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Taliban Publicly Flogs Dozens Of People In Northern Afghanistan

By [RFE/RL's Radio Azadi](#)

The Taliban has publicly flogged dozens of people in a sports stadium in northern Afghanistan after their convictions for crimes involving "immoral relations."

In a statement, the Taliban's Supreme Court said 63 people, including 15 women, were flogged in Sar-e Pol Province in the presence of local officials on June 4.

The court said those flogged were accused of theft and so-called moral crimes, including adultery, homosexuality, and eloping.

Public punishments are on the rise in Afghanistan, where the Taliban's spiritual leader, Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, ordered the return of Islamic sentences in November 2022.

That included "qisas" and "hudood" punishments, which allow "eye-for-an-eye" retribution and corporal punishments for offenses considered to be in violation of the boundaries set by God.

Since then, hundreds across Afghanistan have been publicly flogged or had body parts amputated for crimes such as theft and adultery. The extremist group has also publicly executed at least five people convicted of murder.

The executions and punishments have underscored the Taliban's commitment to imposing its extremist interpretation of Shari'a law.

The punishments have provoked strong criticism from human rights watchdogs and Afghans.

"Because of the bad deed of one person, the reputation of an entire family or community is destroyed," a resident of the southwestern province of Nimroz told RFE/RL's Radio Azadi. "Punishments shouldn't be carried out in public."

Shaharзад Akbar, an Afghan rights campaigner who headed the former Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, said the aim of the Taliban's "theatrical acts" is to incite fear.

"The Taliban's form of governance is contrary to human rights," she told Radio Azadi. "The human rights and human dignity of men and women are not important to them."

Meanwhile, Islamic scholars have said the Taliban has failed to meet the stringent conditions required by Islamic law in implementing such harsh punishments.

Salahuddin Saeedi, an Afghan religious scholar, told Radio Azadi that the Taliban also lacks the legitimacy to carry out Islamic punishments.

The Taliban's hard-line government is not recognized by any country in the world, while its extremist policies are opposed by many Afghans.

Under the Taliban's first regime in the 1990s, public executions and punishments were common. The group gained international notoriety for using sports stadiums to carry them out.

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