings publicly.

