

Afghanistan: Country Focus



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Country of Origin Information Report

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- Austria, Staatendokumentation, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum
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- Germany, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
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The review carried out by the mentioned departments contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of the EUAA.





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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#). It is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EUAA nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The reference period of this report ends on 30 November 2025. Events taking place after this date are not included. For more information on the reference period, see the [Introduction](#).



Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
AFF	Afghanistan Freedom Front
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces
<i>Baad</i>	exchange of daughters between families or clans to end feuds or disputes
<i>Burqa</i>	a long loose-fitting garment worn by women, which covers their entire body and face, and sometimes has a mesh panel covering the eyes
<i>Fitnah</i>	social disorder or chaos, which can itself facilitate sin
GDI	General Directorate of Intelligence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISKP	Islamic State Khorasan Province
<i>Madrassa</i>	Islamic religious school
<i>Mahram</i>	a family member who one may not marry, in this report used as a reference to a male relative serving as a chaperone
MPVPV	Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice
<i>Mullah</i>	Islamic religious cleric
<i>Muhtasib/muhtasibin</i>	Official enforcer/enforcers of <i>sharia</i>



Term	Definition
<i>Niqab</i>	a long garment worn by women, which covers their entire body and face, except for the eyes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRF	National Resistance Front
<i>Pashtunwali</i>	Traditional social, cultural, and quasi-legal code regulating the Pashtun way of life
<i>Shalwar kameez</i>	a loose-fitting knee-length tunic over baggy pants worn by men
<i>Sharia</i>	the religious law of Islam; Islamic canonical law
<i>Shura</i>	a decision-making community council, often formed for non-State dispute settlement, made up of a group of people with community authority (elders) to discuss and find solutions to a problem
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information relevant for the assessment of applications for international protection from Afghan nationals, and in particular for use in updating EUAA's Country Guidance on Afghanistan.

The report covers the period of 1 October 2024–30 November 2025. The report is an update of the [EUAA COI Report: Country Focus – Afghanistan](#) published in November 2024. Events taking place after the end of the reference period have not been included.

Methodology

This report was drafted and reviewed by the EUAA and national COI departments in EU+ countries, as mentioned in the Acknowledgements section.

This report is produced in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)¹ and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).²

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference (ToR) of this report were defined by the EUAA based on input received from COI experts in the EUAA COI Specialist Network on Afghanistan, and from policy experts in EU+ countries within the framework of a Country Guidance development on Afghanistan. The ToR for this report can be found in [Annex 2: Terms of Reference](#).

Collecting information

The information gathered is a result of research using public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources, as well as interviews with expert oral sources, until 11 December 2025. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 6 January 2026.

Research challenges

Chapter [4](#). Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population mainly focuses on targeting acts by the *de facto* authorities and other armed groups towards certain profiles. In some cases, the perpetrator is difficult to identify, and the motives may be unclear. For these reasons, establishing a connection between an act and a certain group or profile is often challenging. Furthermore, some individuals may be targeted for a range of reasons and by

¹ EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

² EUAA, EUAA Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)



multiple actors. This is particularly challenging in the Afghan context, where diverse and overlapping identities permeate society along religious, ethnic, tribal and/or linguistic lines.

Since the Taliban takeover, Afghan local media and civil society have faced numerous restrictions, and it has become increasingly difficult to retrieve reliable and up-to-date information from the country. Especially media coverage on the situation in remote rural areas is difficult to obtain as the remaining media offices have been concentrated in Kabul City. Afghan media in exile, such as Hasht-e Subh, Afghanistan International, Amu TV and Kabul Now, have been used restrictively due to difficulties assessing their reliability and due to objectivity concerns. Reports have been included based on a case-by-case assessment taking into account the value of the information provided and the availability of contrasting information from other sources.

Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EUAA COI Report Methodology and that the ToR were comprehensively addressed, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries listed as reviewers in the Acknowledgements section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 20 January 2026. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

Sources

In accordance with the EUAA COI Report Methodology, various published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs); international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Afghan and regionally-based media and social media; academic publications and think tank reports and specialised sources covering Afghanistan. All information from these sources was consulted within time constraints and within the research constraints posed by Afghanistan's challenging information environment.

In order to address research gaps in publicly available sources, oral sources have been interviewed to obtain first-hand information on the situation on the ground. These sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability and current ground-level knowledge. Many of these sources have, however, requested to remain anonymous for their own safety or their families' safety, or due to operational reasons to be able to continue to travel to Afghanistan and report from the country. For example, some sources did not want to risk getting future visas rejected by the Afghan de facto authorities for being cited by name and title in this report. All oral sources are described in the Annex 1: Bibliography.



Sources on security incidents

Data of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)³ and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)⁴ have been used for information on security events and fatalities. Data provided by UN reports have also been used in some sections.

ACLED is a project that collects, analyses and maps information on ‘dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world’.⁵ ACLED has been covering political violence and protests in Afghanistan since January 2017. Each week, around 110 sources are reviewed in English, Dari/Farsi, Pashto, and Arabic and the information is compiled in a database.⁶ The main sources used in the database for the reference period of this report was Afghan exile media, and the ACLED curated data files for Afghanistan used for this report were downloaded on 10 December 2025.

ACLED explains the methodology applied for coding and monitoring the data in a codebook and in a specific methodology document for Afghanistan.⁷ As ACLED points out, the reader should be aware of some limitations, including the fact that ‘most of the data is gathered based on publicly available, secondary reports’. Thus, the data are in part a reflection of the coverage and reporting priorities of media and international organisations. One effect of this is that it may under-estimate the volume of events of non-strategic importance (for example, low-level communal conflict, or events in very isolated areas). ACLED addresses this possibility by ‘triangulating data sources to include humanitarian and international organisation reports, rather than media alone; and by conducting ground-truthing exercises’ in which they ‘present data to local organisations and partners to assess its validity among people working directly in conflict-affected contexts’.⁸ Based on the above, ACLED’s figures in this report are to be considered as an estimate and illustration of violence trends over a given time period.⁹

ACLED also provides an estimated number of fatalities for each security event, but notes that ‘[f]atality data are typically the most biased, and least accurate, component of any conflict data’ and ‘should be treated as “reported fatalities”’.¹⁰ Furthermore, ACLED’s fatality figures include the reported deaths in totality per event, and do not distinguish civilian deaths.¹¹

ACLED records six event types: battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, protests, riots and strategic developments.¹² For the analysis of the security situation in

³ ACLED, The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project - Bringing clarity to crisis, n.d., [url](#)

⁴ UCDP, Department of Peace and Conflict Research – Uppsala University, Sweden, n.d., [url](#)

⁵ ACLED, About ACLED, n.d., [url](#)

⁶ ACLED, ACLED Methodology and Coding Decisions around Political Violence and Demonstrations in Afghanistan (Version 5), February 2022, [url](#), pp. 3, 10

⁷ ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#); ACLED, ACLED Methodology and Coding Decisions around Political Violence and Demonstrations in Afghanistan (Version 5), February 2022, [url](#), pp. 3, 8; ACLED, ACLED’s Afghanistan Coverage: Adapting Sourcing Strategy in an Evolving Context, 16 March 2022, [url](#)

⁸ ACLED, Guide for Media Users, January 2015, [url](#), pp. 9–10

⁹ ACLED, ACLED Methodology and Coding Decisions around Political Violence and Demonstrations in Afghanistan (Version 5), February 2022, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰ ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 38

¹¹ ACLED, ACLED Methodology and Coding Decisions around Political Violence and Demonstrations in Afghanistan (Version 5), February 2022, [url](#), p. 19

¹² ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 11



Afghanistan in this report, only battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians were included as incidents. ACLED uses the following definitions of these event types:

- **Battle:** ‘a violent interaction between two politically organized armed groups’ which occurs ‘at a particular time and location’, ‘between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein’. There is no fatality threshold for an incident to be included. Sub-events associated with ‘battles’ are designated according to the events outcome and consist of ‘armed clash’, ‘government regains territory’, and ‘non-state actor overtakes territory’.¹³
- **Violence against civilians:** ‘violent events where an organized armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants’ and includes attempts at inflicting harm (e.g. beating, shooting, torture, rape, mutilation) or forcibly disappearing civilian actors. Sub-events associated with ‘violence against civilians’ are: ‘sexual violence’, ‘attack’, and ‘abduction/forced disappearance’. It should be noted that all violence against civilians do not fall under this category, as civilians can also be harmed as ‘collateral damage’ in ‘explosions’ and ‘battles’ – in such cases a separate civilian-specific event is not recorded, although the number of fatalities is aggravated.¹⁴
- **Explosions/remote violence:** ‘incidents in which one side uses weapon types that, by their nature, are at range and widely destructive’. The sub-event types associated with ‘explosions/remote violence’ are ‘chemical weapon’, ‘air/drone strike’, ‘suicide bomb’, ‘shelling/artillery/missile attack’, ‘remote explosive/landmine/IED’, and ‘grenade’.¹⁵

ACLED identifies three codes for the geo-precision of events taking place in a particular town with available coordinates (geo-precision 1), ‘a small part of a region’ or ‘a general area’ (geo-precision 2) and a larger region (geo-precision 3).¹⁶ This report provides information about the security situation at provincial level and therefore makes use of all geo-precision levels.

UCDP is a ‘data collection project for civil war’.¹⁷ UCDP provided EUAA with a Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering the reference period of the report. UCDP’s methodology is explained on its website as well as its GED Codebook.¹⁸ The unit of analysis of UCDP is the ‘event’¹⁹ which is defined as ‘[a]n incident where armed force was used by an organised actor against another organized actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 1 direct death at a specific location and a specific date.’²⁰ This leads, among other things, to ‘seemingly low estimates’ because ‘a number of factors can preclude a potential conflict event from inclusion in the UCDP GED’, for example, unclear actors or uncertainty about whether fatalities occurred.²¹ UCDP provides three estimates for fatalities for each event – a low estimate, a best estimate, and a high estimate. In addition, UCDP provides an estimate of the number of civilian

¹³ ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁴ ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 18–19

¹⁵ ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 16–18

¹⁶ ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 36–37

¹⁷ UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸ UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#); UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹ UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰ UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

²¹ UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)



deaths.²² According to UCDP, ‘it is quite likely that there are more fatalities than given in the best estimate, but it is very unlikely that there are fewer’.²³

The stricter definition of an event of UCDP excludes some violent events recorded by ACLED, such as events attributed to ‘unidentified armed groups’. The difference in definitions is one explanatory factor to why the number of events recorded by ACLED can be significantly higher than events recorded by UCDP.²⁴ In this report, UCDP data have been used to contrast ACLED data and to provide figures on civilian deaths. To reflect the security dynamic in Afghanistan, where the actor behind many security incidents is unknown, EUAA not only includes events that meet all UCDP’s set criteria (codified as ‘clear’ events in the UCDP dataset), but also include events codified as ‘unclear’ and ‘not applicable’.

Structure and use of the report

The report’s first chapter provides information on the general population’s situation under Taliban rule. It contains information on the political context, the functioning of the de facto state administration, and the implementation of *sharia*. This is followed by a chapter outlining the general conflict-related security situation, and a chapter on the humanitarian situation. Thereafter, chapter 4 outlines the situation of eight selected groups and profiles.

Terminology

In this report, Afghan authorities operating under the Taliban (since August 2021) are referred to as the ‘de facto’ authorities, as the Taliban-led government has not been internationally recognised. Footnoted citations for documents published by de facto authorities are aligned with this terminology.

Persons working within lower-level authorities, who have been appointed by the Taliban or have returned to work since the takeover, are not routinely referred to as de facto state employees, but efforts had been made to give clear context in which capacity these persons are working. As the Taliban is both a movement and a de facto government, sources sometimes refer to the ‘Taliban’ and the ‘de facto authorities’ interchangeably. This report refers to de facto authorities/de facto officials, when it is evident that the source refers to a person or a body operating under the de facto government. In other situations, where a source refers to the movement or where the status of the ‘Taliban’ referred to is unclear, the term ‘Taliban’ is used instead. Hibatullah Akhundzada, who is head of both the Taliban movement and the de facto state, is referred to as the ‘Taliban Supreme Leader’.

The former administration of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is referred to by its official name and as ‘the former government’. In cases where the report refers to the previous government of the Taliban of the 1990’s, this is indicated in the text.

²² UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 11, 24

²³ UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴ ACLED, Comparing Conflict Data, Similarities and Differences Across Conflict Datasets, August 2019, [url](#), pp. 5–7

[illegible]

²⁵ UN, Afghanistan, Map No. 3958 Rev. 7, June 2011, [url](#)

1. Situation of the general population

1.1. Political context and international relations

The Taliban came to power on 15 August 2021 after ousting the previous US-backed government after 20 years of war.²⁶ They declared the reestablishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA),²⁷ previously in power in 1996–2001,²⁸ and soon claimed to control the entire Afghan territory.²⁹ Although they have met armed opposition by resistance groups and the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP),³⁰ the Taliban maintain territorial³¹ and effective control over Afghanistan³² – which brings responsibilities under international law.³³

Soon after the takeover, the Taliban announced an all-male³⁴ interim government³⁵ which predominantly consisted of Pashtun Taliban members.³⁶ The de facto government has largely remained in place,³⁷ although there have been some reshuffles of de facto ministers.³⁸ As the de facto head of state,³⁹ the Taliban Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada enjoys absolute power and controls Afghanistan's political, administrative and religious structures,⁴⁰ although this has been disputed by multiple de facto cabinet members.⁴¹ During a speech at the fourth anniversary of the Taliban takeover, on 15 August 2025, Akhundzada indicated that the de facto government had become permanent.⁴²

²⁶ Kluijver, R., Is it time to recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan?, The Conversation, 29 December 2024, [url](#); CFR, The Taliban in Afghanistan, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁷ WSJ, Taliban unveil new Afghan government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

²⁸ BBC News, Hardliners get key posts in new Taliban government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

²⁹ VOA, Taliban order Afghan media to use group's official name, 1 October 2021, [url](#)

³⁰ Rubin, B. R., Afghanistan Under the Taliban: Findings on the Current Situation, 20 October 2022, Stimson Center, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Afghanistan's Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), pp. I, 11;

³¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 3; Clark, K., Co-director and Senior Analyst at the AAN, in USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 1:06:14–1:06:16; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 6

³² HRW, An Avenue to Justice for Afghan Women, 13 May 2024, [url](#); ICRC, The legal protection of persons living under the control of non-State armed groups, January 2022, [url](#)

³³ HRW, An Avenue to Justice for Afghan Women, 13 May 2024, [url](#)

³⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 13

³⁵ BBC News, Hardliners get key posts in new Taliban government, 7 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁶ International Crisis Group, The Taliban's Neighbourhood: Regional Diplomacy with Afghanistan, 30 January 2024, [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 10, 13; Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 46–47

³⁷ UK, House of Commons Library, Recent developments in Afghanistan, 18 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 7

³⁸ Amu TV, Taliban reassign six officials in latest reshuffle, 12 February 2025, [url](#); MEI, Taliban Leadership Tracker, 2025, [url](#)

³⁹ BBC News, Afghanistan country profile, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan, Situasjonen for afghanske menn, 20 January 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Clark, K., Co-director and Senior Analyst at the AAN, in USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 1:06:40–1:07:01; Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 12

⁴¹ Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 12

⁴² Bakhtar News Agency [X], posted on: 15 August 2025, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Taliban Officials Are No Longer 'Acting', 19 August 2025, [url](#)



In July 2025, Russia became the first and only country to recognise the Taliban's de facto government.⁴³ Other countries have indicated that recognition is conditional,⁴⁴ calling on the de facto government to be more 'inclusive' and respect women's and girls' rights.⁴⁵ Over 100 persons within the de facto administration are under UN sanctions,⁴⁶ and some are part of the Haqqani network⁴⁷ (designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK,⁴⁸ the US⁴⁹ and the UN⁵⁰). This complicates Afghanistan's international relations,⁵¹ and protracts its isolation.⁵² On 8 July 2025, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for the Taliban Supreme Leader and the de facto Chief Justice, Abdul Hakim Haqqani, on charges of 'gender persecution'.⁵³

Several states and international organisations have engaged with the de facto government, despite not recognising it,⁵⁴ and diplomatic engagement has been increasing over the years.⁵⁵ Some countries have been reopening their embassies in Kabul City,⁵⁶ and many countries in the region have accepted Taliban-appointed attachés at Afghan embassies⁵⁷ and have been conducting formal visits to Afghanistan.⁵⁸ The UN⁵⁹ and the EU have physical presence in the country, mainly to provide humanitarian aid.⁶⁰ The US do not have diplomatic presence, but its interests in Afghanistan are formally represented by Qatar.⁶¹ In March 2025, Switzerland reopened an office in Kabul City for humanitarian aid⁶² and thus became the 'first Western country to re-establish on-the-ground presence' since the Taliban takeover.⁶³ Some European

⁴³ BBC News, Russia becomes first state to recognise Afghanistan's Taliban government, 4 July 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Russia recognises the Taliban: Which other countries may follow?, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Brookings, Recognition and the Taliban, 30 September 2022, [url](#); Weiss, S., One year into the Taliban's second rule, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 18 August 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁵ VOA, UN talks in Doha end; recognition remains distant dream for Taliban, 1 July 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, Which Countries Have Relations With The Taliban's Unrecognized Government?, 30 May 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁶ VOA, UN talks in Doha end; recognition remains distant dream for Taliban, 1 July 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁷ UK, House of Commons Library, Afghanistan: One year under a Taliban government, 10 October 2022, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁸ UK, Home Office, Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁹ USDOS, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁰ UN, United Nations Security Council Consolidated List, [url](#), section TAe.012

⁵¹ UK, House of Commons Library, Afghanistan: One year under a Taliban government, 10 October 2022, [url](#), p. 6

⁵² Diplomat (The), Are Taliban-Iran Relations Moving on a Positive Trajectory?, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

⁵³ ICC, Situation in Afghanistan: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II issues arrest warrants for Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴ UN, Afghanistan's Future Depends on Taliban's Engagement with World, But Restrictions on Women Signal Lack of International Commitments, Briefer Warns Security Council, 27 September 2022, [url](#); Washington Institute (The), Turkey Calls for Recognition of the Taliban's Islamic Emirate, 17 March 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁵ IISS, Towards the Reintegration of Afghanistan into the International Community, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁶ TOLONews, Muttaqi Says More Embassies Will Reopen in Kabul, 30 March 2023, [url](#); RFE/RL, Which Countries Have Relations With The Taliban's Unrecognized Government?, 30 May 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, India to reopen embassy in Kabul after 4-year hiatus amid new Taliban ties, 10 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷ RFE/RL, Which Countries Have Relations With The Taliban's Unrecognized Government?, 30 May 2024, [url](#); ORF, Taliban's diplomatic advances in Central Asia, 12 August 2024, [url](#); TOLONews, Spokesman: Islamic Emirate Attachés Active in 16 Countries, 23 December 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), paras. 20–22

⁵⁹ Kluijver, R., Is it time to recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan?, The Conversation, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Reuters, European Union re-establishes physical presence in Afghanistan -spokesman, 21 January 2022, [url](#)

⁶¹ USDOS, U.S. Relations With Afghanistan, 15 August 2022, [url](#)

⁶² Switzerland, Swiss Federal Authorities, Switzerland re-establishes presence in Kabul with humanitarian office, 31 March 2024, [url](#)

⁶³ Afghanistan International, Swiss Development Agency Resumes Operations In Kabul After Four-Year Absence, 27 August 2025, [url](#)



countries, including Norway and Germany, allow envoys of the de facto government to work at Afghan embassies and consulates.⁶⁴ Germany has also been communicating with the de facto authorities ‘on a technical level’ to facilitate deportations of rejected asylum seekers.⁶⁵

De facto officials have moreover been travelling to attend regional⁶⁶ and international meetings.⁶⁷ Despite being under sanctions, some individuals have been granted exceptions to travel for personal and official reasons, in more than ‘five dozen’ instances since August 2022, according to the American policy organisation George W. Bush Institute.⁶⁸ The de facto authorities have also been invited to UN meetings on Afghanistan (‘Doha 3’ in 2024⁶⁹ and ‘Doha 4’ in 2025⁷⁰) and the UN climate meeting COP29 (with observer status).⁷¹ The former government has however continued to represent Afghanistan at the UN,⁷² although the seat might be handed over to the de facto authorities under the UN ‘Mosaic plan’ for engagement with Afghanistan.⁷³

1.1.1. Political opposition and civic space

The Taliban have established a de facto government with political monopoly similar to a one-party state.⁷⁴ Political parties are outlawed⁷⁵ and civic space has been severely limited by restrictions on international and local media,⁷⁶ as well as by arrests of critics.⁷⁷ Many individuals opposing the Taliban have left the country,⁷⁸ gone into hiding or resorted to self-censorship.⁷⁹ The general human rights situation has gradually deteriorated,⁸⁰ and sources

⁶⁴ DW, Germany allows Taliban envoys to facilitate deportations, 21 July 2025, [url](#); Roy-Chaudhury, R., Will Russia’s diplomatic recognition of the Afghan Taliban government have a domino effect?, IISS, 8 August 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵ DW, Afghanistan: Are the Taliban still isolated after 4 years?, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), paras. 20–22; Russia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press release on the meeting of the Moscow Format of Consultations on Afghanistan, 4 October 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Afghanistan International, Taliban Delegation Attends 15th Session Of OIC In Gambia, 5 May 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸ George W. Bush Institute, Taliban Travel Tracker, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Watkins, A., What’s Next for the U.N.’s Doha Process on Afghanistan?, USIP, 16 July 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰ UNAMA, UN convenes working group meetings on counter-narcotics, private sector, 1 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹ Ruttig, T., No Climate Change Deniers: The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan goes to COP29, as an observer, AAN, 24 November 2024, [url](#)

⁷² Kluijver, R., Is it time to recognise the Taliban government in Afghanistan?, The Conversation, 29 December 2024, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Taliban Accuses UN Of Bias, Says Group Deserves Afghanistan’s UN Representation, 30 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷³ Khaama Press, Rights Activists slam UN’s ‘Mosaic’ Plan for undermining Legal and Moral Legitimacy in Afghanistan, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁵ VOA, Taliban Ban Afghan Political Parties, Citing Sharia Violations, 16 August 2023, [url](#); RFE/RL, Taliban Bans Political Parties In Afghanistan After Declaring Them Un-Islamic, 17 August 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁶ RFE/RL, Taliban Broadens Crackdown With Detention Of Critical Religious Scholars, 5 June 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24; RFE/RL, Taliban Broadens Crackdown With Detention Of Critical Religious Scholars, 5 June 2025, [url](#); AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights, Afghanistan 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023, March 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24

⁸⁰ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan, Styre och rättskipning [Andrew Watkins, senior expert on Afghanistan], 6 July 2023, [url](#), p. 13; UNAMA, Dignity, freedom and justice must be upheld in Afghanistan, 10 December 2022, [url](#)

described the de facto administration as moving towards becoming a theocratic police state,⁸¹ ruling through a climate of fear⁸² and suppressing dissent.⁸³ In this context, there is no space for political opposition,⁸⁴ and Human Rights Watch reported on 'deepened' repression in 2025.⁸⁵

There were protests against the de facto government's policies right after the Taliban takeover,⁸⁶ and women's rights activists stood at the forefront of this movement.⁸⁷ General opposition, however, largely dissipated during the Taliban's second year of rule.⁸⁸ As women protesters faced violent reprisals,⁸⁹ including detentions and torture,⁹⁰ protests dwindled.⁹¹ More information is available in section [4.4.2 Freedom of expression and assembly](#).

The de facto government has continued to violently suppress protests, including by arrests and shooting directly at protesters.⁹² Amid protests against the opium poppy eradication campaign in Badakhshan Province in 2025,⁹³ de facto security forces shot into protesting crowds which caused deaths and injuries.⁹⁴ This included the death of eight persons in Khash District over the course of two days in June 2025, as well as instances of arrests and ill-treatment, as noted by the UN Secretary-General.⁹⁵ Protests have also been staged without reported violence from the de facto authorities, including by retirees previously working for the former government that regularly stage street protests to demand their pensions to be paid.⁹⁶ The UN Secretary-General also noted that the population staged protests against, *inter*

⁸¹ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan, Styre och rättskipning, 6 July 2023, [url](#), p. 13; Economist (The), Afghans are suffering. Don't expect any tears from the Taliban, 14 August 2024, [url](#); PRIO et al., Pathways towards Strengthening Girl's Education in Afghanistan, December 2023, [url](#), p. 4

⁸² Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan, Styre och rättskipning, 6 July 2023, [url](#), p. 13; RFE/RL, The Azadi Briefing: Thousands Of Afghans Detained By Taliban's Morality Police, 23 August 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24

⁸³ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁴ Nishat, Z. et al., Why Do People in Afghanistan Object to Taliban Rule?, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 22 September 2022, [url](#); Ahmad, J. and London, D., America Should Recognize Afghanistan's Taliban Government, FP, 23 May 2023, [url](#); Amu TV, Afghanistan ranked world's most authoritarian country in 2024 Democracy Index, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁵ HRW, Afghanistan Relentless Repression 4 Years into Taliban Rule, 5 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶ HRW in: France 24 English [YouTube], 'Afghan women are leading the resistance against the Taliban,' researcher says, 25 August 2025, [url](#), 2:37–2:50

⁸⁷ CIVICUS, Protests Escalate in Afghanistan as Frustration with Taliban Rule and Abuses Grow, 28 November 2022, [url](#)

⁸⁸ AW, Two years of Taliban rule: documenting human rights abuses using open source, 15 August 2023, [url](#), p. 3

⁸⁹ Al Jazeera, Afghan women stage rare protests, braving Taliban reprisals, 8 March 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰ BBC News, What happened to the women who took on the Taliban?, 14 June 2024, [url](#)

⁹¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023, March 2024, [url](#), p. 21; AW, Two years of Taliban rule: documenting human rights abuses using open source, 15 August 2023, [url](#), p. 4; AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 13–14

⁹² Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 37

⁹³ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 9; Bjelica, J. and Foschini F., Opium Cultivation in Badakhshan: The new national leader, according to UNDOC, AAN, 13 November 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 31

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 31

⁹⁶ Sabawoon, A. M., Where Are My Rights? Afghan retirees appeal for their pensions, AAN, 22 May 2024, [url](#); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 10; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 10

alia, poppy eradication, taxation of agricultural products, and the destruction of Shia symbols during the holy day of Ashura in Herat City.⁹⁷

As mentioned, several restrictions have been introduced on local media and on content criticising the de facto government.⁹⁸ Media outlets accused of violating these restrictions have been suspended or shut down,⁹⁹ including for content perceived as contrary to ‘national and Islamic values’¹⁰⁰ and for having collaborated with exile media.¹⁰¹ Some media offices stated that their closure was politically motivated.¹⁰² Journalists and media workers have also been facing arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, and threats and intimidation by the de facto authorities.¹⁰³ Further restrictions have been implemented within the reference period of this report, including the ban against showcasing images of living beings¹⁰⁴ which has forced television stations in some provinces to close or only air audio content.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, since September 2024, live political debates are not allowed, and media are required to seek prior approval before airing political talk shows and may only invite experts as per a pre-approved list of experts – or seek prior permission.¹⁰⁶

The de facto authorities have become increasingly intolerant to criticism,¹⁰⁷ and the space for voicing concern has decreased further within the reference period of this report.¹⁰⁸ Sources have reported on even moderate differences of opinion not being tolerated,¹⁰⁹ and individuals considered as loyalists and aligned with the Taliban movement being discouraged from speaking in public on ‘controversial issues’.¹¹⁰

According to Haroun Rahimi, Associate Professor and Chair of Law Department at the American University of Afghanistan, the de facto authorities have been clamping down on

⁹⁷ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 9

⁹⁸ RSF, Afghanistan : the disturbing, escalating censorship suffocating the free press, 27 February 2025, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Trample Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 15, AFJC, 2024 Annual Report on Media Freedom in Afghanistan, 26 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 25–26

¹⁰⁰ RSF, Afghanistan: press freedom at its lowest point as Taliban closed 12 media outlets in less than a year, 20 December 2024, [url](#); IFJ, Afghanistan: Media continues to erode under three years of Taliban rule, 15 August 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ AFJC, 2024 Annual Report on Media Freedom in Afghanistan, 26 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 21, 26; RSF, Afghanistan: Taliban prohibit journalists from collaborating with Afghanistan International news channel, 14 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰² AFJC, 2024 Annual Report on Media Freedom in Afghanistan, 26 December 2024, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁰³ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰⁴ Afghanistan, De facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 17

¹⁰⁵ Just Security, The Taliban’s Slow Dismantling of Afghan media, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ AFJC, Taliban Imposes Stricter Regulations on Afghan Media, Raising Concerns Over Press Freedom, 23 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24; RFE/RL, Taliban Broadens Crackdown With Detention Of Critical Religious Scholars, 5 June 2025, [url](#); Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹⁰⁸ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹⁰⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24; RFE/RL, Taliban Broadens Crackdown With Detention Of Critical Religious Scholars, 5 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.



dissent and have been trying to limit public discourse around governance issues.¹¹¹ The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan reported on the suppression of dissent as taking place in all areas of public discourse, affecting ‘journalists and media workers, human rights defenders, members of civil society and protesters, academics, writers, artists, booksellers and educators, as well as their family members.’¹¹² Islamic scholars and clerics have also reportedly been arrested after publicly criticising the Taliban or ‘merely supporting more moderate policies’, according to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).¹¹³

Nevertheless, some individuals have continued to voice critical concerns, including on girls’ access to higher education and governance issues.¹¹⁴ Such criticism has however become much less frequent, and as explained by Rahimi ‘people on the margin’ – not considered anti-Taliban but still raising concerns – have become much less visible. According to him, the new rule of conduct is to not criticise the de facto government publicly, although there have been moments of public conversation involving both senior de facto government officials and the general public voicing concerns amid major events, such as the internet shutdown and Pakistani airstrikes against Kabul City in the second half of 2025.¹¹⁵ In early 2025, Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the de facto deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, fled Afghanistan soon after having delivered a public speech in which he criticised the ban on higher education for girls. In response, the Taliban Supreme Leader reportedly ordered his arrest and issued a travel ban.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, on the other hand, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the political party Hezb-e Islami, has been publicly questioning the de facto government’s legitimacy and its capability to ensure security in Afghanistan.¹¹⁷

1.1.2. Criticism on social media, and online surveillance

The de facto authorities’ stance on social media has been growing stricter,¹¹⁸ with increasing restrictions.¹¹⁹ The de facto Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (MPVPV) publicly warned of ‘improper’ social media usage and communicated that legal action will be taken ‘against pages, accounts, and networks [...] undermining religious beliefs, public morality, and societal values.’¹²⁰ Starting in mid-September 2025, the de facto

¹¹¹ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹¹² UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 24

¹¹³ RFE/RL, Taliban Broadens Crackdown With Detention Of Critical Religious Scholars, 5 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units; SAK, Emiren stärker kontrollen över hela landet, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹¹⁶ Guardian (The), Taliban minister ‘forced to flee Afghanistan’ after speech in support of girls’ education, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ Afghanistan International, Hekmatyar Warns Of Rising Instability, Calls For Legitimate Government In Afghanistan, 24 February 2025, [url](#); Ariana News, Hekmatyar: We need a legitimate government in Afghanistan, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Khaama Press, Crackdown on TikTok users and influencers in Afghanistan intensified, arrested for activities deemed “Unlawful”, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ BBC News, Social media content restricted in Afghanistan, Taliban sources confirm, 8 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁰ Afghanistan International, Taliban Monitoring Social Media, Warns Of Legal Action For ‘Improper’ Use, 12 May 2025, [url](#)



authorities gradually closed down internet services in some provinces,¹²¹ and eventually, on 29 September 2025, switched off internet in the entire country for 48 hours.¹²² The shutdown of the state-controlled fibre-optic network, on which also private providers highly rely on, virtually left all Afghans without internet connectivity.¹²³ Telecommunications were also disrupted, and people could not make mobile phone calls or send SMS.¹²⁴ No official reason has been announced for the shutdown,¹²⁵ although some sources suggest that it was an attempt to crack down on ‘immoral activities’.¹²⁶

The de facto authorities monitor social media¹²⁷ and target individuals who criticise them online.¹²⁸ The de facto MPVPV claim to monitor online content,¹²⁹ and the de facto General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) has reportedly been monitoring journalists, activists and social media users,¹³⁰ and has a dedicated digital surveillance unit that monitors online activities, according to Amu TV.¹³¹ The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan reported on local sources warning of the ‘extensive use’ of digital and in-person surveillance, including surveillance of social media, mobile-phone searches at checkpoints, and the use of informants. Media and civil society actors further told the UN Special Rapporteur that critical posts on social media might trigger ‘house searches, arbitrary arrests and detention’, including of family members. These measures reportedly contributed to ‘a climate of fear’ and self-censorship, including among Afghans abroad fearing for the safety of remaining family members.¹³² The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) carried out interviews with several sources operating on the ground, that told them that ‘the situation in Afghanistan is becoming increasingly restrictive’ making it ‘difficult to report on the few freedoms or niches that still exist’, and that the de facto authorities monitor ‘all information and reporting’ on Afghanistan closely. One interviewee told ACCORD that Afghans are afraid of expressing anything openly on social media due to the surveillance.¹³³ Rahimi explained that the de facto authorities do not have the sophisticated

¹²¹ Al Jazeera, Afghanistan imposes internet blackout: What has the effect been so far?, 30 September 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Internet and cell phone services resume in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²² UNAMA, Out of reach: The impact of telecommunications shutdowns on the Afghan people, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2; TOLONews, Internet, Telecom Services Restored in Afghanistan After 48-Hour Outage, 1 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²³ Shabir Kabiri in: The Afghanistan Project Podcast [YouTube], Afghanistan's internet outage with Shabir Kabiri - The Afghanistan Project Podcast Ep 113, 6 October 2025, [url](#) 5:45–8:30

¹²⁴ UNAMA, Out of reach: The impact of telecommunications shutdowns on the Afghan people, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹²⁵ UNAMA, Out of reach: The impact of telecommunications shutdowns on the Afghan people, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹²⁶ Al Jazeera, Afghanistan imposes internet blackout: What has the effect been so far?, 30 September 2025, [url](#); Telegraph (The), Afghanistan's internet blackout is a glimpse of a dark future, 6 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷ RSF, Afghanistan, [2024], [url](#); Zan Times, Journalism in the Taliban's surveillance state, 13 June 2023, [url](#); Rahimi, H., online interview, 11 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency and Landinfo – the Norwegian COI Centre; Azizi, H., PhD Candidate, Flinders University, online interview, 9 September 2024

¹²⁸ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹²⁹ Afghanistan International, Taliban Monitoring Social Media, Warns Of Legal Action For ‘Improper’ Use, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁰ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Amu TV, Taliban detain dozens, including journalists, over social media posts: Sources, 27 July 2025, [url](#)

¹³¹ Amu TV, Taliban detain dozens, including journalists, over social media posts: Sources, 27 July 2025, [url](#)

¹³² UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 26

¹³³ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 8, 10



bureaucracy and surveillance system as, for example, China and Iran, which makes it difficult for them to trace information from anonymous accounts. Individuals who are identified as being critics may however face serious consequences.¹³⁴ Timor Sharan, Director of Afghanistan Policy Lab, noted that not only have the Taliban engaged in online surveillance, but have also been extremely effective in penetrating society through human assets, including with informants in mosques, among neighbours and the general population. This gives the Taliban great reach and scale in terms of surveillance.¹³⁵

In May 2025, Afghanistan International reported on the de facto MPVPV arresting ‘several social media users’ for ‘illegitimate’ activities online, and outlined two cases in which TikTok content creators were arrested.¹³⁶ TikTok is prohibited in Afghanistan, but remains a popular platform among the younger generation.¹³⁷ One of the men appeared in a video published by a de facto MPVPV spokesperson ‘confessing’ that he had been detained for speaking with women during livestreams on TikTok.¹³⁸ On 27 July 2025, Amu TV reported on dozens of individuals being arrested across Afghanistan over the past month, including seven journalists, for positing ‘un-Islamic’ content on social media.¹³⁹ Afghan human rights organisation Rawadari also documented ‘numerous’ arrests in the first half of 2025 of individuals posting critical content on social media. The four examples outlined by Rawadari included local journalists and civil activists that were imprisoned for three days or longer. One individual was sentenced to six months in prison.¹⁴⁰ There were moreover reports of women working for the de facto authorities to monitor Instagram accounts and report cases of women posting photos with their face uncovered.¹⁴¹ The de facto authorities have also been reacting to critical publications of exile media by investigating journalists in Afghanistan, and targeting individuals suspected of collaborating with Afghan exile media.¹⁴²

1.2. Implementation of *sharia*

1.2.1. Religious freedom

The Taliban is a Sunni Islamic movement that adheres to the Hanafi School of Jurisprudence¹⁴³ and the Deobandi school of thought.¹⁴⁴ They follow an ‘ultra-conservative’ interpretation of

¹³⁴ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹³⁵ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹³⁶ Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests TikTok Users, Forces Public Apologies Over Online Content, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁷ Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests TikTok Users, Forces Public Apologies Over Online Content, 16 May 2025, [url](#); Khaama Press, Crackdown on TikTok users and influencers in Afghanistan intensified, arrested for activities deemed “Unlawful”, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁸ Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests TikTok Users, Forces Public Apologies Over Online Content, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁹ Amu TV, Taliban detain dozens, including journalists, over social media posts: Sources, 27 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 26–27

¹⁴¹ AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

¹⁴² HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴³ Lombardi, C. and March, A., Afghan Taliban Views on Legitimate Islamic Governance, USIP, February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ Rana, S. and Ganguly, S., Taliban’s religious ideology – Deobandi Islam – has roots in colonial India, The Conversation, 25 August 2021, [url](#)



Sunni Islam.¹⁴⁵ During the insurgency after 2001, a main aim of the Taliban's armed struggle was to establish 'a true Islamic system' in Afghanistan,¹⁴⁶ and amid their takeover in August 2021, they declared that *sharia* would serve as the legal system in the country.¹⁴⁷ In this context, the Taliban, as the de facto state, do not see their main function as guarding individual civil rights, but rather as a guiding body¹⁴⁸ existing to ensure that the people follow *sharia*.¹⁴⁹ Only a limited number of edicts and decrees issued by the de facto authorities have 'ostensibly' aimed at protecting personal rights.¹⁵⁰

The de facto authorities impose their religious ideology on the general population through numerous restrictions.¹⁵¹ Although Shia or Sufi practices have not been explicitly prohibited,¹⁵² celebrations of some holy days of the Shia community have been restricted.¹⁵³ Some religious and cultural practices have moreover been restricted,¹⁵⁴ including non-Islamic celebrations such as the Persian new year (*Nowruz*).¹⁵⁵ Restrictions also regulate the behaviour and appearance of the population,¹⁵⁶ including a prohibition of wearing non-Islamic symbols such as crucifixes,¹⁵⁷ and obligations to pray and follow Islamic dress codes.¹⁵⁸ The most comprehensive set of restrictions are included in the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law (colloquially referred to as the 'Morality law'¹⁵⁹) published on 31 July 2024.¹⁶⁰ The

¹⁴⁵ HRW, Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: Three Years After the Taliban Takeover, 20 March 2025, [url](#); Britannica, Taliban, Definition, History & Facts, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ Lombardi, C. and March, A., Afghan Taliban Views on Legitimate Islamic Governance, USIP, February 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ Rahimi, H., What the Taliban may be getting wrong about Islamic governance, Al Jazeera, 24 August 2021, [url](#); WSJ, Taliban Commander Who Launched Bombings in Kabul Is Now a Police Chief in Charge of Security, 20 October 2021, [url](#); CNN, Taliban's religious police instructed to be more moderate, 12 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ Rahimi, H., online interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 4 October 2023

¹⁴⁹ Rahimi, H., Remaking of Afghanistan: How the Taliban are Changing Afghanistan's Laws and Legal Institutions, ISAS, 26 July 2022, [url](#); Rahimi, H., online interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 4 October 2023; Ahmad, J., The Taliban's religious roadmap for Afghanistan, MEI, 26 January 2022, [url](#); Butt, J., A Taleban Theory of State: A review of the Chief Justice's book of jurisprudence, AAN, 3 September 2023, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 10

¹⁵¹ HRW, Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: Three Years After the Taliban Takeover, 20 March 2025, [url](#); Savi, M. et al., Changing social norms around age of marriage in Afghanistan, Data on repression and resistance under the Taliban, ODI, February 2024, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁵² HRW, Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: Three Years After the Taliban Takeover, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵³ Kabul Now, Taliban Impose Restrictions as Shias Begin to Observe Muharram, 7 July 2024, [url](#); Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁵⁴ Bennet, R., UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, in: USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 11:08–11:15

¹⁵⁵ Shirzay, M., Standing in Solidarity: Addressing Challenges Facing Female Education in Afghanistan at the Start of the New Academic Year, RWI, 2 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ ACAPS, Afghanistan, Taliban directives and decrees affecting human rights and humanitarian actors, 21 April 2023, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁵⁷ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22; UN Human Rights Council, Study of the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 64

¹⁵⁸ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), arts. 13, 14, 22

¹⁵⁹ USCIRF, Four Years after the Taliban's Takeover, "Morality Law" Imposes Harsh Religious Freedom Restrictions, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#)



MPVPV is the main body policing people's private lives and compliance.¹⁶¹ More information is available in section [1.2.7. Enforcement of selected restrictions on personal freedoms.](#)

The 'Morality law' is based on the Hanafi school of thought, which effectively excludes other schools of Islam and disregards 'beliefs and practices of other Muslim groups, including Shias, Ismailis, Salafis and Sufis', as noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan.¹⁶² More information is available in section [4.8. Ethnic and religious groups.](#)

According to Human Rights Watch, the de facto authorities 'view anyone who has left Islam as having committed apostasy',¹⁶³ which is punishable by death.¹⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch further reported on individuals suspected of converting from Islam facing 'threats of violence, forced conversion, and imprisonment'. Such religious minorities, including Christians, live 'in constant fear of being disclosed' and operate in secret, without possibilities to gather, worship or openly express their beliefs.¹⁶⁵ Most Afghan Christians are reportedly converts from Islam, which makes it impossible for them to openly practice their faith, as turning away from Islam is punishable by death.¹⁶⁶ According to the human rights campaign organisation Humanists International, 'very few incidents are recorded' in relation to non-believers and apostates in Afghanistan, which the organisation believes is because converts and dissenters from Islam do not speak out. Criticising, abandoning or denouncing Islam is a 'taboo', even among many 'who adhere to broadly democratic values'.¹⁶⁷ The UN Secretary-General reported on arbitrary arrests of individuals being accused of promoting atheism or other religions than Islam.¹⁶⁸

Blasphemy is punishable by death according to Hanafi jurisprudence, and 'may include anti-Islamic writings or speech' as reported by the United States Department of State (USDOS).¹⁶⁹ There have been reported cases of individuals being arrested on accusations of blasphemy.¹⁷⁰ In 2023, Islamic scholar and activist Rasool Parsi was sentenced to 16-month imprisonment for 'blasphemy'¹⁷¹ and propagandising against the government, after having criticised the Taliban on social media.¹⁷² Although Parsi has served his sentence no updates have indicated his release.¹⁷³ In June 2025, an individual was sentenced to death in eastern Paktika Province for

¹⁶¹ Clark, K., Co-director and Senior Analyst at the AAN, USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 1:09:00–1:09:36

¹⁶² UN Human Rights Council, Study of the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 31

¹⁶³ HRW, Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: Three Years After the Taliban Takeover, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ HRW, Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: Three Years After the Taliban Takeover, 20 March 2025, [url](#); Open Doors, Afghanistan, 2025, [url](#); Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶⁵ HRW, Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: Three Years After the Taliban Takeover, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Open Doors, Afghanistan, 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ Humanists International, The Freedom of Thought Report, Afghanistan, 31 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 36

¹⁶⁹ USDOS, 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Afghanistan, 15 May 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ HRW, Taliban Expand Civil Society Crackdown, 29 March 2023, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Arrest Man in Balkh Over Blasphemy as Morality Crackdown Grows, 11 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ Afghanistan International, Taliban Sentences Afghan University Professor To 16 Months In Prison in Kabul, 30 October 2023, [url](#); Shafaqna, Taliban court sentenced a university professor to 16 months in prison, 2 November 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷² HRW, Taliban Expand Civil Society Crackdown, 29 March 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷³ Pen America, Rasul Abdi Parsi, 2025, [url](#)



alleged blasphemy, reportedly after making comments on the value of modern education.¹⁷⁴ According to Amu TV, the man was a high school teacher, and was accused of having insulted the Prophet Muhammad, while colleagues and acquaintances claimed that personal enmities were behind the accusations.¹⁷⁵ United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that the man's death sentence had been reduced to a two-year imprisonment but pending a de facto Supreme Court hearing.¹⁷⁶ Kabul Now reported on an individual being flogged with 39 lashes and sentenced to imprisonment in Paktika Province in January 2025 for 'insulting religious rituals and Islamic values'.¹⁷⁷

1.2.2. Nature of issued instructions

The de facto government has not enacted a formal legal framework.¹⁷⁸ Since their takeover in 2021, they have been ruling without a constitution,¹⁷⁹ having immediately abolished the 2004 Constitution of the former government¹⁸⁰ and not yet announced any replacement.¹⁸¹ Instead, they have indicated that a constitution is unnecessary asserting that *sharia* provides 'a comprehensive legal framework',¹⁸² although there is not one uncontested universal interpretation of *sharia*.¹⁸³ The book 'The Islamic Emirate and Its System', authored by the de facto Chief Justice and endorsed by the Taliban Supreme Leader,¹⁸⁴ 'appears to be the blueprint' of the de facto government and its intellectual foundations.¹⁸⁵

All laws in effect under the previous government have been undergoing a review to assess their compliance with *sharia*, but no announcement has been made on the final outcome of this review or which laws remain in effect.¹⁸⁶ Rather, the de facto authorities have continued to broadly refer to *sharia* as the governing framework,¹⁸⁷ and have issued verbal and written instructions based on their own interpretations.¹⁸⁸ The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights

¹⁷⁴ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6;

Amu TV, Afghanistan: Paktika teacher sentenced to death over alleged blasphemy, sources say, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ Amu TV, Afghanistan: Paktika teacher sentenced to death over alleged blasphemy, sources say, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁷⁷ Kabul Now, Taliban Publicly Flog Four Individuals on Charges of Sodomy and Blasphemy, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ Al, Friday 15ht of August marks four years since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan., 15 August 2025, [url](#);

Austria, Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Afghan legal system under the Taliban, 9 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 4–5, 7; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 13 June 2024, [url](#), para. 12

¹⁷⁹ Butt, J., A Taleban Theory of State: A review of the Chief Justice's book of jurisprudence, AAN, 3 September 2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 24

¹⁸¹ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 15; Al, Friday 15ht of August marks four years since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan., 15 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 11

¹⁸³ UN OHCHR, Any party in Afghanistan declaring it follows Islamic Sharia must uphold and protect the rights of women and girls, 24 August 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ Butt, J., A Taleban Theory of State: A review of the Chief Justice's book of jurisprudence, AAN, 3 September 2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ Zaland, F. M., The Conflicting Synthesis of the Taliban's Religious and Cultural Identity, Taylor & Francis Journals, July 2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 24

¹⁸⁷ Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Afghanistan: Ruling by Decree, April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 25



in Afghanistan referred to the legal framework as a ‘patchwork of so-called laws, decrees and edicts’¹⁸⁹ highlighting the lack of legal certainty and consistency due to the unclear status of earlier legislation.¹⁹⁰ Other sources similarly noted significant ambiguity regarding which laws have become redundant, as the de facto authorities have selectively applied laws of the previous government.¹⁹¹

The de facto authorities have, however, been formalising the issuance and communication of laws and other instructions,¹⁹² *inter alia* by compiling official gazettes.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, the Taliban Supreme Leader has continued to mainly rule by decree issued from his base in Kandahar,¹⁹⁴ and verbal communication of restrictions has also continued¹⁹⁵ – with unclear legal status.¹⁹⁶

Many instructions have moreover been vaguely formulated,¹⁹⁷ and leave space for different interpretations.¹⁹⁸ Some sources have indicated that instructions may be purposefully vague in order to, *inter alia*, increase policy ambiguity and leave space for adjustments.¹⁹⁹ Some sources also stressed that some decrees are largely symbolic rather than enforceable laws.²⁰⁰ In this system, much is left to the interpretation of the individual enforcer of laws and instructions.²⁰¹

¹⁸⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 25

¹⁹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 32

¹⁹¹ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 15; See also: ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁹² Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 8; Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Afghanistan: Ruling by Decree, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 5

¹⁹³ Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Afghanistan: Ruling by Decree, April 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁹⁴ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 12, 15; Ibrahim, N. et al., After 4 years of repressive Taliban rule, Afghans are suffering in silence. Is the world still watching?, Conversation (The), 14 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (Advance unedited version), 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 23

¹⁹⁶ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 7; UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), paras. 33, 68, 72; Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 7; ACAPS, Afghanistan: Taliban directives and decrees affecting human rights and humanitarian actors, 25 April 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹⁸ ACAPS, Afghanistan: Taliban directives and decrees affecting human rights and humanitarian actors, 25 April 2023, [url](#), p. 3; Obaidullah Baheer in: New Humanitarian (The), How the Taliban’s vice and virtue law is impacting foreign aid and engagement, 22 October 2024, [url](#); Afghan analyst, email, 5 January 2026

¹⁹⁹ Rahimi, H., online interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 4 October 2023; ACAPS, Afghanistan: Taliban directives and decrees affecting human rights and humanitarian actors, 25 April 2023, [url](#), p. 3

²⁰⁰ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 16; Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

²⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), paras. 33, 68, 72; Obaidullah Baheer in: New Humanitarian (The), How the Taliban’s vice and virtue law is impacting foreign aid and engagement, 22 October 2024, [url](#); Afghan analyst, email 5 January 2026



1.2.3. Issued instructions

A compilation of national decrees and instructions issued by the de facto authorities is available in Annex 3: Lists of decrees and instructions. Restrictions issued during the reference period of this report include:

- universities were instructed to remove 680 books ‘conflicting with *sharia*’ from the curriculum (September 2025). These included many books authored by women.²⁰² A Taliban spokesperson confirmed to BBC News that no books authored by women were allowed to be taught;²⁰³
- universities were instructed to stop teaching 18 subjects ‘conflicting with *sharia*’ (September 2025), including gender, women,²⁰⁴ democracy and human rights;²⁰⁵
- a ban on playing chess (11 May 2025);²⁰⁶
- a law on ‘Poetry Regulation’ (30 August 2025),²⁰⁷ reportedly restricting poetry gatherings,²⁰⁸ romantic poetry addressing relationships between men and women, and poetry criticising the Taliban Supreme Leader. Poets were urged to avoid references to feminism, democracy, communism, and nationalism;²⁰⁹
- new guidelines for political analysts participating in political debates (July 2025).²¹⁰ They were urged to speak ‘in accordance with *sharia*’²¹¹ and obtain an identity card from the de facto Ministry of Information and Culture before appearing in media;²¹²
- a ban on new constructions with windows overlooking neighbours’ private areas where women are often visible, such as courtyards and kitchens (December 2024);²¹³
- a prohibition of medical education for women (2 December 2024).²¹⁴

The UN Secretary-General reported on restrictions on religious preaching, smartphone use, and funeral prayers for suicide victims.²¹⁵ This information has however not been possible to corroborate with other sources within the time constraints of drafting this report.

²⁰² BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Taliban Bans Books by Women in Afghanistan’s Universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁰³ BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ New York Times (The), Taliban Bans Books by Women in Afghanistan’s Universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ France 24, Taliban suspends chess in Afghanistan, cites religious concerns over gambling, 11 May 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ Amu TV, Taliban leader bans romantic poetry and his criticism under new law, 31 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 5

²⁰⁹ Amu TV, Taliban leader bans romantic poetry and his criticism under new law, 31 August 2025, [url](#); Print (The), As Taliban declares war on verse, Afghan women lose their only weapon, but say silence won’t last, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Telegraph (The), Taliban bans political debate in free speech crackdown, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

²¹¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 35; Telegraph (The), Taliban bans political debate in free speech crackdown, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

²¹² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 35

²¹³ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 21; AFP, Taliban leader bans windows overlooking places ‘usually used by women’, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

²¹⁴ HRW, Afghanistan’s Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

²¹⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 5



1.2.4. Policy implementation

In April 2024, Obaidullah Baheer, adjunct lecturer with the American University of Afghanistan, described ‘a constant tug of war’ between what is being decreed and what is actually being enforced in Afghanistan.²¹⁶ Not all issued instructions been actively enforced,²¹⁷ and regional variances have been noted.²¹⁸ This discrepancy stems from the fact that some decisions have not been embraced throughout the Taliban movement,²¹⁹ and also from influence of local contexts and stakeholders.²²⁰ However, several sources noted a general trend of more uniform enforcement across the country, with local variations decreasing.²²¹ The de facto authorities have also created provincial enforcement committees to support the ‘Morality law’s’ implementation in the provinces.²²²

Despite more systematic and consistent enforcement efforts, some regional variations continued to be reported in 2025.²²³ These inconsistencies were attributed, in part, to varying norms of local de facto officials²²⁴ and the ambiguous wording of some articles in the ‘Morality law’, leaving room for diverse interpretations.²²⁵

The vague formulations of issued instructions also create leeway for individual enforcers to be lenient or strict.²²⁶ The Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) noted that some de facto officials may go beyond issued restrictions, and for example tell women to wear *burqa* combined with gloves and to always be accompanied outdoors – which is stricter than issued instructions.²²⁷

²¹⁶ Baheer, O., interview, 25 April 2024

²¹⁷ Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Afghanistan: Ruling by Decree, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 3–4; Afghan analyst, online interview, 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

²¹⁸ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 3; UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6; ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 78

²¹⁹ ACAPS, Afghanistan: Taliban directives and decrees affecting human rights and humanitarian actors, 25 April 2023, [url](#), p. 3

²²⁰ International Crisis Group, Afghanistan Three Years after the Taliban Takeover, 14 August 2024, [url](#); ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 25

²²¹ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 12; Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 3; UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²²² UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

²²³ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 7; AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²²⁴ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 25; AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²²⁵ Obaidullah Baheer in: New Humanitarian (The), How the Taliban’s vice and virtue law is impacting foreign aid and engagement, 22 October 2024, [url](#)

²²⁶ Obaidullah Baheer in: New Humanitarian (The), How the Taliban’s vice and virtue law is impacting foreign aid and engagement, 22 October 2024, [url](#); Afghan analyst, email, 5 January 2026

²²⁷ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)



The intensity of the enforcement has moreover varied over time,²²⁸ like a ‘wavelike movement’ as described by Afghanistan expert Thomas Ruttig in an interview with ACCORD in October 2024.²²⁹ For instance, after the announcement of the ‘Morality law’ in 2024, sources noted an increased presence of enforcers in Kabul City²³⁰ and various provinces.²³¹ International Crisis Group similarly noted how the de facto MPVPV come out ‘in full force’ after the announcement of new restrictions, while they at other times ‘are far from omnipresent’²³²

1.2.5. Actors of enforcement

The de facto MPVPV is responsible for propagating virtue and preventing vice based on the de facto authorities’ interpretation of *sharia*,²³³ and has been enforcing instructions that regulate the private lives of Afghans.²³⁴ It is an influential institution that reports directly to the Taliban Supreme Leader on important issues.²³⁵ Although the de facto MPVPV in principle has more of a guiding role,²³⁶ its enforcers (*muhtasibin*.) enjoy extensive powers, allowing them to move beyond advising the population²³⁷ and detain individuals failing to comply²³⁸ or issue extra-judicial punishment.²³⁹ Enforcers may issue any punishment they consider appropriate as long as it is not ‘the exclusive prerogative of a court of law’.²⁴⁰ Enforcement is to follow a ‘sliding scale’,²⁴¹ where ‘advise’ should be the first response to a ‘wrongful act’. Only if the act continues, enforcers may resort to more forceful means (e.g. threats, fines and detentions).²⁴² However, this has not always been followed in practice, with for example women failing to

²²⁸ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 26; International Crisis Group, A Precarious Lifeline? Women-led Business in Afghanistan, 17 December 2025, [url](#)

²²⁹ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 26

²³⁰ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

²³¹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 15

²³² International Crisis Group, A Precarious Lifeline? Women-led Business in Afghanistan, 17 December 2025, [url](#)

²³³ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6

²³⁴ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 11; Clark, K., Co-director and Senior Analyst at the AAN, USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 1:09:00–1:09:36

²³⁵ Samim, S., Policing Public Morality, AAN, 15 June 2022, [url](#); UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October-December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 6

²³⁶ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 9

²³⁷ Rahimi, H., How the Taliban are Institutionalizing the Propagation of Virtue and Enjoinment of Vice in Afghanistan, Edinburgh University Press, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

²³⁸ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 16; Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 24

²³⁹ Butt, J., A Force for Good, or Source of Coercion? An Islamic scholar reflect on the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 24

²⁴¹ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

²⁴² Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 24



comply with the *hijab* decree being arrested as a first response. The de facto MPVPV also cooperates with the de facto GDI, whose mandate allows for further coercive measures.²⁴³

Following the launch of the 'Morality law', the de facto MPVPV deployed additional enforcers across Afghanistan,²⁴⁴ claiming that they had deployed 4 500 enforcers by October 2024.²⁴⁵ Meanwhile, UNAMA reported that 3 300 enforcers operated across 28 provinces as of January 2025, with an average of 118 inspectors per province. Numbers varied depending on the size of the province and its population. For example, Paktya and Paktika had 14 enforcers each, while approximately 540 enforcers were operating in Kabul Province.²⁴⁶ Almost all enforcers are male,²⁴⁷ and they commonly wear white long coats (*perahan tunban*).²⁴⁸

There have been continuous reports on de facto MPVPV enforcers using force, including verbal intimidation, arrests, harassment, and physical violence.²⁴⁹ An Afghan analyst who regularly conducts field-based research in Afghanistan told the EUAA that enforcers at times also resort to 'financial damage', such as destroying mobile phones.²⁵⁰ UNAMA reported on an 'apparent lack of accountability' of de facto MPVPV staff, despite a complaint's mechanism being in place.²⁵¹ In an article, Rahimi argued that the de facto government's 'desire to turn the MPVPV into a police force that ensures compliance with a strict code of conduct' had diluted several legal safeguards to 'keep the ministry consistent with other canonical rules on Islamic governance in protecting privacy, due process, jurisprudential plurality, and equal application of sharia for the ruler and the ruled'.²⁵²

Despite the relatively small number of de facto MPVPV enforcers,²⁵³ many Afghans have adapted to restrictions²⁵⁴ through self-regulation,²⁵⁵ social pressure, and reportedly also community surveillance by family members, religious leaders and neighbours.²⁵⁶ Such measures are reportedly taken to avoid confrontations with enforcers.²⁵⁷ Some women avoid

²⁴³ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), pp. 9, 17

²⁴⁴ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 3; AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁴⁵ AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁴⁶ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 8

²⁴⁷ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁴⁸ AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 6; BBC News, Afghanistan: Policing faces, bodies and beards on Kabul streets, 22 May 2022, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 16; AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁵⁰ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

²⁵¹ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 4

²⁵² Rahimi, H., How the Taliban are Institutionalizing the Propagation of Virtue and Enjoinment of Vice in Afghanistan, Edinburgh University Press, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

²⁵³ Guardian (The), How ordinary men became unpaid Taliban enforcers in their own homes, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 15

²⁵⁶ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 17

²⁵⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 15; Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)



going outside their home,²⁵⁸ due to the risk of being spoken to, insulted, or arrested by an unknown man in the capacity of a de facto MPVPV official, which has a strong deterrent effect, as it would be considered a grave dishonour,²⁵⁹ bringing shame on the woman's family and community²⁶⁰ and triggering rumours.²⁶¹ Families also resorted to 'self-policing' their female family members,²⁶² and some families as well as NGOs and businesses 'pre-emptively' placed restrictions on women, according to UN Women, 'even in the absence of formal decrees'.²⁶³

Men also restrict women relatives as they may be held accountable²⁶⁴ and face reprisals for the behaviour of female family members.²⁶⁵ As per a 2022 decree mandating women to cover their faces, failure to comply may lead to the closest male relative facing reprimands, imprisonment or job dismissal.²⁶⁶ As noted by an anonymous source interviewed by ACCORD, the de facto MPVPV usually 'advises' close male relatives, such as a husband, father or brother, but may also turn to cousins or brothers-in-law.²⁶⁷ Some men have also become more conservative,²⁶⁸ as restrictions have been 'embedding norms into everyday behaviour'.²⁶⁹

1.2.6. Impact on the education sector

A main aim of the Taliban Supreme Leader is reportedly to implement *sharia* in order to 'purify' Afghan society.²⁷⁰ The education sector has been impacted by efforts to eradicate some secular subjects,²⁷¹ while religious topics have been expanded²⁷² and promoted.²⁷³ Women and girls have gradually been restricted from accessing education, starting with

²⁵⁸ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), How ordinary men became unpaid Taliban enforcers in their own homes, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁶¹ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁶² Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), How ordinary men became unpaid Taliban enforcers in their own homes, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁶³ UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁶⁴ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 78–79; UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4; Guardian (The), How ordinary men became unpaid Taliban enforcers in their own homes, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁶⁶ RFE/RL, Afghan Taliban Orders Women To Wear Burqa Coverings In Public, 7 May 2022, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ This anonymous source has nearly two decades of working experience in Afghanistan, focusing on the health sector, service development, training, and capacity building. ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 78–79

²⁶⁸ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁷⁰ International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; Washington Post (The), Taliban forging religious emirate in Afghanistan with draconian Islamic law, 18 February 2023, [url](#)

²⁷¹ RFE/RL, The Azadi Briefing: Taliban Intensifies Efforts To Eradicate Secular Education In Afghanistan, 14 July 2023, [url](#)

²⁷² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 18 September 2023, [url](#), para. 3; Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025

²⁷³ AW, Afghanistan's madrasa system under the Taliban, 7 November 2023, [url](#)



secondary education in 2022,²⁷⁴ followed by university education later that year,²⁷⁵ and most recently, from attending medical education in December 2024.²⁷⁶ The de facto authorities have been working to revise the school curriculum for private and public schools,²⁷⁷ removing topics deemed ‘against’ Islamic rites and Afghan culture.²⁷⁸ According to Rahimi, the curriculum has not been completely overhauled, but rather, more recent additions have been removed, such as social subject or civic education related to democracy themes.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, universities have been instructed to stop teaching 18 subjects considered to be in conflict with *sharia*, including topics on gender, women,²⁸⁰ democracy and human rights.²⁸¹ Human Rights Watch reported that the absence of female teachers had led to a reduced range of subjects being taught to boys, and that subjects such as sports, art, civics and culture had been replaced with religious studies.²⁸²

In Afghanistan, *madrassas* are religious institutions that have historically played an important role in educating children.²⁸³ At the time of writing, *madrassas* were the only option for many girls and women to receive education after primary school.²⁸⁴ Madrassas provide religious education, but generally also teach non-religious subjects,²⁸⁵ such as mathematics, science, physics, geography, and languages.²⁸⁶ Before the Taliban takeover, about 5 000 *madrassas* were formally registered with the then government,²⁸⁷ although thousands more operated without registration.²⁸⁸ The de facto authorities have made efforts to regulate the *madrassa* sector,²⁸⁹ including by registering informal *madrassas*.²⁹⁰ These efforts have led up to almost 23 000 *madrassas* being formally registered as of August 2025, according to the de facto authorities.²⁹¹ Only a limited number of these are newly established institutions – about 316

²⁷⁴ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 18 September 2023, [url](#), para. 18

²⁷⁵ TOLONews, Lecturer Rips Up His Certificates to Protest Ban on Women’s Education, 1 January 2023, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ HRW, Afghanistan’s Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ TOLONews, Nadim: We Want Youth to Be Professionals, Not ‘Talib’, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ Ariana News, Latest News Primary school curriculum revised, 16 January 2024, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

²⁸⁰ BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁸¹ New York Times (The), Taliban Bans Books by Women in Afghanistan’s Universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁸² HRW, “Schools are Failing Boys Too”, The Taliban’s Impact on Boys’ Education in Afghanistan, 6 December 2023, [url](#)

²⁸³ AW, Afghanistan’s madrasa system under the Taliban, 7 November 2023, [url](#); Akram, S., Living a Mullah’s Life (2): The evolution of Islamic knowledge among village clerics, AAN, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ Guardian (The), ‘Send your daughters or you get no aid’: the Taliban are making religious schools girls’ only option, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ Rahimi, H., online interview, 11 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency and Landinfo – the Norwegian COI Centre; AW, Afghanistan’s madrasa system under the Taliban, 7 November 2023, [url](#)

²⁸⁶ AW, Afghanistan’s madrasa system under the Taliban, 7 November 2023, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ AW, Afghanistan’s madrasa system under the Taliban, 7 November 2023, [url](#); VOA, Religious education surges under Taliban as secular schooling languishes, 8 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., The Taliban’s Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

²⁸⁹ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., The Taliban’s Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

²⁹⁰ Akram, S., Living a Mullah’s Life (2): The evolution of Islamic knowledge among village clerics, AAN, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

²⁹¹ CNN, ‘They do not teach us what we need’: Inside the expansion of religious schools for girls across Afghanistan, 4 August 2025, [url](#)



according to the Afghanistan Human Rights Center (AHRC).²⁹² Most *madrassas* continue to be privately run,²⁹³ although a few public so-called *jihadi madrassas* have been established.²⁹⁴

Some commentators worry that *madrassas* may fuel extremism,²⁹⁵ and function as ‘centres for religious indoctrination’.²⁹⁶ The Taliban have been using the education sector to reinforce their ideology within the young generation,²⁹⁷ but Afghanistan experts Haroun Rahimi and Andrew Watkins noted that the name *jihadi madrassa* has caused ‘profound confusion’ as the term is associated with violent religious extremists. Although Rahimi and Watkins could not ‘rule out the extent to which some jihadi madrassas may serve as conduits for future employment in the DFA offices, including enlistment in DFA security forces’, they did not find evidence for these *madrassas* engaging in militarised training or education. They also noted that the *jihadi madrassas* apply the same curriculum as other *madrassas*.²⁹⁸ On the contrary, CNN reported that public *madrassas* almost exclusively teach religious subjects.²⁹⁹ AHRC reported that male students of some public *madrassas* had been promised ‘good positions and jobs in government’ upon their graduation.³⁰⁰ According to individuals interviewed by Rahimi and Watkins, people educated in *madrassas* were easy to recruit into the de facto administration, as they often support the Taliban, although governmental service was not mandatory.³⁰¹

1.2.7. Enforcement of selected restrictions on personal freedoms

This chapter describes the enforcement of selected restrictions. Information on how some of these and other restrictions impact women’s and girls’ freedom of movement and access to work, education and state service is provided in chapter [4.4. Women and girls](#).

(a) Gender segregation

The necessity of gender segregation is a central idea within the Taliban movement, which impacts the decisions of the de facto government.³⁰² From their perspective, as described by an analyst interviewed by Landinfo in 2022, gender segregating restrictions are needed for women to be able to leave their homes at all, as gender segregation must be maintained for women to access public spaces.³⁰³ In order to uphold gender segregation, women have been

²⁹² AHRC, Report on Access To Education for Women under the Taliban, December 2024, [url](#), p. 22

²⁹³ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., The Taliban’s Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 7; AHRC, Report on Access To Education for Women under the Taliban, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 22–23

²⁹⁴ AW, Afghanistan’s madrasa system under the Taliban, 7 November 2023, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ VOA, Religious education surges under Taliban as secular schooling languishes, 8 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ Al Jazeera, Religious schools fill gaps amid Afghanistan’s fractured education system, 7 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁹⁷ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 8

²⁹⁸ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., The Taliban’s Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 14–15

²⁹⁹ CNN, ‘They do not teach us what we need’: Inside the expansion of religious schools for girls across Afghanistan, 4 August 2024, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ AHRC, Report on Access To Education for Women under the Taliban, December 2024, [url](#), p. 26

³⁰¹ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., The Taliban’s Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 24

³⁰² Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Situasjonen for afghanske kvinner etter Talibans maktovertakelse, 22 June 2022, [url](#), p. 2; Newswise, It is not just Sharia law: The Taliban, Pashtunwali and Afghan Women, 15 September 2021, [url](#)

³⁰³ Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Situasjonen for afghanske kvinner etter Talibans maktovertakelse, 22 June 2022, [url](#), p. 2



barred from parks, gyms, public baths,³⁰⁴ and from accessing secondary education.³⁰⁵

Restrictions have moreover been put on some women-led business, and women shopkeepers have been relocated to designated floors at some markets, including in Mazar-e Sharif,³⁰⁶ and Herat City.³⁰⁷ Female and male staff have also been segregated in public offices,³⁰⁸ and at many health facilities patients are only to be treated by health staff of the same sex.³⁰⁹

The ‘Morality law’ forbids unrelated men and women from looking at each other. It further instructs women not to leave their home unless there is an ‘urgent need’, and in such cases she is ‘duty bound to hide her voice, face and body’. Unaccompanied or uncovered women are, moreover, not to be offered transport by commercial vehicles, nor are they to ‘sit or mingle’ with unrelated men.³¹⁰ According to the Afghan analyst, the restrictions on intermingling do not apply to public settings where many people are present at the same time.³¹¹ However, a de facto MPVPV official interviewed by the AAN described women presence in markets in Kabul City as a problem, citing it as evidence that their approach of enforcing *sharia* through advisory measures was not being effective in the capital.³¹²

In some more conservative areas, restrictions generally conform with local customs,³¹³ and have therefore not brought a notable difference.³¹⁴ In more conservative areas, women would already barely go outdoors due to social norms,³¹⁵ including many women in southern provinces who live in *purdah* – meaning that they are secluded from all men except close relatives.³¹⁶ Nevertheless, some women also in conservative areas have been noting some stricter enforcement, being particularly upset over the de facto MPVPV’s authority to advise and question them,³¹⁷ and conservative families told the AAN that they were concerned about

³⁰⁴ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 11

³⁰⁵ Jackson, A., The Ban on Older Girls’ Education: Taliban conservatives ascendant and a leadership in disarray, AAN, 29 March 2022, [url](#); RFE/RL, Islam Does Not Ban Girls’ Education. So Why Does The Taliban?, 13 August 2023, [url](#)

³⁰⁶ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities’ Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 10

³⁰⁷ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

³⁰⁸ RFE/RL, Taliban Resurrects Gender Segregation In Public Offices, Transport In Afghanistan, 16 March 2022, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ Le Monde, The risk to women’s health in Afghanistan: ‘The consequences of this segregation are catastrophic’, 31 January 2025, [url](#); RFE/RL, Taliban Resurrects Gender Segregation In Public Offices, Transport In Afghanistan, 16 March 2022, [url](#); UN Women, Gender Index 2024, 2025, Afghanistan, [url](#), p. 19

³¹⁰ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 13, 20

³¹¹ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

³¹² Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

³¹³ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 16

³¹⁴ Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 26–27

³¹⁵ Al Jazeera English [YouTube], The Taliban’s rules for women in Afghanistan, Start Here, 8 March 2025, [url](#), 02:00–02:09

³¹⁶ Clark, K. and Rahimi, S., “We need to breathe too”: Women across Afghanistan navigate the Taliban’s hijab ruling, AAN, 1 June 2022, [url](#)

³¹⁷ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)



the de facto MPVPV enforcers' authority to question their relationships and interrogate female family members.³¹⁸

A joint telesurvey with women and men across Afghanistan, carried out by UN Women, IOM and UNAMA, suggested that the enforcement of gender segregating restrictions significantly intensified within months following the introduction of the 'Morality law' in 2024,³¹⁹ including women's access to public spaces, mostly being felt in the Western, Central, and Southeastern regions.³²⁰

(b) Dress codes and appearance

Dress codes for women

Women were instructed to cover their faces (preferably with a *burqa*) through a decree in May 2022.³²¹ The 'Morality law' of 31 July 2024, reiterated that women should cover their entire body and faces, and that women's clothes should not be 'thin, short or tight'.³²² The enforcement of restrictions on women's clothing has varied depending on the local context.³²³ As described by a de facto government official, the interpretation of *hijab* differs across the country, although according to him most interpretations were in conflict with *sharia*.³²⁴ In more conservative areas the obligations generally conform with local customs,³²⁵ as women in general already wear fully covering garments,³²⁶ for example in Kandahar Province.³²⁷

The joint telesurvey with women and men across Afghanistan, carried out by UN Women, IOM and UNAMA, suggested that the enforcement of the restrictions on wearing 'proper *hijab*' intensified following the introduction of the 'Morality law', mostly being felt in Western, Central Highland north, and Northeastern regions.³²⁸ Sources identified the *hijab* requirement as one of the most policed aspects in 2025.³²⁹ A woman from a village in Baghlan Province told the

³¹⁸ Clark, K., Co-director and Senior Analyst at the AAN, in USCIRF [YouTube], Hearing on Religious Freedom Conditions in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, 7 April 2025, [url](#), 1:09:38–1:10:26

³¹⁹ UN Women, Four Years of Taliban Rule: Afghan Women Resist as Restrictions Tighten, August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

³²⁰ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 16

³²¹ Clark, K. and Rahimi, S., "We need to breathe too": Women across Afghanistan navigate the Taleban's hijab ruling, AAN, 1 June 2022, [url](#)

³²² Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 13

³²³ Al Jazeera English [YouTube], The Taliban's rules for women in Afghanistan, Start Here, 8 March 2025, [url](#), 01:48-01:52

³²⁴ BBC News, Taliban order women to wear burkas to access hospitals, charity says, 12 November 2025, [url](#)

³²⁵ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 16

³²⁶ Bjelica, J., Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time we just don't go", AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 26–27

³²⁷ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

³²⁸ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 16

³²⁹ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 6



AAN that women were forced to wear *burqa* when going outdoors,³³⁰ and in some areas in the provinces of Bamyan and Ghazni, women had reportedly been instructed to wear black gloves, which is more restrictive than the attire outlined in the 'Morality Law'.³³¹

Kabul City remained distinct from other parts of Afghanistan as regards appearance, with many women continuing to wear *hijab* covering their hair together with a medical facemask to cover their faces.³³² There was reportedly also a new trend among young women in city areas dressing in the fully covering Arab-style *abaya*.³³³ Melissa Kerr Chiovenda, owner and lead researcher of Ereuna Research and Consulting (LLC) and affiliated faculty of anthropology at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, stated that there was a bit of 'breathing space' for women in the centre of Kabul City as women did not wear 'full *hijab*' and did generally not face harassment for it.³³⁴ Meanwhile, in interviews with the AAN in 2025, some de facto MPVPV enforcers complained about how many Kabuli women were not wearing 'proper' *hijab*, and that many women would push back and respond rudely to their advice.³³⁵

The *chador* is mandatory in Herat City since May 2025, according to the UN Secretary-General's report, and non-compliance has reportedly 'led to detention and restricted access to markets and public transport'.³³⁶ The local de facto authorities reportedly issued further restrictions on 5 November 2025 requiring women entering public hospitals to wear a *burqa*.³³⁷ A local journalist suggested to BBC News on 12 November 2025, that the restrictions had laxed following criticism,³³⁸ while Human Rights Watch, citing exile media, reported on the restrictions expanding to all de facto government offices and to female teachers in primary schools. The same source, again citing exile media, reported on a female surgeon being arrested for hours earlier the same month for not wearing a *burqa*.³³⁹

There have been sporadic targeted enforcement campaigns of the *hijab* requirement, in Kabul City and other areas in the country, where women have been arrested for not wearing 'proper *hijab*' in January 2024,³⁴⁰ and again in Kabul City³⁴¹ and Herat City in July–September 2025.³⁴² According to UNAMA, more than 60 women and girls were arrested by the de facto MPVPV in

³³⁰ Bjelica, J., Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time we just don't go", AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 25–26

³³¹ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

³³² Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

³³³ AFP, New generation of Afghan women shift from burqa, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

³³⁴ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

³³⁵ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

³³⁶ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 32

³³⁷ MSF, New restrictions limit access to care for women in Herat, 10 November 2025, [url](#)

³³⁸ BBC News, Taliban order women to wear burkas to access hospitals, charity says, 12 November 2025, [url](#)

³³⁹ HRW, Taliban's Mandatory Burqa in Herat Assaults Women's Autonomy, 19 November 2025, [url](#)

³⁴⁰ EUAA, COI Query, Afghanistan – Major legislative, security-related, and humanitarian developments 2 February 2024, [url](#), p. 2

³⁴¹ Le Figaro, «Un système qui fait penser à celui d'une organisation mafieuse» : l'aile la plus rigoureuse des talibans renforce sa mainmise sur l'Afghanistan, 26 August 2025, [url](#); HRW, Afghan Women Continue to Fight for Bodily Autonomy, 27 July 2025, [url](#); Zan Times, Imprisoned for white shoes: Kabul's women speak of Taliban arrests, 28 August 2025, [url](#)

³⁴² UNAMA, Update on the Human Rights situation in Afghanistan July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 3



16–19 July 2025 in Kabul City. Some were arrested for a few hours and others overnight, and all were released upon the arrival of male relatives signing written guarantees of their future behaviour. UNAMA further reported on a group of women being detained in Herat City in September 2025, and on the de facto MPVPV establishing checkpoints to monitor women's *hijab* in the Jebrael area of the city,³⁴³ which is mainly inhabited by ethnic Hazaras.³⁴⁴ Sources suggested that these intermittent enforcement efforts are applied to spread fear and, in turn, make people abide to the restrictions.³⁴⁵

Dress codes for men

In the 'Morality law' from July 2025, men are instructed to cover their bodies from the waist down to their knees, knees included. It moreover indicates that men are not to wear very tight clothes or clothes that make certain parts of the body apparent during 'pastimes and exercise'. The law further stipulated that one is not to imitate non-Muslims in one's appearance or character, or wear non-Islamic symbols such as crucifixes and neckties.³⁴⁶ The de facto MPVPV has also issued advisory instructions for barbers not to cut men's beard or do 'western style' haircuts.³⁴⁷ The 'Morality law' also identified the 'wrongful acts' of 'shaving one's beard or reducing it to less than the width of a fist', and 'styling one's hair in an un-Islamic manner'.³⁴⁸ Since March 2025, high school students and teachers must wear traditional uniforms as per a directive of the de facto Ministry of Education; reportedly a light-blue *shalwar kameez* and a cap or turban depending on their age.³⁴⁹ The directive was reportedly enforced to a varying degree in initial months.³⁵⁰

Some men have started to dress traditionally to avoid problems with the de facto authorities,³⁵¹ or to gain benefits by looking like the power elite.³⁵² A de facto MPVPV enforcer, however, told the AAN in 2025 that the city street view of Kabul City had not changed much in recent years, as men were still clean-shaved and 'copying female styles'.³⁵³ In 2025, sources reported that men's beards had become one of the most policed aspects.³⁵⁴ UNAMA noted

³⁴³ UNAMA, Update on the Human Rights situation in Afghanistan July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 3

³⁴⁴ HALO, Jebrail: A safe new town for Afghanistan, 24 September 2024, [url](#)

³⁴⁵ Washington Post (The), Women despair over Taliban rules, but many Afghan returnees don't see it, 28 November 2024, [url](#); Zan Times, Imprisoned for white shoes: Kabul's women speak of Taliban arrests, 28 August 2025, [url](#); See also: ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 31

³⁴⁶ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 14, 22

³⁴⁷ UNAMA, De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 11; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 11 September 2023, [url](#), para. 38

³⁴⁸ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22

³⁴⁹ Express Tribune (The), No turban, no class: Afghan boys face strict uniform rules, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ Le Figaro, En Afghanistan, élèves et enseignants contraints de porter l'habit taliban, 30 April 2025, [url](#); Express Tribune (The), No turban, no class: Afghan boys face strict uniform rules, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁵¹ Le Figaro, En Afghanistan, élèves et enseignants contraints de porter l'habit taliban, 30 April 2025, [url](#); AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

³⁵² Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

³⁵³ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

³⁵⁴ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 6



that half of all arbitrary arrests made by the de facto MPVPV in the six months following the enactment of the 'Morality law' were related to non-compliant beards and hairstyles.³⁵⁵ A man from Ghazni Province, interviewed by the AAN in 2025, stated that he had lost his job for violating beard and clothing restrictions, as he liked to wear 'the latest fashion' at the time. He had been stopped twice and threatened with prison for slightly trimming his beard and had thereafter chosen to adapt to the restrictions.³⁵⁶ According to UNAMA, hundreds of men were arrested in Kandahar City in 1–12 July 2025 for shaving or trimming their beards. Their time in arrest ranged from a few hours up to three days, and they were reportedly released after promising to grow their beards. UNAMA further reported on a public trial in Kunar Province in September 2025, against three barbershop owners charged with providing grooming services. The accused were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from three to five months.³⁵⁷ Afghan media in exile, Amu TV, reported on a barber being detained in Faryab Province in July 2025, along with his customers, for shaving a beard.³⁵⁸

Some men have reportedly continued to cut their beards, clean shave and wear 'western style haircuts' in Kabul City, but there have been a general trend among men to dress more conservatively and to grow a beard.³⁵⁹ Some Afghan athletes were clean-shaved or had trimmed beards and wore 'western-style' haircuts in 2025, for example members of the Afghan Futsal team,³⁶⁰ and the Afghan U19 cricket team.³⁶¹

(c) The ban on images of living beings

The 'Morality law' of 31 July 2024 instructed media not to publish reports that 'contain pictures of animate objects',³⁶² and proscribes 'making pictures or videos of any animate object on computers or mobile phones, or any other such device'.³⁶³ The ban has not been uniformly enforced and some de facto officials have continued to appear in news broadcasts and post photographs on social media.³⁶⁴

The ban has been implemented by TV stations closing down or altering their content.³⁶⁵ This primarily concerns local branches of the state broadcaster Radio Television Afghanistan

³⁵⁵ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

³⁵⁶ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ UNAMA, Update on the Human Rights situation in Afghanistan July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 4

³⁵⁸ Amu TV, Taliban detain barber in northern Afghanistan for shaving beard, 24 July 2025, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units; Afghan analyst, email, 5 January 2026; Clark, K., Law, Control Fear – and some Defiance, AAN, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 28, 35, 42

³⁶⁰ TOLONews, Afghanistan's U17 Futsal Champions Receive Hero's Welcome in Paktia, Khost, 8 November 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Afghanistan U-17 Futsal Team Departs for Bahrain, 19 October 2025, [url](#)

³⁶¹ TOLONews, ACB Announces Squad for U19 Asia Qualifiers, 3 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁶² Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 17

³⁶³ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22

³⁶⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 70

³⁶⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 6



closing down as reported by AW,³⁶⁶ but there have also been reported cases of local television outlets shifting to radio broadcasting³⁶⁷ or only displaying natural landscapes with voice-over³⁶⁸ or only airing audio.³⁶⁹ National TV has reportedly continued to air visual content, such as TOLONews and Ariana.³⁷⁰ Afghan media in exile reported on the ban being enforced in 23 provinces, with a complete ban of broadcasting images of living beings being enforced in Paktya,³⁷¹ Nuristan, Sar-e Pul, Bamyán, Laghman, Zabul, Uruzgan, Helmand, Jawzjan, Faryab, Badghis, Farah, Daykundi, Kapisa, Panjsher, Kandahar, and Maidan Wardak.³⁷² Inconsistent broadcasting was reported in seven provinces (Nimruz, Kunar, Logar, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Samangan), while media in remaining provinces still displayed images of people.³⁷³ Other sources suggested that the ban had also been enforced in Takhar Province.³⁷⁴ As noted by Ruttig in an interview with ACCORD in October 2024, the difficult information environment make certain issues ‘impossible’ to investigate on a national scale, as much information is anecdotal – including on the ban on images of living beings.³⁷⁵

(d) Congregational prayer

The ‘Morality law’ sets out several provisions on religious practice, including praying. It *inter alia* identifies the ‘wrongful acts’ of not praying, delaying one’s prayers, omitting mandatory prayers, not praying in congregation, or neglecting obligatory fasts. The law further specifies that the de facto MPVPV is to make sure that public transport adjust timetables so that people can observe prayers. People may be referred to court if, ‘without any valid excuse’, they ‘repeatedly omit[s] saying daily obligatory and mandatory prayers’, ‘repeatedly omit[s] joining in congregational prayers’. This also applies to communities who ‘collectively omit[s] saying the call to prayer or offering congregational prayers’. People may also be referred to court if they do not fast during Ramadan, or fail to ‘perform all the virtuous acts that are required of him or do[es] not avoid all the iniquitous acts from which he should refrain’.³⁷⁶

The AAN reported on congregational prayer for men as one of the most policed aspects of the de facto MPVPV.³⁷⁷ Businesses have been subject to regular inspections to ensure that they

³⁶⁶ AW, The impact of the Taliban’s Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ AFJC, Ban on Publishing Images of Living Beings Expands to Sar-e-Pul Province, Increasing Total Affected Provinces to 20, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

³⁶⁸ Just Security, The Taliban’s Slow Dismantling of Afghan Media, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

³⁶⁹ AFJC, National Television Branch in Farah Province Suspends Broadcasts Following Ban on Images of Living Beings, 6 March 2025, [url](#); DW, Why the Taliban are banning ‘living beings’ on TV, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

³⁷⁰ AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan, 17 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 24

³⁷¹ Kabul Now, State-Run TV in Paktia Switches to Radio After Taliban Bans Images of Living Beings, 23 November 2025, [url](#)

³⁷² Amu TV, Taliban ban on images of living beings enforced in 16 provinces, Amu survey finds, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

³⁷³ Amu TV, Taliban ban on images of living beings enforced in 16 provinces, Amu survey finds, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ Just Security, The Taliban’s Slow Dismantling of Afghan Media, 10 July 2025, [url](#); ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

³⁷⁵ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

³⁷⁶ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 18–19, 22, 26

³⁷⁷ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

close during prayer times,³⁷⁸ and to record staff attendance.³⁷⁹ Local aid organisations have also been facing such routine visits to control gender segregation and staff attendance at prayers.³⁸⁰ The Afghan analyst explained that in areas with large populations, such as Kabul City, not everyone attends the mosque when there are calls for prayers (*azan*), and those who omit prayers do not typically face consequences. In contrast, inhabitants in smaller villager or more conservative areas could experience greater control and pressure to attend prayers.³⁸¹

(e) Music

In the initial years following the Taliban takeover, music was only unofficially banned,³⁸² and ‘taken for granted’³⁸³ as the Taliban movement perceived music as prohibited by *sharia*.³⁸⁴ The ‘Morality law’ from 31 July 2024, however, specified music ‘emanating from any gathering or from the home’ as a ‘wrongful act’. The same law instructed de facto MPVPV officials to ensure that drivers of commercial vehicles do not play music.³⁸⁵

Many musicians left Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover³⁸⁶ or stopped performing,³⁸⁷ and music generally stopped being played in public spaces.³⁸⁸ After the Taliban takeover, music schools closed,³⁸⁹ and in some instances, Taliban fighters subjected musicians to public shaming, physical violence, and arrests.³⁹⁰ Music instruments were also destroyed³⁹¹ and burned.³⁹² In August 2024, the de facto MPVPV claimed that it had destroyed over 21 000 instruments in the past year alone.³⁹³

The enforcement of the ‘Morality law’s’ provisions on music has been inconsistent, although the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan noted that it increased in 2025, ‘in

³⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Study of the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 63

³⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Study of the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 63; Latifi, A., How the Taliban’s vice and virtue law is impacting foreign aid and engagement, New Humanitarian (The), 22 October 2024, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ Latifi, A., How the Taliban’s vice and virtue law is impacting foreign aid and engagement, New Humanitarian (The), 22 October 2024, [url](#)

³⁸¹ Afghan analyst, email, 5 January 2026

³⁸² Samim, S., The Poetry of the Emirate: From insurgent war propaganda to state-sponsored PR, AAN, 20 October 2024, [url](#)

³⁸³ Foschini, F., Hearts Turned Away from Music: Afghan musicians’ path to exile, AAN, 24 April 2023, [url](#)

³⁸⁴ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 26

³⁸⁵ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), arts. 20, 22

³⁸⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 9 September 2022, [url](#), para. 50; RFE/RL, Exiled Afghan Musicians Who Fled The Taliban Fear Deportation From Pakistan, 20 December 2022, [url](#)

³⁸⁷ RFE/RL, With Music Banned, Afghan Musician Now Sells Snacks To Feed His Family, 17 December 2022, [url](#); Kabul Now, IMC Condemns ‘Musical Genocide’ in Afghanistan, 14 December 2022, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan. Restriktioner och begränsningar av personlig frihet under talibanstyret, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 27

³⁸⁹ Kabul Now, IMC Condemns ‘Musical Genocide’ in Afghanistan, 14 December 2022, [url](#)

³⁹⁰ AFI, Artistic Exodus, 13 November 2023, [url](#), p. 26; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 9 September 2022, [url](#), para. 50, 81

³⁹¹ AFI, Artistic Exodus, 13 November 2023, [url](#), p. 26; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 9 September 2022, [url](#), para. 50

³⁹² RFE/RL, ‘I Feel Suffocated’: Taliban Intensifies Clampdown On Music In Afghanistan, 17 August 2023, [url](#); Sky News Australia [YouTube], Taliban sets fire to pile of musical instruments, 1 August 2023, [url](#)

³⁹³ TOLONews, 5,000 Complaints Addressed in Just Over Year: MoVV, 20 August 2024, [url](#)

particular in the south-eastern, eastern and western regions'. This included forced shutdown of several radio stations that had been playing music.³⁹⁴ Music has continued to be played in some closed settings,³⁹⁵ in private homes³⁹⁶ and at wedding halls.³⁹⁷ Sometimes people reportedly managed to pass arrangements with local de facto authorities to play music at a wedding parties for instance.³⁹⁸ Meanwhile, arrests of individuals playing or listening to music have continued to be reported.³⁹⁹ For example, 14 individuals were reportedly arrested in July 2025 for having played music in a private home in northern Takhar Province,⁴⁰⁰ and according to Amnesty International young men have been flogged in public for listening to music.⁴⁰¹

The de facto authorities have encouraged musicians to shift to reciting religious songs or poems.⁴⁰² This is a form of unaccompanied sung poetry, which they perceive as permissible. *Nasheeds*⁴⁰³ or *taranas* are variants of sung poetry, the latter being the most popular form according to AAN expert Sabawoon Samim, with 'melodies and texts deeply rooted in Pashtun folk culture'. Samim further explained that it is 'the closest permissible thing to music', frequently heard in weddings, taxis, and radio shows in the absence of other forms of allowed music. Some new variants duplicate 'musical compositions of Pashto, Dari and Hindi songs' accompanied by beatboxing instead of instruments. Such variants have however been officially banned, although they have 'a wide fanbase' including among Taliban members.⁴⁰⁴

1.2.8. Capital and corporal punishments

After their takeover, the Taliban reopened courts across Afghanistan but replaced former staff with male Taliban judges educated in *madrassas*.⁴⁰⁵ The interpretation of *sharia* has largely been left to individual judges,⁴⁰⁶ who enjoy almost complete authority in court proceedings.⁴⁰⁷ This has caused great variations in verdicts.⁴⁰⁸ Amnesty International described how court

³⁹⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 74

³⁹⁵ Fondation Carmignac, No Woman's Land: An Intimate Look into the Battle for Women's Rights in Afghanistan [2024], [url](#)

³⁹⁶ Afghan analyst, email, 5 January 2026

³⁹⁷ Le Figaro and AFP, Afghanistan: 14 personnes arrêtées pour avoir joué de la musique, 5 July 2025, [url](#); AFP, Afghan wedding halls light up sombre Kabul nights, 10 February 2025, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 26

³⁹⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 29; UNAMA, Update on the Human Rights situation in Afghanistan July–September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁰⁰ Le Figaro and AFP, Afghanistan: 14 personnes arrêtées pour avoir joué de la musique, 5 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ AI, Afghanistan: Authorities must reinstate formal legal frameworks, rule of law and end four years of injustice and impunity, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰² Le Figaro and AFP, Afghanistan: 14 personnes arrêtées pour avoir joué de la musique, 5 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ Amu TV, Taliban adopts Afghan, Indian melodies for its nasheeds, investigation shows, 1 September 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁴ Samim, S., The Poetry of the Emirate: From insurgent war propaganda to state-sponsored PR, AAN, 20 October 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 12; ILAC, Justice Matters: A Status Report on Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover, 2023, [url](#), pp. 6–7

⁴⁰⁶ ILAC, Justice Matters: A Status Report on Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover, 2023, [url](#), pp. 6–7; VOA, Taliban Undertake Speedy Overhaul of Afghanistan's Justice System, 28 September 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

⁴⁰⁸ AI, Friday 15th of August marks four years since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan., 15 August 2025, [url](#); ILAC, Justice Matters: A Status Report on Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover, 2023, [url](#), pp. 6–7

proceedings and sentences, including corporal punishments, are impacted by widespread impunity, unaccountability and personal biases.⁴⁰⁹

On 14 November 2022, the Taliban Supreme Leader ordered all de facto judges to fully implement *sharia*,⁴¹⁰ and issue so-called *hudud* and *qisas*⁴¹¹ punishments where applicable.⁴¹² Such punishments include execution, stoning, flogging and amputation.⁴¹³ Since then, de facto courts have been handing down capital punishment⁴¹⁴ and floggings.⁴¹⁵ In some cases large groups have been lashed all at once,⁴¹⁶ and floggings⁴¹⁷ and executions have been carried out in public – including at sport stadiums.⁴¹⁸

At the time of writing, the UN had recorded ten public executions in total since the Taliban takeover in 2021. All the executed were individuals convicted of murder,⁴¹⁹ and enforcement had been recorded in the provinces of Badghis, Farah, Ghazni, Jawzjan, Laghman, Nimroz, and Paktya.⁴²⁰ On 11 April 2025, four men convicted of murder were publicly executed in front of hundreds of spectators,⁴²¹ at sport stadiums of Badghis, Nimroz and Farah.⁴²² They were shot to death by family members of the murder victims.⁴²³

In the first six months of 2025, both UNAMA and Rawadari recorded hundreds of cases of judicially sanctioned floggings.⁴²⁴ According to UNAMA corporal punishments were carried out in public on a weekly basis,⁴²⁵ while Rawadari, on the contrary, reported that most floggings were not publicly displayed, as they were often used as supplementary punishments to imprisonment. However, Rawadari noted that ‘moral crimes’ were punished in public, with de facto MPVPV officials and *imams* advertising these events to attract crowds.⁴²⁶

⁴⁰⁹ AI, Afghanistan: Authorities must reinstate formal legal frameworks, rule of law and end four years of injustice and impunity, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Leader Orders Full Implementation of Sharia Law, 14 November 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹¹ ‘Hudud offenses are crimes against God whose punishment is clearly specified in the Quran and the Sunna (prophetic traditions), and Qisas are physical assault and murder punishable through retaliation by the victim or heirs of the victim or through the payment of blood money’, see Rahimi, M., Afghanistan’s new Penal Code: Whether or Not to codify Hudud and Qisas, University of Texas School of Law, n.d., [url](#)

⁴¹² UNAMA, Corporal Punishment and the Death Penalty in Afghanistan, 3 May 2023, [url](#), p. 5

⁴¹³ AFP, Afghan supreme leader orders full implementation of sharia law, 14 November 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2024, 1 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 4–5

⁴¹⁵ AI, Afghanistan: Taliban’s cruel return to hardline practices with public floggings must be halted immediately, 24 November 2022, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5; Kabul Now, Taliban Publicly Flogs Over 60 Afghans, Including 15 Women, in Northern Afghanistan, 4 June 2024, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 23; Kabul Now, Taliban Publicly Flogs Over 60 Afghans, Including 15 Women, in Northern Afghanistan, 4 June 2024, [url](#)

⁴¹⁸ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2024, 1 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 4–5; UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 35

⁴¹⁹ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 34

⁴²⁰ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴²¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁴²² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 4; Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁴²³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 4; RFE/RL, Public Executions By Taliban Spark Global Outcry, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

⁴²⁴ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5; Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁴²⁵ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴²⁶ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 34–36

Data collected by Rawadari suggested a significant increase in floggings, with 326 people flogged in the first six months of 2025, including 64 women. This represented more than a two-fold increase compared to the same period in 2024, and more than a four-fold increase since 2023.⁴²⁷ UNAMA recorded corporal punishment against 656 individuals in the period 1 January–30 September 2025 (518 men, 131 women, 5 girls and 2 boys).⁴²⁸

Floggings have been used as punishment for moral crimes such as ‘running away from home’ for women, same-sex sexual relations between men, and extramarital relations,⁴²⁹ and reportedly also for theft, drinking alcohol and drug trafficking.⁴³⁰ People have been lashed up to 39 times,⁴³¹ but on 27 November 2024 a man was reportedly flogged 80 times for falsely accusing another man of adultery.⁴³² In March 2024, the Taliban Supreme Leader announced that the stoning sentence would be enforced for adultery.⁴³³ Rawadari has recorded cases of women being sentenced to stoning,⁴³⁴ including a woman in Daykundi accused of having an ‘illegitimate’ child. As of August 2025, the sentence had not been enforced awaiting approval from higher de facto courts.⁴³⁵ Rahimi noted that almost no *hudud* sentences were being enforced, including stoning and hand amputation, as they were pending approval from the Taliban Supreme Leader.⁴³⁶

1.3. Prison conditions

Human rights organisations do not have access to detention facilities in Afghanistan,⁴³⁷ but torture and other forms of ill-treatment are reportedly common practice at such sites.⁴³⁸ On 8 October 2024, however, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General visited the Pul-e Charkhi prison in Kabul City, and noted issues such as over-crowding, lack of access to legal aid for vulnerable detainees, including women, and prolonged pretrial detention. At the time (24 October 2024), the prison population stood at an unprecedented 26 000 people as per official data, including 1 900 women, 1 400 juveniles and 100 foreign nationals.⁴³⁹ Earlier, in

⁴²⁷ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 34–36

⁴²⁸ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴²⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5; VOA, Taliban publicly flog Afghan woman, 3 men amid UN outcry, 29 October 2024, [url](#); VOA, Taliban publicly flog 9 Afghan men, women despite UN outcry, 9 October 2024, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 3; Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁴³¹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴³² AW, Taliban enforce first Hadd punishment with public flogging in Parwan, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

⁴³³ Telegraph (The), Taliban leader says women will be stoned to death in public, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34; Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 23

⁴³⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁴³⁶ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

⁴³⁷ Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 23

⁴³⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 11 September 2023, [url](#), para. 59

⁴³⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 36



the period 1 January 2022–31 July 2023, UNAMA documented over 1 600 human rights violations taking place during arrest and in detention facilities managed by the de facto Ministry of Interior (MoI), the de facto GDI and in provincial prisons managed by the de facto Office of Prison Administration. 50 % of cases were considered by UNAMA as acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and 18 custodial deaths were recorded.⁴⁴⁰

In 2025, Rawadari published research based on testimonies of former detainees, and documented torture and other forms of ill-treatment being applied by de facto authorities, such as the de facto GDI, the de facto MoI, and the de facto Ministry of Defense (MoD). Various forms of ill-treatment inflicting severe physical and psychological pain were further documented, including beatings, waterboarding, electrocution, and sexual harassment of women detainees. Such abuses were used to extract confessions and information, intimidate, punish, and humiliate detainees, as well as to punish protesters and retaliate against former government employees – in particular those considered opponents or critics of the Taliban.⁴⁴¹ Other sources have also reported on torture of detained persons,⁴⁴² as well as rape and sexual violence, especially against detained women.⁴⁴³ Rawadari moreover reported on detainees being held in inadequate facilities, including ‘kindergartens, district administration buildings, containers, basements, and toilets’. Many facilities moreover lacked adequate ventilation and lighting as well as basic amenities for ‘cleanliness, sleeping, washing, and personal hygiene’. Some detainees only received water and bread during their detention.⁴⁴⁴ Rawadari noted a significant increase in arbitrary arrests. In the first six months of 2025, the organisation recorded 1 509 cases compared to 614 in the same period in 2024 and 222 in 2023.⁴⁴⁵

1.4. Treatment of persons returning from abroad

1.4.1. General conditions

For decades⁴⁴⁶ Afghans have been fleeing their homeland, primarily to neighbouring Pakistan and Iran,⁴⁴⁷ and in periods, significant portions of the Afghan population have lived as

⁴⁴⁰ UNAMA, The treatment of detainees in Afghanistan: Respecting human rights: a factor for trust, 20 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 3, 24

⁴⁴¹ Rawadari, Torture and Ill-Treatment: The State of Prisons in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 13, 30, 35, 37, 39, 56–57

⁴⁴² Independent (The), Taliban critics and ‘rebel collaborators’ face systemic torture in Afghan prisons, survivors say, 8 December 2024, [url](#); OMCT et al., “Every House Felt as long as A Year”, 25 June 2025, [url](#), p. 31

⁴⁴³ RFE/RL, Afghan Survivors Speak Out: What The Taliban Does To Imprisoned Women, 8 March 2025, [url](#); OMCT et al., “Every House Felt as long as A Year”, 25 June 2025, [url](#), p. 36

⁴⁴⁴ Rawadari, Torture and Ill-Treatment: The State of Prisons in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 23–25

⁴⁴⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 23

⁴⁴⁶ Strand, A., Refugee Protection Is Being Eroded, PRIO, 2 February 2024, [url](#); UK, House of Commons Library, Expulsion of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran, 8 December 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ UK, House of Commons Library, Expulsion of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran, 8 December 2023, [url](#)



refugees abroad.⁴⁴⁸ Each powershift in Afghanistan has triggered new emigration waves, as well as voluntary and forced returns from neighbouring states.⁴⁴⁹

Following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, both Pakistan and Iran initiated repatriation plans leading to ‘large numbers of forced and coerced returns’⁴⁵⁰ of Afghans residing on their territory.⁴⁵¹ As of September 2025, nearly 6 million people had returned from Pakistan and Iran since the Taliban takeover.⁴⁵² In 2025 alone (as of November) almost 2.7 million Afghans returned from these countries, according to UNHCR.⁴⁵³ Sources noted that many Afghans have been forced or felt compelled to return ‘because of threats, harassment and intimidation’,⁴⁵⁴ ‘abusive tactics’ and other pressure.⁴⁵⁵

Pakistan began their three-phase ‘Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan’ in October 2023. The first phase targeted undocumented Afghans,⁴⁵⁶ and led to the return of over 468 000 people in October–December 2023.⁴⁵⁷ The second phase included registered individuals (Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders),⁴⁵⁸ who were to leave voluntarily by 31 March 2025 or face deportation as of 1 April 2025.⁴⁵⁹ According to UNHCR, more than 483 700 Afghans returned in the period 1 April–September 2025.⁴⁶⁰ Amid the plan’s resumption in April 2025, Pakistan announced that the third phase would be initiated, in which also recognised refugees (Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders) would be repatriated⁴⁶¹ as of 1 September 2025.⁴⁶² According to IOM and UNHCR, over 1.6 million people had returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan since the initiation of the repatriation scheme as of 18 October 2025, including over 8 000 recognised refugees (PoR card holders) being deported.⁴⁶³ Amid armed cross-border clashes between de facto and Pakistani security forces, Pakistan intensified efforts to repatriate Afghans, including ‘escalating police raids’.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁴⁸ Britannica, Afghanistan, Demographic trends, 7 October 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁹ Strand, A., Refugee Protection Is Being Eroded, PRIO, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁰ UNHCR, Afghanistan situation, [2025], [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ UNHCR, Afghanistan emergency, [2025], [url](#); FEWS NET, Despite harvest, drought and returnee influx, drive food security concerns, July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁵² WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁵³ UNHCR, Afghanistan situation, [2025], [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ UN OHCHR, Afghanistan: Returns of Afghans creating multi-layered human rights crisis, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ HRW, Pakistan: Forced Returns Expose Afghans to Persecution, Destitution, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁶ Dawn, Govt decides to evict over 1M foreigners illegally residing in Pakistan: state media, 2 October 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Pakistan’s mass deportation of Afghans poses risk to regional stability, 13 November 2023, [url](#); IOM and UNHCR, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #4, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 04 November 2023), 8 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁵⁷ AI, Pakistan: 1.4 million Afghan refugees at risk of deportation, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ AI, Pakistan: 1.4 million Afghan refugees at risk of deportation, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁹ UNHCR, Returns emergency Response, 11 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁶⁰ UNHCR, Pakistan - Afghanistan: Returns Emergency Response #42 (as of 4 September 2025), 5 September 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶¹ UNHCR, UNHCR urges Pakistan to exempt Afghans with international protection needs from involuntary return, 5 August 2025, [url](#); Dawn, Govt to begin repatriation of 1.3m Afghan PoR holders from Sept 1, 6 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶² Dawn, Govt to begin repatriation of 1.3m Afghan PoR holders from Sept 1, 6 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶³ IOM and UNHCR, UNHCR-IOM Flash Update #65, 11 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁶⁴ DW, Pakistan ramps up Afghan migrant crackdown after clashes, 3 November 2025, [url](#)

Iran has also been repatriating Afghans in recent years⁴⁶⁵ and scaled up the intensity of deportations in 2025 (particular in June–July following Israeli attacks against Iran).⁴⁶⁶ This coincided with an exit deadline for unregistered Afghans. According to an IOM representative, an unmanageable number of 30 000–40 000 people crossed the border to Afghanistan from Iran every day in July 2025.⁴⁶⁷ Returning Afghans indicated that they were feeling ‘unsafe’ in Iran,⁴⁶⁸ and there were reports of increased harassment by Iranian authorities accusing Afghans of collaborating with Israel⁴⁶⁹ and a general hostility pushing Afghans to leave.⁴⁷⁰ According to UNCHR, 1.8 million people returned from Iran in 2025, as of 29 November.⁴⁷¹

The Afghan de facto authorities have previously called on Afghans to stay in the country,⁴⁷² and have called on Afghans residing abroad to return to Afghanistan.⁴⁷³ As the US issued an entry ban on Afghan citizens in June 2025, the Afghan de facto Prime Minister reiterated the general amnesty issued after the Taliban takeover,⁴⁷⁴ and stated that all who fled amid the collapse of the former government were free to return under safe conditions.⁴⁷⁵ The de facto authorities have responded to the large-scale returns by providing returnees with registration and national identity cards, medical care, cash grants,⁴⁷⁶ shelter, SIM cards, and transport to their destinations.⁴⁷⁷ According to an anonymous source interviewed by ACCORD in September 2024, some returnees have faced physical violence at the border by the de facto authorities, in particular women and children.⁴⁷⁸ Sources interviewed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), on the contrary, did not indicate that the de facto authorities were conducting arrests or abusing returnees at air or land border crossings. Instead, most sources indicated returnees were generally treated well and were not subjected to abuse solely on the basis of being returnees.⁴⁷⁹ Two surveys on the situation of returnees in Afghanistan, carried out by the UNCHR and the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), respectively, found that 98 % of respondents had not ‘experienced physical security issues in their

⁴⁶⁵ VOA, Taliban: Pakistan, Iran expelled over 400,000 Afghan refugees so far in 2024, 10 June 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁶ UN Women, Gender Alert: Gendered Needs and Challenges of Afghans Returning from Iran and Pakistan (June 2025), 1 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1; DW, Why are Afghan migrants and refugees being forced to flee Iran?, 2 August 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Iran drives out 1.5 million Afghans, with some branded spies for Israel, 1 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ Tagesschau, Regierung führt Gespräche mit Taliban, 14 September 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ UN Women, Gender Alert: Gendered Needs and Challenges of Afghans Returning from Iran and Pakistan (June 2025), 1 July 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁶⁹ DW, Why are Afghan migrants and refugees being forced to flee Iran?, 2 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ New Humanitarian (The), Afghans say they were scapegoated in Iran during Israeli bombardment, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ UNHCR, Afghanistan situation, [2025], [url](#)

⁴⁷² EUAA, Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2024, [url](#), p. 97

⁴⁷³ TRT World, Taliban urges Afghans to ‘return to your country’ after new US travel ban, 7 June 2025, [url](#); Bakhtar News Agency, Delawar Called on All Afghan Political Figures to Return Home, 21 May 2022, [url](#); TOLONews, Afghan UN Mission Announces It Will Host Gathering, 14 May 2022, [url](#); TOLONews, Anas Haqqani Calls on Unqualified Officials to Step Down, 27 December 2021, [url](#); TOLONews, At Hajj Ceremony, Official Calls for Brotherly Intl Relations, 12 June 2022, [url](#); Ariana News, Defense ministry urges Afghan military students abroad to return home, 15 February 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁴ TRT World, Taliban urges Afghans to ‘return to your country’ after new US travel ban, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁵ AP, The Taliban leader slams Trump’s travel ban on Afghans and calls the US an ‘oppressor’, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ UNAMA, No safe heaven: Human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan, July 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁷⁷ ACAPS, Afghanistan, Spotlight on social impact (October 2023 to February 2024), 25 April 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁷⁸ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 85

⁴⁷⁹ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 35

communities/villages',⁴⁸⁰ and 80 % felt safe and secure.⁴⁸¹ There was a gender discrepancy in MCC's survey, however, where only 15 % of women indicated that there were no specific risks making them feel unsafe or insecure, in contrast to 66 % among men. In MCC's survey 9 % among male respondents and 6 % among female respondents feared human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan, and the MMC stressed that their aggregated data may conceal individuals belonging to vulnerable groups.⁴⁸² In UNHCR's survey, 1.6 % indicated that they had been feeling unsafe, and cited issues such as disputes of land, property, and water as well as kidnapping and an 'unwelcoming attitudes in the community'.⁴⁸³ UNAMA identified several profiles exposed to human rights violations upon being involuntarily returned to Afghanistan return, including women and girls, former government officials, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists and musicians.⁴⁸⁴ More information on these profiles is provided in chapter [4. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population](#) and section [1.2.7\(e\) Music](#).

The significant influx of returnees has put additional strain on the precarious humanitarian situation in Afghanistan,⁴⁸⁵ already facing limited resources,⁴⁸⁶ lack of basic services, and recurring climate shocks.⁴⁸⁷ Most returnees arrive with no assets,⁴⁸⁸ and many have never set foot in Afghanistan,⁴⁸⁹ as they have been living abroad for generations.⁴⁹⁰ These people tend to lack a social network in Afghanistan,⁴⁹¹ while having a social network is of great importance in Afghan society⁴⁹² in the absence of a social welfare state.⁴⁹³ Having a network is vital for returnees to reintegrate,⁴⁹⁴ and to secure a job.⁴⁹⁵ MMC reported that returnees lacking a network may be perceived as foreigners, and that individuals returning from the region as well as from Europe may face discrimination and struggle to fit in, due to deviating accents,

⁴⁸⁰ UNHCR, Post-Return Monitoring Report, 30 October 2024, [url](#), p. 43

⁴⁸¹ MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), p. 28

⁴⁸² MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 28–29

⁴⁸³ UNHCR, Post-Return Monitoring Report, 30 October 2024, [url](#), p. 42

⁴⁸⁴ UNAMA, No safe heaven: Human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan, July 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁸⁵ UNHCR, Afghan Returns from Iran and Pakistan Emergency Update #12, 3 October 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ IOM, Nearly 110,000 Afghans Returned from Pakistan in a Month; IOM Seeks Urgent Funding, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁷ UNAMA, International Community Must Act Now, 1 Million Returning Afghans in 2025, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁸ UNAMA, International Community Must Act Now, 1 Million Returning Afghans in 2025, 26 June 2025, [url](#);

Tagesschau, Regierung führt Gespräche mit Taliban, 14 September 2025, [url](#); NRC, Afghanistan: Humanitarian response overstretched as more than 1 million Afghans return from Iran, 10 July 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Deported Afghans Face Hardship After Returning Empty-Handed from Iran, 9 October 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁹ UN Women, Gender Alert: Gendered Needs and Challenges of Afghans Returning from Iran and Pakistan (June 2025), 1 July 2025, [url](#), p. 4; International Crisis Group, Pakistan-Afghanistan: Tempering the Deportation Drive, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁰ Bjelica, J. and Sabawoon, A. M., Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland?, AAN, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁹¹ UN News, 'The real challenge is still ahead': UN warns on Afghan returnees, 8 August 2025, [url](#); Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 29, 42

⁴⁹² Schuster, L., in: DRC, Afghanistan conference, The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28 November 2022, [url](#), p. 47; Afghan analyst, interview, 25 April 2024; UNHCR, Protection Interventions for Afghan Returnees from Pakistan (April 2024 to December 2025), 22 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 7; de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025; Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

⁴⁹³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 27

⁴⁹⁴ MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), p. 33; Sharan, email, 27 November 2025

⁴⁹⁵ Afghan analyst, interview, 25 April 2024; UN Women, Gender Alert: Gendered Needs and Challenges of Afghans Returning from Iran and Pakistan (June 2025), 1 July 2025, [url](#), p. 4

clothing, and behaviour.⁴⁹⁶ Sharan also described how returnees without a network face significant exclusion and lack of safety, including those settling in urban areas instead of their areas of origin. He also noted that some families could struggle to readapt due to their way of dressing and having more liberal attitudes.⁴⁹⁷

Amid a major continuing humanitarian crisis in the country, returnees in general face very limited job prospects⁴⁹⁸ or no job prospects at all.⁴⁹⁹ They struggle to secure an income⁵⁰⁰ and permanent housing and shelter.⁵⁰¹ Many do not return to their areas of origin since they lack property or land,⁵⁰² and due to limited job opportunities and basic services.⁵⁰³ Instead, they tend to settle in cities.⁵⁰⁴ Some returnees may be facing disputes over land and property in their area of origin,⁵⁰⁵ since other families may have been living in their houses for generations or their land may have been confiscated.⁵⁰⁶ Women-headed households are particularly vulnerable, facing limitations in accessing housing and shelter, which exposes them to gender-based violence and exploitation.⁵⁰⁷ Another key issue faced by returnees is insufficient aid.⁵⁰⁸ Host communities struggle to support returnees due to limited resources, leaving returnee populations struggling economically.⁵⁰⁹ The general cuts to funding in the humanitarian sector have also adversely impacted the support to returnees.⁵¹⁰ More information on this topic is available in section [3. Humanitarian situation](#).

1.4.2. Returns from Europe

After the Taliban takeover, many Western states halted deportations to Afghanistan, and IOM⁵¹¹ and Frontex suspended activities facilitating accompanied returns.⁵¹² As reported by SEM, there have only been isolated cases of repatriations and voluntary returns from

⁴⁹⁶ MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 33–34

⁴⁹⁷ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

⁴⁹⁸ Bjelica, J. and Sabawoon, A. M., Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland?, AAN, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁹ UNAMA, International Community Must Act Now, 1 Million Returning Afghans in 2025, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁰ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 29

⁵⁰¹ UN Women, Gender Alert: Gendered Needs and Challenges of Afghans Returning from Iran and Pakistan (June 2025), 1 July 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁰² Bjelica, J. and Sabawoon, A. M., Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland?, AAN, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁰³ UNHCR, Post-Return Monitoring Report, 30 October 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁵⁰⁴ Byrd, W., Where Does Afghanistan Stand After Four Years of Taliban Rule?, Lawfare, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁵ ACAPS, Afghanistan, Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1; Moradi, K., “Throwing Dust in Our Eyes”: Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarjat under the Taliban and its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, 31 May 2025, [url](#), p. 43

⁵⁰⁶ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 85; See also: UN-Habitat, It all starts at home, Strategic Priorities for UN-Habitat Afghanistan 2026–2027, June 2025, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁰⁷ UN Women, Gender Alert: Gendered Needs and Challenges of Afghans Returning from Iran and Pakistan (June 2025), 1 July 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁰⁸ Bjelica, J. and Sabawoon, A. M., Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland?, AAN, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁹ UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, April 2024, 2 July 2024, [url](#)

⁵¹⁰ UNAMA, International Community Must Act Now, 1 Million Returning Afghans in 2025, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

⁵¹¹ CoE Parliamentary Assembly, The humanitarian crisis emerging for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees, 25 September 2023, [url](#), para. 37; IOM, Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration, n.d., [url](#)

⁵¹² CoE Parliamentary Assembly, The humanitarian crisis emerging for Afghanistan and Afghan refugees, 25 September 2023, [url](#), para. 37; Frontex, Risk Analysis for 2022/2023, September 2022, [url](#), p. 24

European countries and North America.⁵¹³ Initially, this included a few cases of people being forcibly returned from the US (two persons in 2022),⁵¹⁴ Belgium (February 2023),⁵¹⁵ Sweden (via Uzbekistan in 2023), and Switzerland (two persons in October 2024).⁵¹⁶ There have also been cases of voluntary returns from EU states,⁵¹⁷ and many Afghans residing abroad, including in Western countries, have been going on short-term visits to Afghanistan.⁵¹⁸

Some EU states have sought to deport Afghans whose asylum applications have been rejected, with Germany and Austria resuming deportations in 2024⁵¹⁹ and 2025 respectively.⁵²⁰ Germany deported 28 Afghans with criminal records on 30 August 2024.⁵²¹ According to Der Spiegel, these individuals were detained upon their return, but most were released about a week later, after their families assured the de facto authorities that they would not commit future crime. A handful of individuals were kept in house arrest-like conditions, while being interrogated.⁵²² One deported person was reportedly killed, although the perpetrating actor was not specified.⁵²³ Germany conducted a second deportation on 18 July 2025, this time of 81 Afghans with criminal records.⁵²⁴ The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan said that he had no information on the treatment of these individuals upon their return.⁵²⁵ According to the German media outlet Tagesschau, the de facto authorities have used this opportunity to promote a positive image of themselves by publishing videos featuring these individuals being welcomed back to Afghanistan.⁵²⁶ Austria deported one man convicted of crime on 21 October 2025.⁵²⁷

The de facto authorities reportedly see engagement over migration management as a way to build relations in the absence of diplomatic recognition.⁵²⁸ An anonymous source interviewed by ACCORD noted that, unlike under the former government, European countries are no longer in position to push for a system supporting deported Afghans ‘to provide a landing’,

⁵¹³ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 12

⁵¹⁴ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, Afghanistan. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14 December 2023, [url](#), pp. 18–19

⁵¹⁵ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, Afghanistan. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14 December 2023, [url](#), p. 18

⁵¹⁶ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁵¹⁷ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Afghanistan, Return from abroad, 14 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13; The Netherlands, General country information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), p. 136

⁵¹⁸ Washington Post (The), Women despair over Taliban rules, but many Afghan returnees don’t see it, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

⁵¹⁹ JURISTnews, Germany departs 28 Afghan nationals following Solingen knife attack, citing security concerns, 30 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵²⁰ Reuters, Austria departs first Afghan since Taliban seized power, says more to come, 21 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵²¹ Al Jazeera, Germany departs 28 Afghans for first time since 2021 Taliban takeover, 30 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵²² Amu TV, Taliban releases 28 deportees from Germany, Spiegel reports, 8 September 2024, [url](#); Der Spiegel, Taliban lassen aus Deutschland abgeschobene Straftäter schon wieder frei, 6 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵²³ German Institute for Human Rights, Afghanistan in 2025: Richard Bennett on the Struggle for Human Rights, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁴ Euronews, Germany departs 81 Afghan nationals under tougher migration policy, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ German Institute for Human Rights, Afghanistan in 2025: Richard Bennett on the Struggle for Human Rights, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁶ Tagesschau, Die Show der Taliban, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁷ Reuters, Austria departs first Afghan since Taliban seized power, says more to come, 21 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ Hakimi, H., Push to deport failed Afghan asylum seekers from Europe could benefit the Taliban, Chatham House, 3 October 2025, [url](#)



such as mental health support, housing, job training, and more. This leaves returnees more vulnerable for re-traumatisation due to displacement.⁵²⁹

Being interviewed on the topic of ‘westernization’, Ruttig told ACCORD that individuals perceived as ‘infected’ by Western values have been met with suspicion, and the Taliban have been targeting such individuals, including urban residents, civil society activists, individuals having a Western education or who had adopted a lifestyle deviating from local customs.⁵³⁰

1.4.3. Stigma and shame

Sharan described Afghanistan as a guilt- and shame-based society, and returnees’ sense of self-worth may diminish if they are excluded from the local community, struggle to find a job and provide for their families.⁵³¹ The MMC reported on a combination of social stigma and debt posing ‘a major barrier to effective integration’. In their research, securing an income and shame were the most pressing difficulties for returning Afghan men. This sentiment mainly applied to those returning after having moved relatively recently to earn an income abroad, in contrast to ‘long-term migrants’ returning from e.g. Pakistan. Stigma and shame were *inter alia* connected with the costs of emigrating, often funded by the extended family, which could result in unsolved debts and profound economic implications for their relatives. One of MMC’s respondents explained that deportations from Europe were particularly associated with stigma, and those returning often hid that they had been deported to avoid being scrutinised by people.⁵³² Sources reported on deportations bringing assumptions of engaging in criminal activities abroad,⁵³³ and rumours easily spreading around being ‘contaminated’ with Western ideas and values,⁵³⁴ having ‘lost’ one’s culture and done prohibited acts, such as not praying, converting to Christianity,⁵³⁵ drinking alcohol or engaging with women.⁵³⁶ Accusations that seem small may cause conflicts,⁵³⁷ and some older sources reported on deportees being exposed to potential robbery, due to assumptions that they have become rich in Europe.⁵³⁸

⁵²⁹ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 85

⁵³⁰ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 82

⁵³¹ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

⁵³² MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), p. 35

⁵³³ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 84

⁵³⁴ Vera-Larrucea, C. and Malm Lindberg, H., Return to Afghanistan: The perils of returning to unstable and insecure countries, Migration Policy Practice, December 2021–April 2022, [url](#), p. 45; Schuster, L., in: DRC, Afghanistan conference, The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28 November 2022, [url](#), p. 39, 41, 48

⁵³⁵ MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), p. 35

⁵³⁶ MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), p. 35; Schuster, L., The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28 November 2022, [url](#), pp. 39, 41, 48

⁵³⁷ Schuster, L., The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28 November 2022, [url](#), pp. 39, 41, 48

⁵³⁸ Vera-Larrucea, C. and Malm Lindberg, H., Return to Afghanistan: The perils of returning to unstable and insecure countries, Migration Policy Practice, December 2021 – April 2022, [url](#), p. 45; Schuster, L., The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28 November 2022, [url](#), p. 39, 41, 48



2. Security situation

2.1. Recent security trends

Following the Taliban takeover in 2021, levels of armed violence⁵³⁹ and civilian harm declined significantly compared to previous years of conflict.⁵⁴⁰ UN sources have described the subsequent period as marked by a ‘relative absence of armed conflict’⁵⁴¹ and a ‘virtual halt of active conflict’.⁵⁴² In 2022, UCDP assessed that the intensity of the conflict in Afghanistan no longer met its threshold to be classified as a ‘war’.⁵⁴³ Similarly, Bertelsmann Stiftung reported in 2024 that there was ‘no indication of systematic or scattered combat’.⁵⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the de facto government has faced armed opposition from resistance groups (see section [2.2.1](#)) and the ISKP.⁵⁴⁵ While violence from such groups has generally decreased⁵⁴⁶ after peaking in 2022,⁵⁴⁷ resistance groups have continued to carry out low-intensity attacks,⁵⁴⁸ targeting mainly the de facto authorities.⁵⁴⁹ Until 2024, dozens of explosions and suicide attacks were reported annually,⁵⁵⁰ targeting the de facto authorities⁵⁵¹ and civilians.⁵⁵² Many attacks were claimed by the ISKP,⁵⁵³ while some remain unattributed.⁵⁵⁴

De facto security forces have also clashed with Pakistani border forces, causing casualties on both sides.⁵⁵⁵ Pakistan has faced recurring attacks that they attribute to Tehreek-e-Taliban

⁵³⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 28 January 2022, [url](#), para. 3

⁵⁴⁰ UNAMA, Human Rights in Afghanistan 15 August 2021–15 June 2022, July 2022, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁴¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 20 June 2023, [url](#), para. 1

⁵⁴² UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025 (December 2024), 19 December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁴³ UCDP, Afghanistan, [2024], [url](#)

⁵⁴⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, Afghanistan’s Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), p. 11

⁵⁴⁶ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁷ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#); BBC News, What happened to IS in 2023, 26 December 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 3

⁵⁴⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁵⁰ BBC News, Suicide bomb kills Taliban minister in Kabul, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁵¹ New York Times (The), Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan Targets Taliban Heartland, 21 March 2024, [url](#); Centre on Armed Groups, Drivers of ISKP Recruitment in Afghanistan, August 2024, [url](#), p. 5; HRW, World Report 2025, Afghanistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵² AOAV, Explosive Violence Monitor 2024, 21 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 31, 47; AOAV, Explosive Violence Monitor 2023, 19 April 2023, [url](#), pp. 43–44, 48; HRW, World Report 2025, Afghanistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵³ New York Times (The), Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan Targets Taliban Heartland, 21 March 2024, [url](#); BBC News, Suicide bomb kills Taliban minister in Kabul, 11 December 2024, [url](#); AOAV, Explosive Violence Monitor 2024, 21 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 43, 47; AOAV, Explosive Violence Monitor 2023, 19 April 2023, [url](#), pp. 44, 48

⁵⁵⁴ Centre on Armed Groups, Drivers of ISKP Recruitment in Afghanistan, August 2024, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 6; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁵⁵ TOLONews, Security Situation Considered at Three-Year Mark of Islamic Emirate Rule, 15 August 2024, [url](#)



(TTP, ‘the Pakistani Taliban’), and they accuse the Afghan de facto authorities of harbouring this organisation. In December 2024, tensions resurged as Pakistan carried out airstrikes in Paktika Province. While Pakistan claimed to target the TTP, the Afghan de facto authorities stated that nearly 50 civilians were killed in the attack.⁵⁵⁶ Following a TTP attack against the Pakistani military in a border area on 9 October 2025,⁵⁵⁷ Pakistan carried out an airstrike against Kabul City.⁵⁵⁸ In the following days the de facto security forces fired at Pakistani posts along the shared border, and Pakistan responded with mortar fire and drone strikes,⁵⁵⁹ including airstrikes against Kabul City,⁵⁶⁰ the border town of Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province,⁵⁶¹ and in Paktika Province.⁵⁶² On 19 October 2025, Pakistan and the Afghan de facto authorities agreed on a ceasefire,⁵⁶³ but negotiations ended without a long-term settlement,⁵⁶⁴ and sporadic cross-border incidents continued to be reported in November 2025.⁵⁶⁵

There are conflicting assessments of Al-Qaida’s presence in Afghanistan.⁵⁶⁶ The UN Sanctions and Monitoring Team noted reports of Al-Qaida maintaining presence, although it had limited resources and ‘drastically downsized’. It also noted reports of Al-Qaida training camps across the country, although ‘small and rudimentary’, as well as alleged links with the TTP.⁵⁶⁷ Some sources have questioned some of the reports noted by the UN Sanctions and Monitoring Team, in particular claims of Al-Qaida running overt training camps in Afghanistan.⁵⁶⁸

A comparison of ACLED data covering the same January–November period in 2024 and 2025 suggests a decrease in violence levels, from 958 events down to 684 events. The same trend could be noted as regards events codified as ‘battles’ (from 371 down to 222 events) and ‘violence against civilians’ (from 493 down to 337). In contrast, the number of events codified as ‘explosions/remote violence’ increased from 94 to 125 events, and was mainly driven by Pakistani airstrikes, but also increased activity of the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) and the National Resistance Front (NRF).⁵⁶⁹ As regards violence against civilians, UCDP data covering 2025 (as of November), compared to data covering the same period in 2024

⁵⁵⁶ Chatham House, What the West can do now in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, 5 February 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, As Pakistan, Afghanistan attack each other, what’s next for neighbours?, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁷ Times of India (The), Pakistan: Ambush by TTP near Afghanistan border claims lives of 11 soldiers, 9 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 20

⁵⁵⁹ BBC News, Taliban and Pakistan agree to ceasefire after days of deadly clashes, 19 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ TOLONews, Pakistan Airstrike Hits Kabul, Civilians and School Damaged, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶¹ Reuters, Pakistan, Afghanistan agree to temporary truce after fresh fighting, airstrikes, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 20

⁵⁶³ BBC News, Taliban and Pakistan agree to ceasefire after days of deadly clashes, 19 October 2025, [url](#);

⁵⁶⁴ Al-Monitor, Explainer-Why are tensions flaring again between Afghanistan and Pakistan?, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁵ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch, Latest Updates, Asia-Pacific, November 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁶ CFR, The Taliban in Afghanistan, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁷ UN Security Council, Thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, 24 July 2025, [url](#), paras. 85, 90–91

⁵⁶⁸ Obaidullah Baheer [X], posted on: 2 February 2024, [url](#); Afghan analyst, online interview, 1 October 2024. The interview was carried out by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian, and Swedish COI units.

⁵⁶⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)



suggest a 33 % decrease in civilian deaths (down to 287 from 426 deaths).⁵⁷⁰ Rawadari also noted a decrease in civilian casualties from ‘explosive and suicide attacks’, with 11 civilian deaths and 35 injured recorded in the first six months of 2025, respectively constituting a 33.3 % and 50 % decrease from the same period in 2024 and 2023.⁵⁷¹

Figure 1. Conflict data covering 1 October 2024–30 November 2025

Source	Total no. events	Battles	Explosions and remote violence	Violence against civilians	Civilian deaths
ACLED	971	336 (35 %)	168 (17 %)	467 (48 %)	N/A
UCDP	682	N/A	N/A	N/A	412

Source: EUAA table based on ACLED and UCDP data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#); UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025.

It should be noted that within the reference period of this report (1 October 2024–30 November 2025) ACLED codified 467 events as ‘violence against civilians’. Event details suggest that at least 80 % of events involved de facto security forces as the perpetrating actor; this included arrests based on various motives, and the use of excessive violence in various situations, including in combatting crime but also situations where de facto officials exploited their position to exert violence. Moreover, about 104 cases were related to the enforcement of *sharia*, including floggings, and in addition, 92 events were related to arrests and killings of former government officials and their family members, although the motive was often unclear. A handful of cases concerned arrests of individuals suspected of being affiliated with opposition groups, and in one case the de facto security forces assaulted and beat up civilians in Nahreen District in Panjsher Province, following clashes with the NRF.⁵⁷²

Afghanistan is moreover highly contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war⁵⁷³ especially in the countryside.⁵⁷⁴ Children make up the majority of victims,⁵⁷⁵ and in the period 9 September 2024–5 September 2025, the UN recorded 49 civilian deaths due to unexploded

⁵⁷⁰ EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025; UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2023 - 30 September 2024, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 3 October 2024

⁵⁷¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁷² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

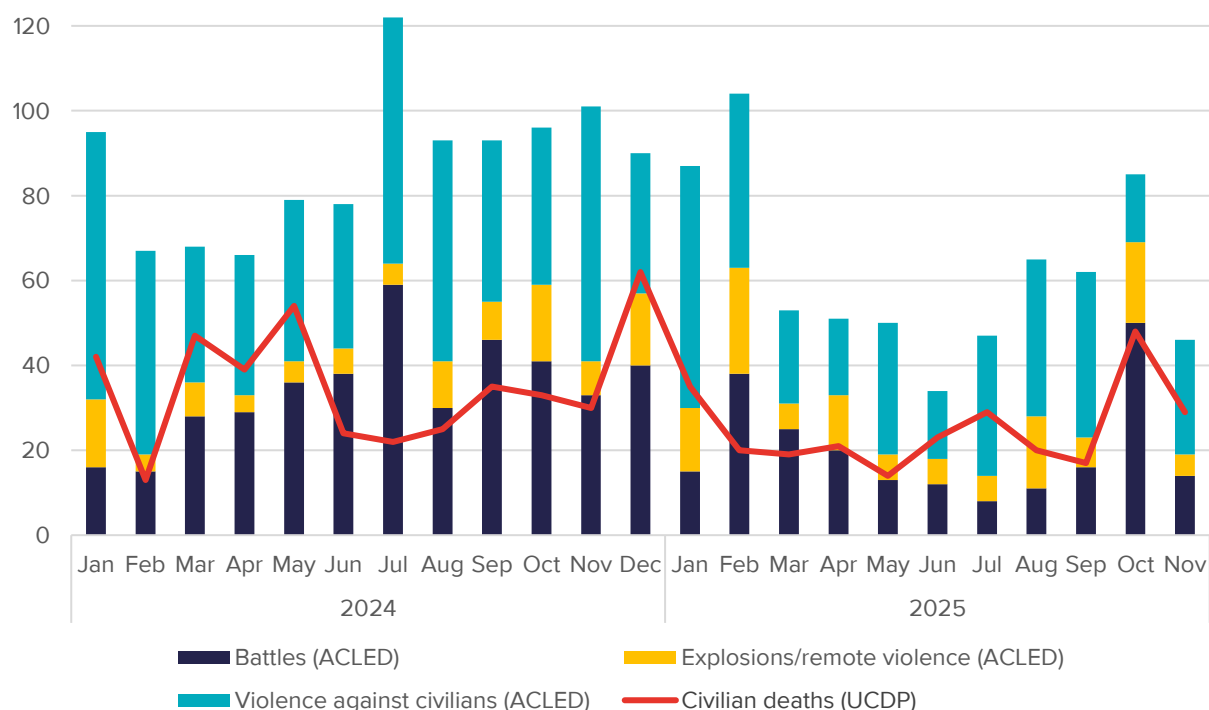
⁵⁷³ UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Unearthing hope from a legacy of mines, 3 April 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁴ Britannica, Afghanistan, Political process, 4 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 14

ordinances (UXOs), and injuries to 29 boys, 8 girls, and 12 men, and 151 civilians, including 76 boys, 28 girls, 32 men, and 15 women.⁵⁷⁶

Figure 2. Events and civilian deaths by month, 1 January 2024–30 November 2025

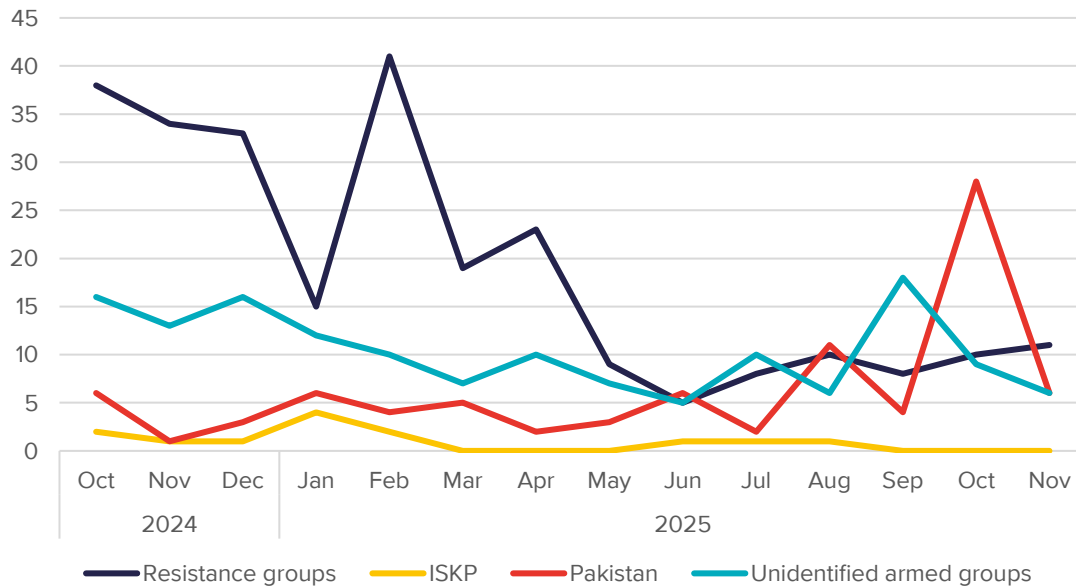


Source: EUAA table based on ACLED and UCDP data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period

⁵⁷⁶ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 27; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 34; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 32; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 26

1 January 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#); UCDP, data covering the period 1 January 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in emails, 8 December 2025 and 3 October 2024.

Figure 3. Events by actor (as ‘actor 1’), 1 October 2024–30 November 2025



Source: EUAA table based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

2.2. Armed groups, and armed confrontations

2.2.1. Activities of resistance groups

Armed resistance groups emerged in Afghanistan as a response to the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021. These groups are aligned with the former government, and the main groups have been the NRF and the AFF,⁵⁷⁷ although a number of other groups announced their existence in April 2022.⁵⁷⁸ No armed resistance groups currently control territory in Afghanistan,⁵⁷⁹ and according to the Afghan analyst none had overt presence in the country as of October 2024.⁵⁸⁰ In his reporting covering 1 August 2024–31 October 2025, the UN Secretary-General noted activity of the NRF, AFF, Afghanistan Liberation Movement, the People’s Sovereignty Front, the National Mobilization Front, the National Battle Front, and the Islamic Liberation Front.⁵⁸¹ While many other groups have previously proclaimed their

⁵⁷⁷ International Crisis Group, Afghanistan’s Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁸ RFE/RL, Taliban Faces Rising Armed Resistance From Former Government Factions, 27 April 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 17

⁵⁸⁰ Afghan analyst, online interview, 1 October 2024

⁵⁸¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 14; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 19; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 20; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan

existence, their actual capacity has in some cases not extended beyond social media announcements.⁵⁸²

NRF claims to have a strength of 5 000 men, present in 20 provinces,⁵⁸³ while other groups have previously been described as smaller than NRF.⁵⁸⁴ It was not possible to corroborate NRF's claim of their size, and no information on the size of other resistance groups was found within the time constraints of drafting this report. Some sources have, however, suggested that resistance groups have been almost completely defeated in the NRF's former strongholds in Panjsher Province and the district of Andarab in Baghlan Province.⁵⁸⁵ While resistance groups have still engaged in sporadic irregular attacks,⁵⁸⁶ Ruttig told ACCORD in October 2024 that recent attacks had been 'relatively marginal and rarely noticed in the region'. Meanwhile journalist Emran Feroz stated in January 2025 that attacks by the NRF and AFF were increasing but underreported due to censorship.⁵⁸⁷

The UN Secretary-General's report assessed that the armed opposition poses no significant challenge to the de facto authorities hold on territorial control. In the period 1 August 2024–31 July 2025 the UN could verify 277 attacks by armed opposition groups, including the NRF (165 attacks), AFF (55), the Afghanistan Liberation Movement (4), and the People's Sovereignty Front (2). At least 32 additional attacks remained unattributed.⁵⁸⁸ However, in recent reporting covering the reporting period 1 May–31 October 2025, the UN Secretary General could verify 38 additional attacks, but did not provide a breakdown of the data.⁵⁸⁹

Event details of ACLED data covering the reference period of this report, suggest that armed resistance groups were the perpetrating actors in 'battles' and 'explosions/remote violence'. Such events were recorded in the provinces of Kabul (61 events), Kunduz (59), Herat (33), Takhar (25), Parwan (15), Kapisa (13), Baghlan (12), Badghis (11), Farah (9), Badakhshan (8), Faryab (6), Balkh (5), Panjsher (5), Kandahar (1), Laghman (1), and Nimruz (1). ACLED data indicated that only the de facto security forces were being targeted by resistance group.⁵⁹⁰

and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 17; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 17

⁵⁸² International Crisis Group, Afghanistan's Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), p. 14

⁵⁸³ NRF, Afghanistan's National Resistance Front: Progression and Success, OPI, 14 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁴ UNICRI, The Taliban in Afghanistan: Assessing New Threats to the Region and Beyond, October 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁵ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

⁵⁸⁶ UNICRI, Afghanistan's Security Landscape under the Taliban, May 2023, [url](#), p. 31; UCDP, Afghanistan, [2024], [url](#)

⁵⁸⁷ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 20

⁵⁸⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 14; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 19; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 20; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 17

⁵⁸⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 17; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 17

⁵⁹⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

UNAMA however reported on, *inter alia*, the NRF harming civilians in ‘deliberate’ attacks.⁵⁹¹ In their reporting covering 1 October 2024–30 June 2025, UNAMA mentioned six attacks carried out by the NRF, the AFF and Afghan Liberation Front wounding 37 civilians and killing one.⁵⁹² UCDP recorded 5 civilian deaths in connection to events involving the de facto government and resistance groups within the reference period of this report.⁵⁹³

2.2.2. Activities of the ISKP

The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team estimated the strength of the ISKP to 2 000 individuals in 2025, and described the group as ‘scattered across the northern and northeastern provinces’.⁵⁹⁴ Sources suggest that the ISKP has not had any overt presence in Afghanistan under the de facto government.⁵⁹⁵ The group reportedly operate through scattered decentralised networks⁵⁹⁶ of cells scattered across the country.⁵⁹⁷ Many ISKP cells have moreover relocated from former strongholds to Pakistan and northern Afghanistan.⁵⁹⁸ The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team reported on sympathisers and supports increasing ‘significantly’ in the provinces of Badakhshan and Kunduz, including in retaliation for the de facto authorities poppy eradication campaign.⁵⁹⁹ AW reported on ISKP attacks as well as counteroperations by the de facto authorities ‘intensifying’ in the north of Afghanistan in the first quarter of 2025, with five attacks being claimed in the provinces of Baghlan, Takhar, and Kunduz, and counteroperations taking place in the provinces of Sar-e Pul, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, and Samangan.⁶⁰⁰

The number of ISKP attacks have significantly decreased since peaking in 2022.⁶⁰¹ The group’s operational capacity has reportedly been weakened following intense counter-operations⁶⁰² in which the de facto authorities captured and killed several ISKP commanders and dismantled numerous ISKP cells.⁶⁰³ International Crisis Group noted that the ISKP had

⁵⁹¹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5

⁵⁹² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁹³ UCDP, data covering the period 1 January 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in emails, 8 December 2025 and 3 October 2024.

⁵⁹⁴ UN Security Council, Thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, 24 July 2025, [url](#), paras. 86–87

⁵⁹⁵ Giustozzi, A., Crisis and adaptation of the Islamic State in Khorasan, LSE IDEAS, February 2024, [url](#), pp. 7, 11; Winter, C., ISKP: A Primer, CJA, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 7–8, 17

⁵⁹⁶ AW, ISKP shifts focus to northern Afghanistan, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁷ Diplomat (The), Is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province Losing Momentum, 26 June 2025, [url](#); Giustozzi, A., Crisis and adaptation of the Islamic State in Khorasan, LSE IDEAS, February 2024, [url](#), p. 11

⁵⁹⁸ Giustozzi, A., Crisis and adaptation of the Islamic State in Khorasan, LSE IDEAS, February 2024, [url](#), pp. 7, 11

⁵⁹⁹ UN Security Council, Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, 6 February 2025, [url](#), para. 87

⁶⁰⁰ AW, ISKP shifts focus to northern Afghanistan, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰¹ International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰² UN Security Council, Thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, 24 July 2025, [url](#), para. 88; International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province Losing Momentum, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰³ International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)



shifted its operations to targets abroad,⁶⁰⁴ although other sources noted that sporadic ISKP attacks have continued in Afghanistan, mainly targeting the de facto authorities,⁶⁰⁵ but also religious minorities.⁶⁰⁶ on 21 November 2024 the ISKP attacked the Sufi community in Nahrin District (Baghlan Province),⁶⁰⁷ and on 14 June 2025 a Shia imam was shot and beheaded in Nusay District (Badakhshan Province) by unknown individuals leaving behind an ISKP flag.⁶⁰⁸

The UN Secretary-General's report assessed that the ISKP poses no significant challenge to the de facto authorities' territorial control.⁶⁰⁹ In the period 1 August 2024–30 January 2025 the UN recorded at least 12 attacks.⁶¹⁰ In subsequent reports covering the reporting period 1 February–31 October 2025, the UN Secretary-General states that attacks continue without providing any numbers,⁶¹¹ adding that they have decreased in number and scale since 1 May 2025.⁶¹² Although the ISKP claimed no attack in 1 May–31 July 2025, the UN Secretary-General noted that the de facto GDI and the de facto security forces had carried out several operations killing alleged ISKP members in Kabul City, and the provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar, and Badakhshan, and that the ISKP had attacked de facto security forces in Darah-i Nur District (Nangarhar Province) on 15 June 2025, and clashed with de facto security forces in Alingar District (Lagman Province) on 8 July 2025.⁶¹³ Within the reference period of this report, ACLED recorded 13 events in which the ISKP was the apparent perpetrating actor in the provinces of Baghlan (3 events), Nangarhar (3), Kabul (2), Ghor (1), Kunar (1), Kunduz (1), Laghman (1), Takhar (1).⁶¹⁴

According to the UN Secretary-General reporting on 6 December 2024, IEDs and suicide attacks, primarily claimed by the ISKP, were the leading cause of civilian casualties in the

⁶⁰⁴ International Crisis Group, *The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?*, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁵ HRW, *World Report 2025, Afghanistan, Events of 2024*, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 26

⁶⁰⁶ ACCORD, *Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls*, February 2025, [url](#), p. 20; HRW, *World Report 2025, Afghanistan, Events of 2024*, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 26

⁶⁰⁷ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 20

⁶⁰⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 13

⁶⁰⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 3; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 3

⁶¹⁰ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 15; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 20

⁶¹¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 21; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 18; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁶¹² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 18; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁶¹³ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁶¹⁴ ACLED, *Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025*, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)



period 1 August–30 October 2024. The source recorded 87 civilian casualties caused by such attacks, including 16 deaths and 71 injured.⁶¹⁵ In a subsequent publication covering the period 1 November 2024–30 April 2025, the UN Secretary-General reported on 88 civilians killed in attacks, and 150 civilians wounded, but did not always specify the actor behind the attacks or the means of the attack.⁶¹⁶ No IED attack was mentioned in the UN report covering 1 May–31 July 2025.⁶¹⁷ According to UCDP, events involving the ISKP caused 20 civilian deaths within the reference period of this report.⁶¹⁸

2.2.3. Clashes and airstrikes involving Pakistan

Most incidents involving crossfire between the Afghan de facto security forces and Pakistan have taken place along the shared eastern and southeastern border,⁶¹⁹ and both sides have significantly increased ‘troop presence along the border’, as reported by the UN Secretary-General.⁶²⁰ In October 2025, Pakistan carried out airstrikes further into Afghanistan, targeting Kabul City.⁶²¹

In the period 1 August 2024–31 July 2025, the UN recorded more than 48 armed incidents involving the Afghan de facto security forces and Pakistani security forces.⁶²² This figure is incomplete as no number was provided for the reporting period covering 1 February–30 April 2025, although the UN Secretary-General noted reports of ‘multiple’ armed incidents.⁶²³ Similarly, the UN Secretary-General noted ‘multiple’ border incidents and Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan in the period 1 August–31 October 2025, but did not provide any figures.⁶²⁴ Meanwhile, within the reference period of this report, ACLED recorded 107 events involving Pakistani and Afghan de facto security forces; 48 events took place in October 2025.⁶²⁵

⁶¹⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), paras. 25–26

⁶¹⁶ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 32; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 30

⁶¹⁷ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶¹⁸ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025.

⁶¹⁹ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Pakistani, Afghan forces exchange deadly border fire: What’s next?, 12 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶²⁰ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22

⁶²¹ TOLONews, Pakistan Airstrike Hits Kabul, Civilians and School Damaged, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶²² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 16; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 19

⁶²³ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22

⁶²⁴ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), paras. 19–20

⁶²⁵ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)



Most Pakistani airstrikes have been carried out in border areas.⁶²⁶ Most incidents recorded by the UN have been taking place in border districts of the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Khost,⁶²⁷ notably the districts of Goshtah, Naziyan, Lal Pur and Mohmand Darah (Nangarhar), Khas Kunar, Dur Baba (Kunar), and Tere Zayi, Gurbuz, Jaji Maidan⁶²⁸ and Ali Sher (Khost).⁶²⁹ Single incidents were however also recorded in the provinces of Kandahar (Shorabak),⁶³⁰ Patkya (Dand Patan), Paktika (Barmal District),⁶³¹ as well as in Helmand (Dishu).⁶³² ACLED data indicated that the provinces affected by this conflict included Nangarhar (21 events), Kunar (20), Paktika (13), Kandahar (11), Khost (8), Helmand (4), Nuristan (4), Paktya (4) and Kabul (2).⁶³³

On 9 October 2025, Pakistan carried out an airstrike against Kabul City⁶³⁴ with unclear damage, as well as against a civilian market in Paktika Province damaging 'a number of shops'.⁶³⁵ Fighting thereafter escalated⁶³⁶ as Afghan de facto security forces retaliated on 11 October 2025 by attacking Pakistani military posts along the shared border.⁶³⁷ Security forces on both sides clashed on 11–12 October 2025, in what was reported as the deadliest clashes since the Taliban takeover in 2021, killing dozens of fighters,⁶³⁸ and injuring and killing many civilians.⁶³⁹ Heavy fighting between the Afghan de facto security forces and the Pakistani military forces was also reported in the district of Spin Boldak (Kandahar Province) on 15 October 2025.⁶⁴⁰ On this day, Pakistan also conducted airstrikes against Kabul City⁶⁴¹ and Spin Boldak City.⁶⁴² According to UN data, clashes between Afghan de facto and Pakistani security forces caused at least 503 civilian casualties, with 50 killed and 453 injured, mainly by air strikes and cross-border shelling, in the period 10–17 October 2025.⁶⁴³ As per UNAMA's

⁶²⁶ Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Sikkerhetssituasjonen, 7 November 2025, [url](#), p. 4; ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶²⁷ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 16; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 19

⁶²⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22

⁶²⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁶³⁰ General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 16

⁶³¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁶³² UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22

⁶³³ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁴ ACLED, Kabul: First strikes in Afghanistan's capital city since 2022 – Expert comment, 10 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁵ BBC News, Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of 'violating Kabul's sovereign territory', 10 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁶ UNAMA, UNAMA welcomes Afghanistan-Pakistan ceasefire, urges protection of civilians, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁷ Al-Monitor, Explainer-Why are tensions flaring again between Afghanistan and Pakistan?, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁸ Reuters, Pakistani troops on high alert on Afghan border after fighting, trade halts, 13 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁹ UNAMA, UNAMA welcomes Afghanistan-Pakistan ceasefire, urges protection of civilians, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁰ UNAMA, UNAMA welcomes Afghanistan-Pakistan ceasefire, urges protection of civilians, 16 October 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Pakistan and Afghanistan announce ceasefire after deadly border clashes, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴¹ TOLONews, Pakistan Airstrike Hits Kabul, Civilians and School Damaged, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴² Reuters, Pakistan, Afghanistan agree to temporary truce after fresh fighting, airstrikes, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴³ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 27



preliminary records, 17 civilians were killed and 346 injured in the district of Spin Boldak alone.⁶⁴⁴ After reaching a temporary ceasefire agreement on 19 October 2025,⁶⁴⁵ sporadic airstrikes and clashes have continued to be reported in border areas.⁶⁴⁶

According to UCDP data, events involving Pakistan caused 37 civilian deaths within the reference period of this report. Notably, 32 civilian deaths were recorded in the district of Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province.⁶⁴⁷ Civilians have also been displaced due to clashes in border areas.⁶⁴⁸ More information is available in section [2.3.1. Displacement and return](#).

Following clashes, Pakistan closed all border crossings with Afghanistan on 12 October 2025,⁶⁴⁹ including for trade.⁶⁵⁰ The border remained closed as of 30 November 2025,⁶⁵¹ except for some border crossings that have been temporarily or partially reopened for migrant movements,⁶⁵² mainly for Afghan returnees.⁶⁵³ The crossing had already been closed on 22 February 2025 due to clashes for about a month, and civilians and humanitarian actors were instructed to evacuate on the Afghan side.⁶⁵⁴

While Pakistan has claimed that they conduct airstrikes against TTP targets,⁶⁵⁵ the Afghan de facto authorities and media have reported on civilians being victims of such attacks.⁶⁵⁶ Civilian homes have reportedly been damaged or destroyed in airstrikes, including in the provinces of Kunar⁶⁵⁷ and Khost.⁶⁵⁸ According to TOLONews 80 civilian houses were destroyed in Spin Boldak, following airstrikes in October 2025, as well as 50 shops and 10 car dealerships.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁴⁴ UNAMA, UNAMA welcomes Afghanistan-Pakistan ceasefire, urges protection of civilians, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁵ BBC News, Taliban and Pakistan agree to ceasefire after days of deadly clashes, 19 October 2025, [url](#);

⁶⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, Afghanistan says Pakistan bombed Khost, killing nine children and a woman, 25 November 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Baradar Warns Against Any violation of Afghan Territory, 28 November 2025, [url](#); RFE/RL, Taliban Blames Pakistan For Air Strikes Killing 10, Including 9 Children, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁷ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁶⁴⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 16; UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁶⁴⁹ AP, Pakistan partially reopens Torkham border crossing to allow Afghan refugees to leave, 1 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁰ Reuters, Pakistani troops on high alert on Afghan border after fighting, trade halts, 13 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵¹ Nikkei Asia, Pakistan's trade war with Afghanistan boomerangs on its economy 30 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵² Khaama Press, Pakistan Reopens Spin Boldak Border After Week-Long Closure, 17 October 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Afghanistan–Pakistan border crossings remain shut for 50th day as trade and travel grind to a halt, 30 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵³ Amu TV, Afghanistan–Pakistan border crossings remain shut for 50th day as trade and travel grind to a halt, 30 November 2025, [url](#); IOM, Afghanistan: Emergency Border Response report (26 Oct - 08 Nov 2025), 17 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁵⁴ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 22

⁶⁵⁵ DW, Pakistan strikes Afghanistan, kills 9 children, Taliban says, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁶ TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Vows Timely Response to Pakistan's Airstrikes, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ Al Jazeera, What are the risks of Afghanistan-Pakistan tensions escalating?, 25 November 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Pakistani Airstrike Hits Civilian Home in Kunar, Injures 5, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁸ TOLONews, Khost Residents Demand Retaliation After Pakistani Attacks, 27 November 2025, [url](#); DW, Pakistan strikes Afghanistan, kills 9 children, Taliban says, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁹ TOLONews, 20,000 Families Displaced by Pakistani Airstrikes in Kandahar, 18 October 2025, [url](#)



Pakistan has also carried out airstrikes against Kabul City, including on 9 October 2025.⁶⁶⁰ According to a social media post by a Taliban spokesperson published the subsequent day, no injuries or harm had been reported.⁶⁶¹ On 15 October 2025, two additional explosions reportedly hit Kabul City's Police District 15 and another unspecified area, according to Khaama Press,⁶⁶² while the UN Secretary-General reported on the explosions taking place in police district 4.⁶⁶³ While Pakistan claimed to have carried out an airstrike against the capital,⁶⁶⁴ the de facto authorities attributed the explosions to a fuel tanker fire.⁶⁶⁵ There were reportedly electricity blackouts in some areas during the night and at least until the next morning, as some cables had been damaged.⁶⁶⁶

2.3. Conflict trends by province

Kabul City and Kabul Province

Kabul City has faced most security incidents since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. As noted by Landinfo, many high-profile de facto government targets are located in the capital, and Kabul has a large population.⁶⁶⁷ Sources suggest that the general security situation in Kabul City has improved since the powershift.⁶⁶⁸ ACLED recorded 155 events in Kabul Province within the reference period of this report, and the main actors involved were the de facto security forces targeting civilians, and the NRF and AFF targeting the de facto security forces.⁶⁶⁹ The UN Secretary-General noted that the de facto authorities had carried out several operations killing alleged ISKP members in, *inter alia*, Kabul City.⁶⁷⁰ Some notable events in Kabul City included:

- 19 October 2024: AFF claimed two rocket attacks against Kabul airport;⁶⁷¹
- 11 December 2024: the ISKP carried out a suicide attack outside the de facto Ministry of Refugees killing the de facto Minister of Refugees, Khalil Haqqani, and six others;⁶⁷²
- 28 December 2024: an IED explosion by NRF killed one and injured four civilians;⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁰ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 20

⁶⁶¹ Al Jazeera, Taliban blame Pakistan after explosions in Kabul, amid outreach to India, 10 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶² Khaama Press, Explosions Rock Kabul, Residents Report Twin Blasts Across Afghanistan Capital, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶³ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 3 December 2025, [url](#), para. 20

⁶⁶⁴ Khaama Press, Pakistan Confirms Airstrikes on Kabul and Kandahar, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁵ Khaama Press, Explosions Rock Kabul, Residents Report Twin Blasts Across Afghanistan Capital, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁶ AFP, Afghanistan-Pakistan ceasefire holds after deadly border clashes, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁷ Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Sikkerhetssituasjonen, 7 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁶⁸ Akram, S., The Turbaned Traders: The Taliban take over the urban economy, AAN, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁹ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁰ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁶⁷¹ RFE/RL, Taliban Searches Houses In Kabul After Rocket Attack Claimed By Freedom Front, 22 October 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷² BBC News, Suicide bomb kills Taliban minister in Kabul, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5



- 13 February 2025: the ISKP carried out a suicide attack against the de facto Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, killing 3 and injuring 10 employees, including the de facto Deputy Minister⁶⁷⁴ who was ‘severely injured’;⁶⁷⁵
- 9 and 15 October 2025: Pakistan carried out carried out two airstrikes.⁶⁷⁶

Northeastern provinces

When comparing conflict data of northeastern provinces (Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan, and Panjsher) from the period January–November 2024 with the same period in 2025, ACLED events have remained on similar levels with 201 events recorded in 2024 and 188 in 2025.⁶⁷⁷ Within the reference period of this report (1 October 2024–30 November 2025), data trends looked as follows:

Kunduz (71 ACLED events). Most events involved resistance groups targeting de facto security forces.⁶⁷⁸ Rawadari recorded suicide and explosive attacks causing civilian deaths and injuries in, *inter alia*, Kunduz in the first half of 2025, but did not provide a data breakdown.⁶⁷⁹ One notable attack claimed by the ISKP targeted de facto security force employees collecting their salaries in Kunduz City, killing 15 de facto officials and 4 civilians.⁶⁸⁰

Takhar (65 ACLED events). Most events involved the de facto security forces targeting civilians, and resistance groups targeting the de facto security forces.⁶⁸¹ In the first quarter of 2025, AW reported on counteroperations against the ISKP in the province.⁶⁸² Notable attacks reported by other sources included:

- 5 October 2024: an IED explosion in front of a high school, wounding six children, one man, and two de facto police officers. NRF claimed responsibility.⁶⁸³
- 21 December 2024: an IED explosion in Taloqan City injuring a civilian. The Afghan Liberation Front claimed responsibility.⁶⁸⁴
- 21 January 2025: the killing of a Chinese citizen and a de facto security official in Khwaja Baha ud Din District. The ISKP claimed responsibility.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁷⁴ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁶⁷⁵ Afghanistan International, Taliban Deputy Minister Severely Injured In Kabul Suicide Bombing, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ Khaama Press, Explosions Rock Kabul, Residents Report Twin Blasts Across Afghanistan Capital, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 January 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁸ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 12

⁶⁸⁰ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁶⁸¹ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸² AW, ISKP shifts focus to northern Afghanistan, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5

⁶⁸⁴ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 27 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 4–5

⁶⁸⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 20



Badakhshan (54 ACLED events) and **Baghlan** (24 ACLED events). Most events involved resistance groups targeting the de facto security forces, and the de facto security forces targeting civilians. In both provinces, a handful cases were also attributed to the ISKP or ‘unidentified armed groups’, targeting both civilians and the de facto security forces.⁶⁸⁶ UCDP recorded 37 civilian deaths in Badakhshan, mainly connected to the de facto security forces targeting civilians, including violently suppressing protests causing 13 deaths. Moreover, 10 civilian deaths were caused by unknown actors targeting civilians. In Baghlan, UCDP recorded 17 civilian deaths, whereof 11 were caused by the ISKP attacking a Sufi shrine.⁶⁸⁷ In the first quarter of 2025, AW reported on counteroperations against the ISKP taking place in, *inter alia*, these provinces,⁶⁸⁸ and the UN Secretary-General reported on killings of alleged ISKP members during operations in, *inter alia*, Badakhshan.⁶⁸⁹ Notable attacks in Baghlan included:

- 21 November 2024: the ISKP attacked a Sufi shrine in Nahrin District, killing 11 people;⁶⁹⁰
- 7 January 2025: the ISKP attacked two pro-Taliban clerics, killing one of them;⁶⁹¹
- 18 January 2025: the AFF threw a hand grenade against a de facto police checkpoint in Pul-e Khumri, killing one man and injuring 18 others.⁶⁹²

Panjsher (32 ACLED events). Most events involved de facto security forces targeting civilians, but also a small number of cases in which resistance groups and unidentified armed actors targeted the de facto security forces.⁶⁹³ According to Kerr Chiovenda, there is a lot of military presence in Andarab District and Panjsher, due to its history of resistance, although NRF has been almost completely suppressed.⁶⁹⁴ More information is available in section

[4.3.1. Suspected affiliates of resistance groups.](#)

Western provinces

When comparing conflict data of western provinces (Badghis, Farah, Ghor, Herat) from the period January–November 2024 with the same period in 2025, ACLED events have decreased with 136 events recorded in 2024 and 74 in 2025.⁶⁹⁵ Within the reference period of this report (1 October 2024–30 November 2025), data trends looked as follows:

⁶⁸⁶ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁷ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁶⁸⁸ AW, ISKP shifts focus to northern Afghanistan, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁶⁹⁰ AFP, IS-Khorasan Claims Attack On Sufi Shrine In Afghanistan, 23 November 2024, [url](#); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 210

⁶⁹¹ Khaama Press, ISIS claims responsibility for assassination of cleric in Baghlan province, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁹³ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

⁶⁹⁵ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)



Herat (69 events). Most events involved resistance groups targeting the de facto security forces, and the de facto security forces targeting civilians.⁶⁹⁶ UCDP recorded 16 civilian deaths, connected to various situations, including violent crime.⁶⁹⁷

Badghis (25 ACLED events) and **Farah** (15 ACLED events). Most events involved resistance groups and unidentified armed groups targeting the de facto authorities.⁶⁹⁸ UCDP recorded 9 civilian deaths in Badghis and 4 in Farah, mainly attributed to unknown actors targeting civilians.⁶⁹⁹ In **Ghor** (13 ACLED events), most events involved the de facto security forces targeting civilians.⁷⁰⁰ UCDP recorded 9 civilian deaths in Ghor, caused by the de facto government and unknown actors.⁷⁰¹

Northwestern provinces

When comparing conflict data of northwestern provinces (Balkh, Faryab, Jowzjan, Samangan, and Sar-e Pul) from the period January–November 2024 with the same period in 2025, ACLED events have decreased with 69 events recorded in 2024 and 44 in 2025.⁷⁰² Within the reference period of this report (1 October 2024–30 November 2025), data trends look as follows:

Balkh (21 ACLED events). Most events involved unidentified armed groups and de facto security forces targeting civilians. There were also some events in which resistance groups targeted the de facto authorities.⁷⁰³ UCDP recorded 8 civilian deaths in the province.⁷⁰⁴ Notable events included three IEDs attacks in Mazar-e Sharif in April 2025, two of which were claimed by the AFF and wounded seven civilians, and one remain unclaimed and killed one man and wounded nine men and one boy.⁷⁰⁵ According to Afghan media sources the third attack took place in the vicinity of a Shia mosque.⁷⁰⁶

Faryab (23 ACLED events). Most events involved the de facto security forces and unidentified armed groups targeting civilians, and also some cases of resistance groups targeting the de facto security forces.⁷⁰⁷ In **Samangan** (10 ACLED events), **Jowzjan** (7), and **Sar-e Pul** (4), most

⁶⁹⁶ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁷ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁶⁹⁸ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁹ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁷⁰⁰ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰¹ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁷⁰² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 January 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰³ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁴ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁷⁰⁵ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), pp. 5–6

⁷⁰⁶ Amu TV, Sources: One killed in explosion near mosque in Balkh, 14 April 2025, [url](#); Khaama Press, Explosion rocks Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh Province, Afghanistan, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁷ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)



events involved de facto military forces and unidentified armed groups targeting civilians.⁷⁰⁸ UCDP recorded 2 civilian deaths in Samangan, 17 civilian deaths in Jowzjan, and 11 civilian deaths in Sar-e Pul, mainly connected to unknown armed groups targeting civilians, but also some cases in which civilians were targeted by the de facto security forces, and one case in which the ISKP caused two civilian deaths in Sar-e Pul.⁷⁰⁹ AW reported counteroperations against the ISKP in, *inter alia*, Sar-e Pul and Samangan.⁷¹⁰

South and southeastern provinces

When comparing conflict data of southern and southeastern provinces (Nangarhar, Khost, Paktika, Paktya, Laghman, Ghazni, Kunar, Nuristan, Kandahar, Helmand, Nimruz, Uruzgan, and Zabul) from the period January–November 2024 with the same period in 2025, ACLED events have increased with 195 events recorded in 2024 and 226 in 2025.⁷¹¹ Some areas along the border with Pakistan have been impacted by airstrikes and cross-border violence.⁷¹² Within the reference period of this report (1 October 2024–30 November 2025), data trends looked as follows:

In **Nangarhar** (63 ACLED events), **Khost** (37), **Paktika** (32), and **Paktya** (24), a large share of events involved Pakistani security forces, but also the de facto security forces targeting civilians. In **Laghman** (14 ACLED events) and **Ghazni** (13), most events involved de facto authorities targeting civilians. In **Kunar** (37 ACLED events), there were events in which Pakistani security forces and unidentified armed groups also clashed with the TTP. In **Nuristan** (7 ACLED events), most events involved Pakistani security forces and unidentified armed groups targeting civilians.⁷¹³ A large share of civilian deaths recorded by the UCDP in Khost (20) and Paktika (67) were caused by Pakistani airstrikes.⁷¹⁴ The UN Secretary-General noted that the de facto intelligence and security forces had carried out several operations killing alleged ISKP members in Kunar and Nangarhar in the period 1 May–31 July 2025. The ISKP moreover attacked de facto security forces in Darah-i Nur District (Nangarhar Province) on 15 June 2025, clashed with de facto security forces in Alingar District (Lagman Province) on 8 July 2025,⁷¹⁵ and reportedly carried out an explosion and subsequent ambush on de facto security forces, killing three de facto state employees in Kunar Province on 12 October 2024.⁷¹⁶

⁷⁰⁸ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#); Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Sikkerhetssituasjonen, 7 November 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁰⁹ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁷¹⁰ AW, ISKP shifts focus to northern Afghanistan, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 January 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹² ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹³ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹⁴ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁷¹⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁷¹⁶ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 15



Kandahar (37 ACLED events). Most events involved Pakistani security forces targeting civilians and the de facto security forces, although there were also a large share of events in which the de facto security forces targeted civilians.⁷¹⁷ UCDP recorded 48 civilian deaths, with a large share caused by Pakistani airstrikes and border clashes.⁷¹⁸

Helmand (23 ACLED events). Most events involved unidentified groups targeting civilians, the de facto security forces and Pakistani security forces. There were also clashes between the de facto and Pakistani security forces. Both actors also targeted civilians.

Most events in **Nimruz** (11), **Uruzgan** (4) and **Zabul** (3) related to the de facto security forces targeting civilians.⁷¹⁹

Other provinces

In **Parwan** (35 ACLED events) and **Kapisa** (25) the data involved various actors, with civilians mainly being targeted by the de facto security forces. The de facto security forces were also targeted by resistance groups as well as unidentified groups. In **Wardak** (13 events), **Daykundi** (7), **Logar** (3), **Bamyan** (1), most events related to de facto security forces targeting civilians.⁷²⁰

Figure 4. Conflict data by province

The table on the next page contains available conflict, population, and displacement data. Data limitations include challenges in collecting accurate data on population movements,⁷²¹ and population data, as Afghanistan lacks a census.⁷²² The official population data used is an estimate based on a household listing collected in 2003–2005 and mathematical formulas. As per this estimate the Afghan population stands at 36 million people in 2025,⁷²³ which is about 10 million less than figures used by e.g. the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).⁷²⁴ There has also been a recent large-scale influx of returnees from neighbouring countries.⁷²⁵ It should further be noted that the UNHCR return data only include parts of 2025 and not the whole reference period of this report.⁷²⁶

⁷¹⁷ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹⁸ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025

⁷¹⁹ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁰ ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷²¹ IDMC, Country Profile, Afghanistan, 15 May 2025, [url](#); UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Conflict Induced Displacements, 24 November 2025, [url](#); UNHCR, Forced Displacement and Returns in Afghanistan, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷²² Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

⁷²³ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, Estimated population of Afghanistan 2025-26, September 2025, [url](#), pp. iii, 31

⁷²⁴ IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for March - April 2025 and Projection for May - October 2025, 6 June 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁵ UNHCR, Afghan Returns from Iran and Pakistan Emergency Update #12, 3 October 2025, [url](#)

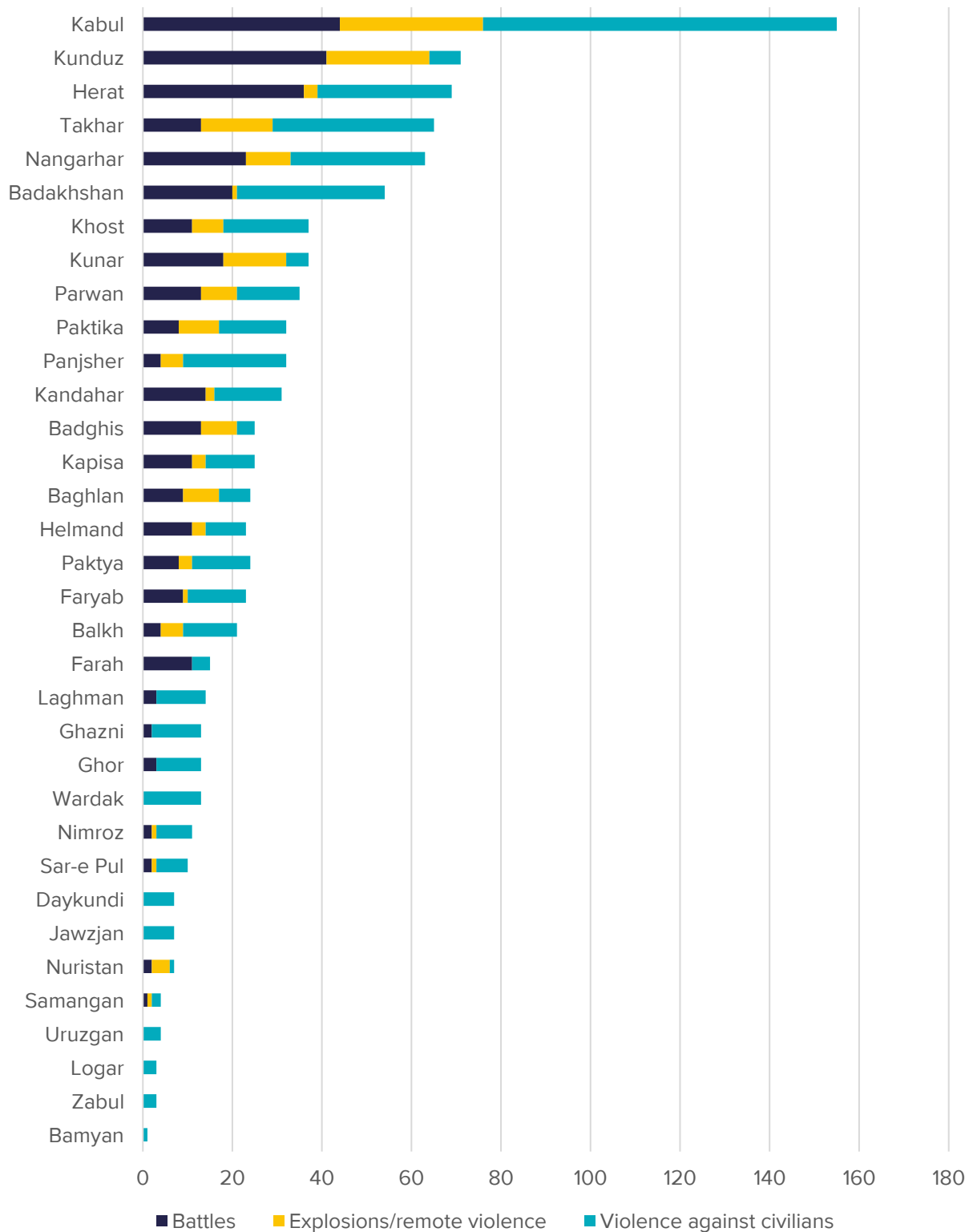
⁷²⁶ UNHCR, Forced Displacement and Returns in Afghanistan, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

Province	Population ¹	Events (ACLED) ²				Civilian deaths (UCDP) ³	Displacement (as of 12 Oct) ⁴ / return (30 Nov) ⁵
		Total	Battles	Explosions/ remote violence	Violence against civilians		
Badakhshan	1 150 342	54	20	1	33	37	-/41
Badghis	585 254	25	13	8	4	9	-/-
Baghlan	1 113 400	24	9	8	7	17	-/14
Balkh	1 595 814	21	4	5	12	8	-/14
Bamyan	540 614	1	0	0	1	0	-/-
Daykundi	562 913	7	0	0	7	2	-/-
Farah	615 154	15	11	0	4	4	-/12
Faryab	1 213 961	23	9	1	13	17	-/11
Ghazni	1 487 410	13	2	0	11	15	-/-
Ghor	847 731	13	3	0	10	9	-/-
Helmand	1 580 345	23	11	3	9	6	-/104
Herat	2 383 202	69	36	3	30	16	-/19
Jawzjan	660 962	7	0	0	7	3	-/13
Kabul	6 173 494	155	44	32	79	26	-/242
Kandahar	1 567 980	31	14	2	15	48	-/51
Kapisa	532 235	25	11	3	11	4	-/-
Khost	694 197	37	11	7	19	20	-/-
Kunar	544 839	37	18	14	5	5	98/8
Kunduz	1 258 535	71	41	23	7	5	-/22
Laghman	538 040	14	3	0	11	5	- /24
Logar	473 811	3	0	0	3	2	-/-
Nangarhar	1 877 232	63	23	10	30	20	7 369/27
Nimroz	201 140	11	2	1	8	8	-/14
Nuristan	178 534	7	2	4	1	4	-/7
Paktika	845 359	32	8	9	15	67	-/-
Paktya	667 956	24	8	3	13	10	-/-
Panjsher	185 194	32	4	5	23	0	-/-
Parwan	806 431	35	13	8	14	2	-/-
Samangan	562 963	4	1	1	2	2	-/-
Sar-e Pul	678 598	10	2	1	7	8	-/17
Takhar	1 196 656	65	13	16	36	7	-/-
Uruzgan	475 839	4	0	0	4	6	-/-
Wardak	719 710	13	0	0	13	4	-/-
Zabul	419 352	3	0	0	3	3	-/9
Total	36 435 197	971	336	168	467	399	7 467/649

Sources:¹ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, Estimated population of Afghanistan 2025-26, September 2025, [url](#), pp. 31–32; ² ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#); ³ UCDP, data covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, provided by courtesy

of UCDP in an email, 8 December 2025; ⁴ UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Conflict Induced Displacements, 24 November 2025, [url](#); ⁵ UNHCR, Forced Displacement and Returns in Afghanistan, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

Figure 5. ACLED data by province



Source: ACLED, Curated Data Files, Afghanistan covering the period 1 October 2024–30 November 2025, as of 10 December 2025, [url](#)



2.3.1. Displacement and return

The conflict between the Taliban and the previous government caused large displacement, with an average of 380 000 people becoming displaced per year across the whole country, according to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). After the Taliban takeover, conflict-induced displacement stopped almost completely, according to the same source.⁷²⁷ Most displacement taking place after 2021 has been induced by climate change and natural disasters.⁷²⁸

Nevertheless, 4.2 million people were estimated to live in internal displacement due to conflict and violence in 2024, and 3 200 new movements were recorded this year due to violence along the border with Pakistan, mainly in Khost Province.⁷²⁹ Although not providing any figures, the UN Secretary-General noted that civilians had been displaced in border areas in 2024, including following clashes between Pakistani security forces and Afghan de facto security forces in Shorabak (Kandahar Province) on 6 and 9 October 2024, and following shelling in Dangam (Kunar Province) on 7 October 2024.⁷³⁰

In 2025 (as of 12 October), UN OCHA recorded 7 467 conflict-induced displacements, taking place in the provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar. This included 6 675 individuals being displaced from the district of Mohmandara and 694 individuals from the district of Durbaba (both located in Nangarhar Province) and 98 individuals being displaced from Nari district (Kunar Province). UN OCHA also noted that constrained humanitarian access prevents verifying the full extent of displacement.⁷³¹ Local de facto authorities however stated that about 20 000 families had been displaced from Spin Boldak following Pakistani airstrikes in October 2025.⁷³²

The UN Secretary-General also reported on 250 families being displaced from the district Sarkani (Kunar Province) on 10 January 2025, following mortar fire and heavy clashes between Afghan de facto security forces and Pakistani security forces.⁷³³

UNHCR reported on 649 IDPs returning to various provinces in 2025 (as of 30 November);⁷³⁴ see **Figure 4** on the previous page.

⁷²⁷ IDMC, One year on: the Taliban takeover and Afghanistan's changing displacement crisis, August 2022, [url](#)

⁷²⁸ IOM, Climate Crisis Drives Displacement, Worsens Afghanistan's Humanitarian Needs: IOM Report, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁹ IDMC, Country Profile, Afghanistan, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷³⁰ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 16

⁷³¹ UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Conflict Induced Displacements, 24 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷³² TOLONews, 20,000 Families Displaced by Pakistani Airstrikes in Kandahar, 18 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷³³ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁷³⁴ UNHCR, Forced Displacement and Returns in Afghanistan, 20 December 2025, [url](#)



2.4. Child recruitment

Children were recruited to Taliban ranks during their time as an insurgency.⁷³⁵ Sources have suggested that children have remained in Taliban ranks after the Taliban takeover,⁷³⁶ and that child recruitment has continued.⁷³⁷

The de facto authorities have been taking measures to remove and avoid recruiting young boys into their ranks, including by forming a commission for this purpose,⁷³⁸ and issuing a command order prohibiting the recruitment of children not showing signs of puberty.⁷³⁹ However, many people in Afghanistan do not know their age and do not perceive the age of 18 years as the end of childhood,⁷⁴⁰ rather this is assessed based on signs of puberty.⁷⁴¹ The Taliban, including in their capacity as the de facto authorities, have been assessing the age of boys based on their beard's growth.⁷⁴² The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan reported on the ambiguous legal definition of a child leaving adolescent children vulnerable to recruitment into the de facto armed forces.⁷⁴³ However, according to the Afghan analyst, many children have been removed from armed forces in this process, and young boys are not present among Taliban fighters in the same manner as directly after the takeover – although it was not a very common sight back then either.⁷⁴⁴

In 2023, the UN Secretary-General reported on 342 boys being used in combat and in support roles by the de facto authorities. Most boys (333) were released from Taliban ranks that year following negotiations with the UN. In the same report, the UN Secretary-General reported on 29 boys and 2 girls being detained for alleged association with opposing groups, of which one child died in custody.⁷⁴⁵ In July 2025, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, reported that the engagement of the UN with the de facto

⁷³⁵ HRW, This is our opportunity to end the Taliban's use of child soldiers, 20 September 2021, [url](#)

⁷³⁶ HRW, This is our opportunity to end the Taliban's use of child soldiers, 20 September 2021, [url](#); UN General Assembly, Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 25 July 2025, [url](#), para. 37

⁷³⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 56; USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Afghanistan, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷³⁸ Afghan analyst, interviews 8–9 June 2023, 1 October 2024, and email communication, 10 October 2023, 13 October 2024. The interview on 1 October 2024 was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

⁷³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 56

⁷⁴⁰ Afghan analyst, interviews 8–9 June 2023, 1 October 2024, and email communication, 10 October 2023, 13 October 2024. The interview on 1 October 2024 was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

⁷⁴¹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 54

⁷⁴² The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), section 1.2.7.1; Afghan analyst, interviews 8–9 June 2023, 1 October 2024, and email communication, 10 October 2023, 13 October 2024. The interview on 1 October 2024 was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

⁷⁴³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Advanced unedited version, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 56

⁷⁴⁴ Afghan analyst, interviews 8–9 June 2023, 1 October 2024, and email communication, 10 October 2023, 13 October 2024. The interview on 1 October 2024 was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.

⁷⁴⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict, 3 June 2024, [url](#), paras. 16, 17, 24



authorities had ‘led to the release from their ranks of 58 children and their reintegration’ in the period August 2024–July 2025.⁷⁴⁶

According to the USDOS Trafficking in persons report, published on 24 June 2024, children have been recruited by both the Taliban and other armed groups as soldiers for combat and support roles. The report states that the Taliban have been recruiting children in *madrassas* in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and often recruits children through coercion, fraud, and false promises’, as well as by encouraging relatives to send their children to join Taliban ranks in order to ‘expand its trusted personnel’.⁷⁴⁷ In contrast, in their research on *madrassas* in Afghanistan, Rahimi and Watkins did not find any support for public *madrassas* engaging in militarised training or education, although they could not rule out that *madrassas* were being used for recruitment into the de facto administration. The prevalence of child recruitment was not mentioned in the research paper.⁷⁴⁸ In an interview with the EUAA, Rahimi noted that although public *jihadi madrassas* may be used to identify suitable future de facto officials, it may take many years to complete such an education.⁷⁴⁹ More information is available in section [1.2.6. Impact on the education sector](#).

USDOS further stated that the NRF and the ISKP use children in ‘direct hostilities’, including to plant and detonate IEDs, carry weapons, spy and as guards. Recruitment strategies of such armed groups include targeting children from impoverished and rural areas, and displaced children are reportedly particularly vulnerable.⁷⁵⁰ It has not been possible to corroborate this information with other sources. Meanwhile, a research study carried out by Afghanistan expert Antonio Giustozzi suggested that the ISKP sought to recruit university students.⁷⁵¹ The UN Sanctions and Monitoring Team also reported on the new ISKP leader focusing on recruiting more educated individuals and extending recruitment to non-Salafists.⁷⁵² A research paper of Centre on Armed Groups identified the most common pathway to join the ISKP as through personal relationships or through religious institutions, and that the ISKP has ‘capitalised on the Taliban’s harassment of Salafists’. The report makes reference to child recruitment, but outlines how a ‘younger generation’ of ISKP recruits joining after the Taliban takeover in 2021 were inspired by male relatives that had previously joined the ISKP.⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁶ UN General Assembly, Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 25 July 2025, [url](#), para. 37

⁷⁴⁷ USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Afghanistan, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁸ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., The Taliban’s Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 14–15

⁷⁴⁹ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

⁷⁵⁰ USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Afghanistan, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁵¹ Giustozzi, A., An Unfamiliar Challenge: How the Taliban are Meeting the Islamic State Threat on Afghanistan’s University Campuses, RUSI, May 2023, [url](#), pp. 3, 6–10

⁷⁵² UN Security Council, Fourteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 1 June 2023, [url](#), para. 46

⁷⁵³ Centre on Armed Groups, Drivers of ISKP Recruitment in Afghanistan, August 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 8



2.5. Recent crime trends

No crime statistics are available in Afghanistan,⁷⁵⁴ and available reporting on armed crime ‘has not been sufficiently systematic to allow reliable estimates of the scale’, as reported by Saleem and Semple.⁷⁵⁵ Furthermore, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) indicated that, according to journalists’ reports from Herat, Nangarhar, Faryab, and Bamyán provinces, crime was not allowed to be reported.⁷⁵⁶

Following the Taliban takeover, some sources suggested that crime levels increased.⁷⁵⁷ Freedom House noted that high levels of violent crime were reported across the country, including kidnappings and armed robberies,⁷⁵⁸ while USDOS noted that armed groups engaged in violent activities, such as threats, robberies, and kidnappings against civilians, medical and NGO workers and foreigners.⁷⁵⁹ Other sources also noted that de facto officials had been involved in violent crime against the population, including kidnapping for ransom,⁷⁶⁰ robberies, and crime under the pretext of house searches,⁷⁶¹ while some robberies were allegedly committed by individuals dressed as Taliban or wearing de facto security-personnel uniforms.⁷⁶²

However, an Afghan analyst, who regularly visits Afghanistan to conduct field-based research, told the EUAA in October 2024 that the situation concerning violent crime had significantly improved, although it had not been completely suppressed.⁷⁶³ By contrast, during 2025, some media outlets reported that violent crime, such as robberies, targeted killings and kidnappings, have increased in many parts of the country,⁷⁶⁴ including in Kabul City.⁷⁶⁵ Some of these sources attribute this rise to unemployment levels, lack of job opportunities,

⁷⁵⁴ Norway, Landinfo, Temanotat, Afghanistan, Situasjonen for afghanske menn, 20 January 2025, [url](#), p. 8; International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023

⁷⁵⁵ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 27

⁷⁵⁶ CPJ, How the Taliban’s propaganda empire consumed Afghan media, 13 August 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁷ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 27 February 2023, [url](#), para. 16; Business Standard, Crime rate rising in Afghanistan since Taliban takeover in August last year, 22 August 2022, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Afghanistan’s Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), pp. 6, 17

⁷⁵⁸ Freedom House, Afghanistan: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report, 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁹ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, [url](#), p. 3; USDOS, 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 20 March 2023, [url](#), p. 3

⁷⁶⁰ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

⁷⁶¹ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 27

⁷⁶² Hasht-e Subh, Lives at Risk, Voices Silenced: Robbery and Murder Under Taliban Rule, 24 May 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 4 armed robbers detained in Kabul, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶³ Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI units at the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the Swedish Migration Agency, as well as Landinfo – the Norwegian COI Centre

⁷⁶⁴ Khaama Press, Armed Robbers Kill Mother and Daughter in Logar Province, Afghanistan, 9 November 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Kabul Gripped by Insecurity: Armed Robberies in Taliban Uniforms Spark Growing Public Fear, 15 October 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Two Teenagers Killed After Being Abducted in Helmand and Kandahar, 11 September 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban say child rescued from kidnappers in Balkh, 13 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁵ Hasht-e Subh, Kabul Gripped by Insecurity: Armed Robberies in Taliban Uniforms Spark Growing Public Fear, 15 October 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Lives at Risk, Voices Silenced: Robbery and Murder Under Taliban Rule, 24 May 2025, [url](#)



economic hardship and poverty,⁷⁶⁶ as well as to ‘weak law enforcement’.⁷⁶⁷ According to such media reports, some of these crimes targeted children.⁷⁶⁸ AW also reported on a de facto official allegedly being involved in the rape and subsequent killing of a teenage boy.⁷⁶⁹ Local media Khaama Press also noted a recent ‘string of robberies and murders’ in November 2025, creating ‘public concern over deteriorating security conditions’.⁷⁷⁰ In the period 1 November 2024–30 April 2025, the UN Secretary-General recorded 283 robbery incidents in total, with numbers marking an increase as compared with the respective same period in 2023–2024.⁷⁷¹ During the first half of 2025, Rawadari documented at least 251 cases of people killed or injured ‘in targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings’, including 20 women, and 12 children, noting a 30 % increase compared to the same period last year. Many incidents have been linked to Taliban members or unidentified individuals.⁷⁷²

The de facto authorities have reportedly carried out arrests for some incidents relating to violent crimes.⁷⁷³ However, according to Afghan media in exile, despite claims of combatting violent crime and provide security, the de facto authorities did not provide effective protection.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁶⁶ Kabul Now, Teenager Found Dead in Ghazni Amid Rising Violent Crime Across Afghanistan, 17 September 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Lives at Risk, Voices Silenced: Robbery and Murder Under Taliban Rule, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁷ Kabul Now, Teenager Found Dead in Ghazni Amid Rising Violent Crime Across Afghanistan, 17 September 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁸ Kabul Now, Teenager Found Dead in Ghazni Amid Rising Violent Crime Across Afghanistan, 17 September 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Missing Boy Found Dead in Eastern Afghanistan Amid Surge in Violent Crime, 10 September 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban say child rescued from kidnappers in Balkh, 13 July 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Horrific Child Killings and Public Outrage: Taliban Remain Silent, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁹ CIR, Boy found dead after accusing Taliban members of sexual abuse, 9 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁰ Khaama Press, Armed Robbers Kill Mother and Daughter in Logar Province, Afghanistan, 9 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁷¹ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 19; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 18

⁷⁷² Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁷⁷³ Khaama Press, Armed Robbers Kill Mother and Daughter in Logar Province, Afghanistan, 9 November 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Teenager Found Dead in Ghazni Amid Rising Violent Crime Across Afghanistan, 17 September 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 4 armed robbers detained in Kabul, 6 February 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Amid Taliban Control, Takhar Residents Face Escalating Insecurity and Armed Crime, 9 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁴ Khaama Press, Armed Robbers Kill Mother and Daughter in Logar Province, Afghanistan, 9 November 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Missing Boy Found Dead in Eastern Afghanistan Amid Surge in Violent Crime, 10 September 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Amid Taliban Control, Takhar Residents Face Escalating Insecurity and Armed Crime, 9 October 2024, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 7 killed, 5 wounded in Afghanistan last week, 10 March 2024, [url](#)



3. Humanitarian situation

3.1. Economic and humanitarian crisis

Decades of conflict, persistent economic crisis, and natural disasters have been pushing large parts of the Afghan population into poverty.⁷⁷⁵ The economy suffered a severe shock amid the Taliban takeover in 2021,⁷⁷⁶ and entered a stage of ‘free fall’.⁷⁷⁷ By mid-2022, it stabilised again but at a lower equilibrium than before, with a general loss of economic ground and increased poverty.⁷⁷⁸ According to the World Bank, the Afghan economy contracted by 20.7 % in 2021, and 6.2 % in 2022.⁷⁷⁹ In this period, the population became increasingly reliant on humanitarian aid,⁷⁸⁰ peaking in 2023 with 28.3 million people in need of assistance.⁷⁸¹

In 2023–2024, the economy showed signs of slow recovery.⁷⁸² The World Bank however noted that the growth was insufficient to improve living standards⁷⁸³ and remained below the population growth rate.⁷⁸⁴ As a result, per-capita income stagnated.⁷⁸⁵ The World Bank forecast a 4 % contraction of GDP per-capita for FY2025, due to rapid population expansion,⁷⁸⁶ and almost half of the population, 22.9 million people, required humanitarian assistance in 2025 ‘to survive’, according to UN OCHA.⁷⁸⁷ The economy continued to be impacted by sanctions and isolation resulting from the de facto government not being recognised,⁷⁸⁸ and has suffered new shocks, including a significant reduction in US aid in 2025 and the mass influx of returnees from Pakistan and Iran, placing additional strain on humanitarian needs.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁷⁵ IRC, U.S. aid cuts are impacting millions of Afghans, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁶ HRW, Economic Causes of Afghanistan’s humanitarian Crisis, 4 August 2022, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁷ USIP, One Year Later, Taliban Unable to Reverse Afghanistan’s Economic Decline, 8 August 2022, [url](#); UN News, Afghanistan economy in ‘freefall’, threatening to take entire population with it, 19 December 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁸ USIP, One Year Later, Taliban Unable to Reverse Afghanistan’s Economic Decline, 8 August 2022, [url](#); World Bank, Afghanistan Development Update – Adjusting to the New Realities, October 2022, [url](#), pp. 9, 17

⁷⁷⁹ World Bank, Afghanistan Development Update - Navigating Challenges: Confronting Economic Recession and Deflation, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 9, 12–13

⁷⁸⁰ IOM, With More than Half of Afghans Dependent on Humanitarian Aid, IOM Calls for Sustained Support, 1 September 2022, [url](#); Islamic Relief, Two years on, millions of Afghan civilians need greater international support, 17 August 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁸¹ UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023, 23 January 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁸² UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁸³ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Economic Monitor, June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁸⁴ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Byrd, W., Where Does Afghanistan Stand After Four Years of Taliban Rule?, Lawfare, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁵ Byrd, W., Where Does Afghanistan Stand After Four Years of Taliban Rule?, Lawfare, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁶ World Bank, Macro Poverty Outlook, October 2025, [url](#), p. 148

⁷⁸⁷ UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁷⁸⁸ International Crisis Group, After the Aid Axe: Charting a Path to Self-reliance in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁹ Clark, K., Another Drought Year for Afghanistan... But prospects are not as bad as the could be, AAN, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 33, 37



Millions of Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan in recent years,⁷⁹⁰ and over 2.5 million in 2025 alone.⁷⁹¹ Returnees face multiple challenges upon arrival, including accessing adequate shelter, income, food, clean water, and healthcare.⁷⁹² More information on returnees is available in section [1.4. Treatment of persons returning from abroad](#).

The US, previously the largest state donor contributing to Afghan aid relief, decided to cut funds to almost all of its humanitarian programmes in April 2025,⁷⁹³ and other donors have followed.⁷⁹⁴ The consequences of aid cuts have included, *inter alia*, hundreds of health centres shutting down,⁷⁹⁵ and the suspension of USAID programmes supporting millions of Afghans with food provision, urgent healthcare services, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.⁷⁹⁶ Restrictions by the de facto authorities have also negatively impacted aid delivery, and complicated the work of aid organisations on the ground.⁷⁹⁷ More information is available in section 4.7. Human rights defenders and activists and in the [2024 EUAA COI Report Afghanistan: Country Focus](#) (section 3.6. Aid delivery).

Afghanistan is vulnerable to climate-related disasters⁷⁹⁸ and face annual flash floods,⁷⁹⁹ persistent droughts⁸⁰⁰ and earthquakes causing severe damage and deaths.⁸⁰¹ Reuters reported on an annual average of 560 persons being killed by earthquakes in Afghanistan and annual damages of USD 80 million.⁸⁰² A compilation by UN OCHA indicated that over 90 000 people had been affected by natural disasters in 2025 (as of 6 October), 2 059 people were killed and 3 882 injured. Moreover, 4 467 houses were damaged and 7 559 houses destroyed.⁸⁰³ The most destructive incident of 2025 was an earthquake hitting the eastern province of Kunar on 31 August,⁸⁰⁴ affecting over 59 000 people in adjacent districts, killing 1 986 persons and injuring 3 565, as reported by UN OCHA.⁸⁰⁵ In some cases, entire communities were wiped out,⁸⁰⁶ with women and children being overrepresented among

⁷⁹⁰ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁷⁹¹ UNHCR, Pakistan - Afghanistan: Returns Emergency Response #42 (as of 4 September 2025), 5 September 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹² ACAPS, Country analysis, Afghanistan, 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹³ Clark, K., The End of US Aid to Afghanistan: What will it mean for families, services and the economy?, AAN, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁴ International Crisis Group, After the Aid Axe: Charting a Path to Self-reliance in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁵ International Crisis Group, After the Aid Axe: Charting a Path to Self-reliance in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁶ Clark, K., The End of US Aid to Afghanistan: What will it mean for families, services and the economy?, AAN, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁷ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁷⁹⁸ FEWS Net, Afghanistan Food Security Outlook June 2024 - January 2025, 6 July 2024, [url](#); SIPRI, Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Afghanistan 2023, February 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UN OCHA, Afghanistan: The alarming effects of climate change, 1 August 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁹ ICRC, Afghanistan: Assisting communities grappling with the impact of climate change, 25 November 2024, [url](#); Afghanaid, Afghanaid joins global UN conference on disaster risk reduction, n.d., [url](#); UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

⁸⁰⁰ UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, December 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Clark, K., Another Drought Year for Afghanistan... But prospects are not as bad as the could be, AAN, July 2025, [url](#), p. 39

⁸⁰¹ UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 10, 12; Reuters, Why is Afghanistan so prone to earthquakes?, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰² Reuters, Why is Afghanistan so prone to earthquakes?, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰³ UN OCHA, Natural Disasters Dashboard, 11 November 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁴ IRC, Afghanistan earthquake: What's happening and how to help, 1 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁵ UN OCHA, Natural Disasters Dashboard, 11 November 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁶ Al Jazeera, Video: Al Jazeera reports from Afghanistan earthquake zone, 7 September 2025, [url](#)



those dead and injured.⁸⁰⁷ Meanwhile, there is a shortage of female rescue staff, exacerbated by the de facto authorities' restrictions.⁸⁰⁸ Some witnesses stated that there were instances of male rescuers neglecting women trapped in the rubble,⁸⁰⁹ as they did not want to touch them,⁸¹⁰ while others credited male volunteers for saving female earthquake victims.⁸¹¹

3.2. Poverty, basic subsistence and employment

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world.⁸¹² The World Bank reported that about 48 % of the population lived below the poverty threshold in 2025,⁸¹³ while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported on 75 % of the population being 'subsistence-insecure'.⁸¹⁴ A significant portion of the population struggle to cover their basic needs, and have expenses exceeding their income.⁸¹⁵ UNDP noted 'significant deteriorations' of the population's ability to afford adequate housing, healthcare, cooking items, food, and winter clothing, driven by economic shocks and reduced humanitarian assistance.⁸¹⁶ Households in crisis resorted to negative coping strategies, including taking on debt,⁸¹⁷ taking children out of school and engaging them in child labour,⁸¹⁸ or marrying off girls.⁸¹⁹ More extreme, but still reported, strategies included selling children⁸²⁰ and selling body organs.⁸²¹

Agriculture is the backbone of the Afghan economy.⁸²² A great share of the population lives in rural areas and depends on farming⁸²³ and tending livestock.⁸²⁴ As many households rely on

⁸⁰⁷ UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Situation Update #7 - Eastern Region Earthquake Response (25 September 2025, 25 September 2025, [url](#))

⁸⁰⁸ Al Jazeera, Did restrictions on women workers hamper Afghanistan's earthquake response?, 27 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁹ New York Times (The), After Afghan Quake, Many Male Rescuers Helped Men but Not Women, 4 September 2025, [url](#); NPR, Afghan earthquake triggers contradictory Taliban tactics on rescuing women, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

⁸¹⁰ Al Jazeera, Did restrictions on women workers hamper Afghanistan's earthquake response?, 27 September 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), After Afghan Quake, Many Male Rescuers Helped Men but Not Women, 4 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸¹¹ Al Jazeera, Did restrictions on women workers hamper Afghanistan's earthquake response?, 27 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸¹² UNDP and OPHI, Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024, Poverty Amid Conflict, 2024, [url](#), p. 18

⁸¹³ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸¹⁴ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 22–24

⁸¹⁵ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 22–24; World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸¹⁶ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 22–24

⁸¹⁷ EC, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, Afghanistan, [2025], [url](#); Byrd, W., Where Does Afghanistan Stand After Four Years of Taliban Rule?, Lawfare, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸¹⁸ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 19

⁸¹⁹ UN OCHA, Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 5, 14

⁸²⁰ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 19; DW, Children for sale in Afghanistan, 14 August 2022, [url](#)

⁸²¹ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁸²² WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 7; Austria, Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 9

⁸²³ France 24, Afghanistan hit by worst drought in 30 years, 9 October 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, After the Aid Axe: Charting a Path to Self-reliance in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

⁸²⁴ REACH, Afghanistan: Comparative Drought Analysis, September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

their own production,⁸²⁵ they are vulnerable to climate shocks.⁸²⁶ The agricultural sector was highly affected by persistent droughts in 2021–2023,⁸²⁷ one of the worst drought periods in Afghan history.⁸²⁸ In 2025, another severe drought hit Afghanistan, which mainly impacted farmers relying on springtime rain and tending livestock in the northern provinces of Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan, and Sar-e Pul, and the western provinces of Badghis and Herat. Nevertheless, despite droughts, Afghan wheat production has steadily increased each year since 2022, with the production for 2025 being above the levels in 2020, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This trend was attributed to the use of improved seeds.⁸²⁹ Meanwhile, farmers in areas depending on rainfall and growing crops such as fruit,⁸³⁰ and tending livestock,⁸³¹ face another year of crisis,⁸³² with drought pushing families across the country to abandon their lands and relocate.⁸³³ The opium cultivation ban has also impacted many farmers⁸³⁴ who struggle to find alternative livelihoods.⁸³⁵

Some reports suggest that poverty is more intense in rural areas,⁸³⁶ but the possibility of many households to self-produce generally makes them less vulnerable to changes in workforce demands.⁸³⁷ A multi-authored research article of Biruni Institute suggested that the rural population has adapted over the years and developed diverse coping mechanism to handle economic shocks. The urban population, in contrast, lacked informal insurance mechanisms such as land, food savings, localised co-insurance, and could not rely on any formal insurance mechanism of a welfare state either, for example unemployment benefits.⁸³⁸ The World Bank also reported on improved security and better market access reducing rural poverty.⁸³⁹

⁸²⁵ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 32

⁸²⁶ International Crisis Group, After the Aid Axe: Charting a Path to Self-reliance in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#); WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁸²⁷ UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Drought - 2021-2024, 2024, [url](#)

⁸²⁸ REACH, Afghanistan: Comparative Drought Analysis, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 3–4

⁸²⁹ Clark, K., Another Drought Year for Afghanistan... But prospects are not as bad as the could be, AAN, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 10, 12, 38

⁸³⁰ France 24, Afghanistan hit by worst drought in 30 years, 9 October 2025, [url](#); Clark, K., Another Drought Year for Afghanistan... But prospects are not as bad as the could be, AAN, July 2025, [url](#), p. 22

⁸³¹ Clark, K., Another Drought Year for Afghanistan... But prospects are not as bad as the could be, AAN, July 2025, [url](#), p. 23

⁸³² France 24, Afghanistan hit by worst drought in 30 years, 9 October 2025, [url](#); Clark, K., Another Drought Year for Afghanistan... But prospects are not as bad as the could be, AAN, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 22–23

⁸³³ IOM, Afghanistan, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; France 24, Afghanistan hit by worst drought in 30 years, 9 October 2025, [url](#)

⁸³⁴ International Crisis Group, Trouble In Afghanistan's Opium Fields: The Taliban War On Drugs, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

⁸³⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 5

⁸³⁶ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Hakimi, H., Afghanistan's Outlook: Under Taliban Rule, the economy slumps as taxation income rises, 15 August 2023, [url](#)

⁸³⁷ CMI, Understanding and addressing poverty and food insecurity in Afghanistan, April 2023, [url](#)

⁸³⁸ Rahimi, L., The Silent Erosion of Afghanistan's Urban Middle Class: A Neglected Crisis, The Diplomat, 24 February 2024, [url](#)

⁸³⁹ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

Unemployment is widespread,⁸⁴⁰ and in urban areas poverty is driven by the lack of job opportunities.⁸⁴¹ The urban population rely heavily on the construction sector,⁸⁴² which ‘boomed’ in 2024, especially in Kabul, as reported by the World Bank.⁸⁴³ However, the job markets in Afghan cities are over-saturated, with unemployed labourers struggling to secure even low-paid daily-wage jobs.⁸⁴⁴ There is also a significant gender disparity in accessing economic opportunities,⁸⁴⁵ in particular for female-headed households.⁸⁴⁶ The unemployment rate doubled in the period 2020–2023, with women and youth being most affected.⁸⁴⁷ According to an estimate of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the unemployment rate in 2024 was 13.3 % of the total labour force.⁸⁴⁸ However, there is a great discrepancy between men and women, with most men (84 %) having a job in 2024, according to a UNDP household survey, in contrast to 7 % of female household members.⁸⁴⁹ Another group that is disproportionately affected is the educated youth, according to the World Bank.⁸⁵⁰

UNDP reported on a decline in salaried work in 2024 and an increase in casual labour and self-employment. According to this source, only 11 % of household income came from salaried employment in 2024, while 40 % derived from casual labour.⁸⁵¹ Meanwhile, the most recent Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA)⁸⁵² indicated a drop in average household incomes in 2024 from 10 712 AFN to 9 004 AFN (approximately USD 136 to USD 115).⁸⁵³ The private sector has been one of few alternatives for working women,⁸⁵⁴ but restrictions on gender mixing have been excluding women from many jobs and restricted many to home-based self-employment.⁸⁵⁵ As a result, small-scale⁸⁵⁶ women-run businesses have significantly increased.⁸⁵⁷ However, as noted by the World Bank, increasing self-employment among

⁸⁴⁰ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Economic Monitor, June 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Byrd, W., Where Does Afghanistan Stand After Four Years of Taliban Rule?, Lawfare, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴¹ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁴² MEE, ‘Afghanistan’s food crisis is one of access, not availability’, 29 September 2023, [url](#); CMI, Understanding and addressing poverty and food insecurity in Afghanistan, April 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁴³ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁴⁴ Zan Times, Afghanistan’s workers: More oppressed and defenseless than ever, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁵ UNHCR, Rebuilding lives: How return duration shapes income generation and reintegration dynamics for Afghan returnees, 26 August 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁴⁶ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 24; WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁴⁷ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁴⁸ World Bank, Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), 7 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁹ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 35

⁸⁵⁰ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. ix

⁸⁵¹ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 32

⁸⁵² WoAA is a nationwide household survey

⁸⁵³ UNHCR, Annual Result Report 2024, 26 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁵⁴ AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁵⁵ ACAPS, Afghanistan, Barriers and enablers to self-employment, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁵⁶ World Bank, Afghanistan Development Update - Uncertainty After Fleeting Stability, 3 October 2023, [url](#), p. 23;

⁸⁵⁷ World Bank, Afghanistan Development Update - Uncertainty After Fleeting Stability, 3 October 2023, [url](#), p. 23; ACAPS, Afghanistan, Barriers and enablers to self-employment, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 1

women 'often reflects survival rather than true entrepreneurship'.⁸⁵⁸ Female-headed households are facing particularly severe decline in income and expenditure.⁸⁵⁹

The high number of returnees have intensified job competition,⁸⁶⁰ which is a key source of tension in some communities.⁸⁶¹ As people return from abroad, many families lose their channel for economic support through remittances.⁸⁶² Compared to host communities, returnees often face more severe economic hardship.⁸⁶³

3.3. Food security

According to analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classifications (IPC),⁸⁶⁴ 27 % of the Afghan population experienced high levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and 4) in March–April 2025 and were in 'urgent need of humanitarian food assistance'.⁸⁶⁵

Figure 6. IPC figures on the prevalence of acute food insecurity among the total population

IPC Phase	October 2023	March-April 2024	Sept-Oct 2024	March-April 2025
1: No or minimal	31 % (13.8 million)	31 % (14.1 million)	31 % (14.1 million)	32 % (14.7 million)
2: Stressed	40 % (17.7 million)	36 % (16.2 million)	44 % (20.2 million)	41 % (18.7 million)
3: Crisis	24 % (10.6 million)	25 % (11.3 million)	21 % (9.8 million)	23 % (10.6 million)
4: Acute	5 % (2.4 million)	7 % (2.9 million)	4 % (1.8 million)	4 % (1.95 million)
5: Famine	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

Source: IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for March - April 2024 and Projection for May – October 2024, 27 May 2024, [url](#); IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for October 2023 and Projection for November 2023 – March 2024, 14 December 2023, [url](#); IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - October 2024 and Projection for November 2024 - March 2025, 7 January 2025, [url](#); IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for March - April 2025 and Projection for May - October 2025, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

It should be noted that Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) partners have warned that the IPC projections may severely underestimate food insecurity, since returnees are not systematically captured in the data.⁸⁶⁶ Moreover, although large parts of the population have an acceptable calorie-intake, their diets mainly consists of less nutritious food such as

⁸⁵⁸ World Bank (The), Afghanistan Development Update, Unlocking Youth Potential for Resilience and Economic Recovery, April 2025, [url](#), p. ix

⁸⁵⁹ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 22–24

⁸⁶⁰ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁶¹ MMC, Afghan returns: experiences, challenges and prospects for reintegration, August 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁸⁶² WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 21

⁸⁶³ UNHCR, Rebuilding lives: How return duration shapes income generation and reintegration dynamics for Afghan returnees, 26 August 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁸⁶⁴ IPC 'provides a common scale for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and acute malnutrition' with five phases ranging from None/Minimal (Phase 1) to Catastrophe/Famine (Phase 5). See: IPC, Understanding the IPC Scales, June 2022, [url](#), pp. 3–4

⁸⁶⁵ IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for March - April 2025 and Projection for May - October 2025, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁶ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 21

staples,⁸⁶⁷ while the consumption of meat, dairy and vegetables is more rare,⁸⁶⁸ which might have long-term health implications.⁸⁶⁹ WFP reported on 78 % of Afghans being unable to afford nutritious food⁸⁷⁰ and stressed that Afghanistan is experiencing an unprecedented hunger crisis in 2025,⁸⁷¹ constituting one of the worst nutrition crises in the world.⁸⁷² The WoAA from 2022 demonstrated how the percentage of households with ‘acceptable’ food consumption never exceeded 30 % in 2021–2023.⁸⁷³ Meanwhile, aid cuts have impacted the health and nutrition system that was funded with 80 % of donors, which has led to the closure of 298 WFP/UNICEF sites.⁸⁷⁴ Households have coped with food insecurity by adjusting their diets to avoid expensive food,⁸⁷⁵ and adults have been skipping meals so that their children can eat.⁸⁷⁶ Some families only consume bread and tea.⁸⁷⁷

Urban and rural areas face different challenges in terms of food security. While food insecurity is more prevalent in rural areas on a relative level,⁸⁷⁸ food is generally cheaper there⁸⁷⁹ and many households rely on their own food production⁸⁸⁰ and livestock.⁸⁸¹ For example, as outlined in a report by REACH from July 2025, Kandahar Province had the largest gap in terms of food affordability, but despite income constraints, this province as well as the ‘wider southern region’ did not report the highest levels of food insecurity.⁸⁸² However, as mentioned above, rural communities are vulnerable to climate shocks,⁸⁸³ and some lack resources to engage in farming⁸⁸⁴ or to access food at the markets.⁸⁸⁵ For example, some households under pressure resort to eating seed stocks intended for farming, or to selling of vital

⁸⁶⁷ Yolchi, J. and Wang, H., The impact of climate change on household dietary diversity in Afghanistan, Climate Risk Management, 2025, [url](#); Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁸ Yolchi, J. and Wang, H., The impact of climate change on household dietary diversity in Afghanistan, Climate Risk Management, 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁹ Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁰ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁸⁷¹ BBC News, My three boys starved to death. I hope angels bring them home, says Afghan mother, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷² WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 10

⁸⁷³ REACH, Afghanistan: Comparative Drought Analysis, September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁷⁴ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 10

⁸⁷⁵ ACAPS, ACAPS Thematic Report Afghanistan – Coping with the crisis, 17 June 2023, [url](#), p. 9; NAC, Joining forces against the impact of climate change in Afghanistan, 16 September 2024, [url](#), p. 16

⁸⁷⁶ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 9; NAC, Joining forces against the impact of climate change in Afghanistan, 16 September 2024, [url](#), p. 16

⁸⁷⁷ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), pp. 5, 10; BBC News, My three boys starved to death. I hope angels bring them home, says Afghan mother, 22 September 2025, [url](#); Reuters, In aid-starved Afghanistan, relief workers fight a forgotten hunger crisis, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁸ Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#); UN Afghanistan, Common Country Analysis, December 2024 Update, November 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁷⁹ Afghanistan Times, Women and food, Insecurity in Afghanistan, 16 October 2024, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁸⁰ REACH, Quarterly Markets Overview–Spotlight on Affordability, Accessibility and Availability, July 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁸¹ Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸² REACH, Quarterly Markets Overview–Spotlight on Affordability, Accessibility and Availability, July 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁸⁸³ NAC, Joining forces against the impact of climate change in Afghanistan, 16 September 2024, [url](#), p. 14

⁸⁸⁴ Afghanistan Times, Women and food, Insecurity in Afghanistan, 16 October 2024, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁸⁵ Afghanistan Times, Women and food, Insecurity in Afghanistan, 16 October 2024, [url](#), p. 7; REACH, Quarterly Markets Overview–Spotlight on Affordability, Accessibility and Availability, July 2025, [url](#), p. 4



livestock.⁸⁸⁶ Urban households generally do not have land assets⁸⁸⁷ or livestock, but rely on wage labour, which is volatile⁸⁸⁸ given the lack of job opportunities.⁸⁸⁹ While there is a greater availability of food products in urban areas, food is generally more expensive,⁸⁹⁰ and many households struggle to afford basic food items.⁸⁹¹ Urban households relying on different forms of wage labour are moreover vulnerable to price shocks at the markets.⁸⁹² According to a 2025 study investigating rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan, the large food expenditure shares, prevalence of coping strategies, and lack of savings among households suggest that both urban and rural households are vulnerable to shocks and trapped in a 'vicious cycle' of chronic food insecurity.⁸⁹³ In October 2025, REACH reported that the value of their Minimum Expenditure Basket reference⁸⁹⁴ was at least twice as high as the average household income.⁸⁹⁵

According to IPC, the food security situation was worst in Badakhshan in March–April 2025, with 40 % of the population classified in IPC Phase 3 and above, followed by Balkh, Bamyan, Daykundi, Ghor, Jawzjan, Nimroz, and Sar-e-Pul (35 % of the respective populations were classified in IPC Phase 3 and above).⁸⁹⁶ REACH emphasised the vulnerability of populations without access to their own food production in areas with particularly high food prices, and in particular female-headed households and returnee households. Provinces with particularly high food prices in contrast to the average household income included the provinces of Kandahar, Baghlan, Kunar, Badakhshan, Faryab and Paktya. Kabul Province had the lowest price of Minimum Expenditure Basket in relation to the income ratio, although it should be noted that this still exceeded the average income by 71 %.⁸⁹⁷

Food insecurity has particularly impacted households headed by women,⁸⁹⁸ persons with lower education,⁸⁹⁹ persons with disabilities⁹⁰⁰ as well as returnee households.⁹⁰¹ Women's access to food has been negatively impacted by restrictions on their mobility and access to

⁸⁸⁶ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁸⁷ NAC, Joining forces against the impact of climate change in Afghanistan, 16 September 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁸⁸ Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan Times, Women and food, Insecurity in Afghanistan, 16 October 2024, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁸⁹ TOLONews, Poverty and Unemployment Deepen as Afghans Struggle to Afford Basic Needs, 5 October 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁰ Afghanistan Times, Women and food, Insecurity in Afghanistan, 16 October 2024, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁹¹ TOLONews, Poverty and Unemployment Deepen as Afghans Struggle to Afford Basic Needs, 5 October 2025, [url](#); REACH, Quarterly Markets Overview – Spotlight on Affordability, Accessibility and Availability, July 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁹² Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#); IPC, IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, Afghanistan, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁹³ Hassanzoy, N. et. al, Patterns of rural and urban food insecurity in Afghanistan after August 2021, Food Security, 12 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁴ This is a reference used on humanitarian contexts to measure a monetary threshold for goods and services that household requires to meet its essential needs, and 'is conceptually equivalent to a poverty line'. See: Food Security Cluster Handbook, 5.6.2 Minimum Expenditure Basket, 7 December 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁵ REACH, Quarterly Markets Overview–Spotlight on Affordability, Accessibility and Availability, July 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁹⁶ IPC, IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, Afghanistan, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁹⁷ REACH, Quarterly Markets Overview–Spotlight on Affordability, Accessibility and Availability, July 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁹⁸ WFP, A lifeline at risk: food assistance at a breaking point, September 2025, [url](#), p. 18; Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC), 19 December 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁹ IPC, IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, Afghanistan, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁰⁰ FEWS NET, Afghanistan Food Security Outlook June 2024 - January 2025, 6 July 2024, [url](#), p. 9; Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, Food Security and Agriculture (FSAC), 19 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰¹ UNICEF, Afghanistan, Humanitarian Situation Report, 31 August 2025, [url](#), pp. 2–3



work.⁹⁰² Meanwhile, since 2023, WFP has significantly scaled down its emergency assistance and has in parallel noted a record high increase in malnutrition in Afghanistan. In 2025 (as of June), 500 000 malnourished women and children had been left without support from WFP.⁹⁰³ IPC projections suggested that acute malnutrition would affect 1.16 million pregnant or breastfeeding women and 3.5 million children.⁹⁰⁴ UNICEF reported that about 12 % of children under 2 years received the right variety and quantity of food needed for their age.⁹⁰⁵

Child malnutrition reportedly increased after the Taliban takeover⁹⁰⁶ and has continued to increase amid dwindling aid.⁹⁰⁷ Children suffering from severe acute malnutrition commonly die.⁹⁰⁸ The most recent child malnutrition estimate and the national Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey,⁹⁰⁹ both from 2022, indicated that stunting (an indicator of long-term malnutrition signified by low-height-for-age) among children under five ranged from 32.7 %⁹¹⁰ to 44.6 %.⁹¹¹ In August 2025, UNICEF and WFP launched a joint emergency appeal to address child malnutrition in Afghanistan. They noted that the country had seen the sharpest surge in child malnutrition ever recorded, and that 3.5 million children under five were affected by the nutrition crisis, with 10.3 % of them being severely malnourished.⁹¹² Media reports from local hospitals across Afghanistan also suggested a significant increase in malnourishment among children under five in recent years, with some families losing several or all their children due to lack of food and poverty.⁹¹³

3.4. Housing

According to UN Habitat, many Afghans live in informal settlements in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, making them vulnerable to forced evictions.⁹¹⁴ Traditional houses in Afghanistan, especially in the countryside, are often made of mudbricks and stone.⁹¹⁵ According to 2022 WoAA survey, 61 % of Afghan households lived in mud houses, many of which being partially damaged with leaks during both heavy and light rain. The same survey found that a majority of households had problems with water and energy, lacking access to piped water and heating

⁹⁰² IPC, IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, Afghanistan, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Afghanistan Times, Women and food, Insecurity in Afghanistan, 16 October 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁹⁰³ WFP, Q&A: How Afghanistan's hunger and nutrition crisis is affecting families, women and girls, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁴ IPC, Afghanistan: IPC Acute Malnutrition Snapshot, June 2024 - May 2025, 7 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁰⁵ UNICEF, Nutrition, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁰⁶ PBS, 1.1 million Afghan children under 5 could face severe malnutrition this year, U.N. says, 25 May 2022, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁷ Al Jazeera English [YouTube], Afghan children face alarming malnutrition as aid cuts and crisis deepen, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁸ AA, In Afghanistan, women and children bearing worst of hunger crisis, 13 March 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁹ 'The SMART Methodology is a simplified and standardized cross-sectional survey method'. See: Nutrition Cluster et al., Afghanistan National SMART Survey Report (April-October 2022), 8 June 2023, [url](#), p. 16

⁹¹⁰ Nutrition Cluster et al., Afghanistan National SMART Survey Report (April-October 2022), 8 June 2023, [url](#), p. 42

⁹¹¹ World Bank, Prevalence of stunting, height for age (% of children under 5) – Afghanistan, 2023, [url](#)

⁹¹² WFP, UNICEF and WFP Joint Action Plan to Stop Child Wasting in Afghanistan, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹³ BBC News, The hospital struggling to save its starving babies, 9 September 2024, [url](#); Sky News, Crying babies blighted by hunger fill this Afghanistan hospital - where parents fear each day might be the last, 6 October 2025, [url](#); BBC News, My three boys starved to death. I hope angels bring them home, says Afghan mother, 22 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹⁴ UN-Habitat, It all starts at home, Strategic Priorities for UN-Habitat Afghanistan 2026–2027, June 2025, [url](#), p. 11

⁹¹⁵ Britannica, Housing of Afghanistan, 4 November 2025, [url](#); UNDP, What is vernacular architecture, and how can it help Afghanistan?, 18 December 2023, [url](#)



devices for cooking, as well as sanitation facilities and soap.⁹¹⁶ As reported by UNDP, mud constructions endure harsh weather conditions but have low resistance to disasters such as earthquakes.⁹¹⁷ Tens of thousands of homes were destroyed in the Herat earthquake in 2023,⁹¹⁸ and thousands of homes were destroyed in the earthquake in eastern Afghanistan in August 2025.⁹¹⁹ Flash floods have also destroyed thousands of homes annually in recent years.⁹²⁰ UNDP reported on a general deterioration of housing inadequacy in 2024.⁹²¹ Many of the poorest live in tents,⁹²² including disaster-struck individuals⁹²³ and returnees.⁹²⁴ In Herat City, several public spaces have reportedly turned into makeshift tent camps due to the influx of returnees.⁹²⁵

Poor housing conditions is contributing to recorded deaths due to cold,⁹²⁶ and many households lack adequate winter clothing and blankets.⁹²⁷ The winter season put a significant economic strain on many households,⁹²⁸ with large amounts of snow and sub-zero temperatures⁹²⁹ impacting transport and work opportunities for casual workers.⁹³⁰ The lack of infrastructure and access to electricity pose challenges for many households to stay warm,⁹³¹ and many rely on firewood for heating.⁹³² Sporadic deaths due to cold weather conditions were recorded across Afghanistan during the winter season in 2024/2025.⁹³³

UN Habitat referred to estimates of 30 % of the Afghan population living in urban areas in 2025, although there are no updated data available.⁹³⁴ The large influx of returnees has added pressure on the urban 'housing crisis',⁹³⁵ with the demand accelerated by housing

⁹¹⁶ UNDP, Afghanistan, Socio-Economic Outlook 2023, 18 April 2023, [url](#), pp. 53–55, 57, 65

⁹¹⁷ UNDP, What is vernacular architecture, and how can it help Afghanistan?, 18 December 2023, [url](#)

⁹¹⁸ Shapour, R., Nature's Fury: The Herat earthquakes of 2023, AAN, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

⁹¹⁹ UNICEF, UNICEF Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 9, 30 September 2025, 31 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁹²⁰ UN OCHA, Natural Disasters Dashboard, 11 November 2025, (as of 2 November 2025), 2025, [url](#)

⁹²¹ UNDP, Afghanistan Socio-Economic Review, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 23

⁹²² UNDP, Afghanistan, Socio-Economic Outlook 2023, 18 April 2023, [url](#), pp. 53–55, 57, 65

⁹²³ UNICEF, UNICEF Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 9, 30 September 2025, 31 October 2025, [url](#), p. 1; Guardian (The), War, deforestation, flooding: in Afghanistan they are all linked, 14 September 2024, [url](#)

⁹²⁴ AP, Displaced, repatriated and crossing borders: Afghan people make gruelling journeys to survive, 31 December 2023, [url](#); Bjelica, J. and Sabawoon, A. M., Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland?, AAN, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

⁹²⁵ Zan Times, 'Where else can we go?' As refugees return, Afghanistan's housing crisis deepens, 30 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹²⁶ UNDP, Afghanistan, Socio-Economic Outlook 2023, 18 April 2023, [url](#), p. 54

⁹²⁷ UNDP, Afghanistan, Socio-Economic Outlook 2023, 18 April 2023, [url](#), p. 54; Intersos, In Afghanistan we help the most vulnerable get through the winter, 15 March 2024, [url](#)

⁹²⁸ NRC, Winter in Afghanistan endangers the lives of the impoverished, 17 February 2025, [url](#); Afghanaid, "As winter approaches, deep humanitarian need continues.", 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹²⁹ NRC, Snowfall in Kabul – What does it mean?, 7 March 2024, [url](#); Afghanaid, "As winter approaches, deep humanitarian need continues.", 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹³⁰ NRC, Winter in Afghanistan endangers the lives of the impoverished, 17 February 2025, [url](#); Afghanaid, "As winter approaches, deep humanitarian need continues.", 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹³¹ Afghanaid, "As winter approaches, deep humanitarian need continues.", 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹³² Afghanaid, "As winter approaches, deep humanitarian need continues.", 2 December 2024, [url](#); Xinhua, Economic hardship leaves Afghans struggling to heat their homes this winter, 25 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹³³ Amu TV, Severe weather claims nine lives in Afghanistan, UN agency reports, 14 January 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Heavy Snowfall and Cold Weather Kills Three Children in Northeastern Afghanistan, 30 November 2024, [url](#); TOLONews, Two People Die Due to Cold Weather in Faryab, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

⁹³⁴ UN-Habitat, It all starts at home, Strategic Priorities for UN-Habitat Afghanistan 2026–2027, June 2025, [url](#), p. 10

⁹³⁵ Zan Times, 'Where else can we go?' As refugees return, Afghanistan's housing crisis deepens, 30 October 2025, [url](#)



shortages and surging rents in cities like Herat⁹³⁶ and Kabul.⁹³⁷ In some city areas, rents reportedly more than doubled in 2025.⁹³⁸ In particular returnees struggle to afford the high rents,⁹³⁹ but also other Afghans struggle with finding affordable options,⁹⁴⁰ including individuals with salaried employment and living in rural areas with cheaper alternatives.⁹⁴¹ Property prices in city areas have also spiked⁹⁴² making it difficult for people of the middle-class and below to buy a home, as reported by the AAN.⁹⁴³ According to the Associated Press (AP), reporting in December 2024, Afghan banks rarely issue mortgages due to a lack of deposits, and those who can afford buying a property generally pay in cash.⁹⁴⁴

3.5. Healthcare

The development of Afghan healthcare has been impeded by decades of war,⁹⁴⁵ leaving it heavily dependent on foreign aid to deliver basic health services.⁹⁴⁶ In the absence of quality healthcare, many Afghans have been travelling abroad to seek medical care, for example in Pakistan, India, Türkiye⁹⁴⁷ or Iran.⁹⁴⁸ This option has reportedly become increasingly unattainable in recent years, amid border closures with Pakistan and Pakistan's restricted visa policy.⁹⁴⁹ Afghanistan is experiencing a deepening healthcare crisis, exacerbated by dwindling international aid and the de facto authorities' minimal state budget allocation on health.⁹⁵⁰

⁹³⁶ Zan Times, 'Where else can we go?' As refugees return, Afghanistan's housing crisis deepens, 30 October 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Herat Residents Struggle With Soaring Rents, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹³⁷ TOLONews, Kabul Residents Struggle as Rents Soar, 28 August 2025, [url](#); Sadat, S. A. and Clark, K., A Place to Call Home: What is driving up house prices in Kabul and pushing the poorest residents into homelessness?, AAN, 14 December 2024, [url](#); Austria, Staatendokumentation, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁹³⁸ Zan Times, 'Where else can we go?' As refugees return, Afghanistan's housing crisis deepens, 30 October 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Herat Residents Struggle With Soaring Rents, 25 August 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Kabul Residents Struggle as Rents Soar, 28 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹³⁹ Zan Times, 'Where else can we go?' As refugees return, Afghanistan's housing crisis deepens, 30 October 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Herat Residents Struggle With Soaring Rents, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁰ Sadat, S. A. and Clark, K., A Place to Call Home: What is driving up house prices in Kabul and pushing the poorest residents into homelessness?, AAN, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁴¹ Austria, Staatendokumentation, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁹⁴² AP, Thanks to peace, two unexpected words are echoing across Afghanistan's capital: Luxury housing, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁴³ Sadat, S. A. and Clark, K., A Place to Call Home: What is driving up house prices in Kabul and pushing the poorest residents into homelessness?, AAN, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁴ AP, Thanks to peace, two unexpected words are echoing across Afghanistan's capital: Luxury housing, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁵ WHO, Afghanistan, Who's Health Emergency Appeal 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁴⁶ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), Afghan doctors warn of healthcare crisis as international aid cuts bits, 25 September 2023, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

⁹⁴⁷ Sherzad, A. G. et al., Factors Influencing Decision Making of Afghan Patients to Seek Medical Treatment in Pakistan: A Cross-Sectional Study, Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare, April 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁸ RFE/RL, Unreliable Medical Tests Force Afghans to Seek Treatment Abroad, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁹ Hasht-e Subh, The Prescription Shift: Is India Replacing Pakistan in Afghanistan's Medical Lifeline? , 20 December 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁰ Bjelica, J., Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time we just don't go", AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 16, 51



Meanwhile, life expectancy has reportedly declined,⁹⁵¹ and mortality rates among children under five⁹⁵² and mothers have reportedly increased.⁹⁵³

Amid the Taliban takeover in August 2021, major donors cut their development funding which severely impacted the healthcare system.⁹⁵⁴ Aid organisations have tried to fill the gap in donor cuts for public health,⁹⁵⁵ but have not been able to replace the former scale of international donor support.⁹⁵⁶ About 33 % of the population (over 14 million people) are underserved in terms of healthcare access,⁹⁵⁷ and rural communities in particular.⁹⁵⁸ The situation has been further exacerbated by subsequent aid cuts, prompting many organisations to shift priorities from *inter alia* healthcare to immediate relief efforts.⁹⁵⁹ According to AAN, the number of operative health facilities had declined to 1 500 by 2024, down from a ‘peak’ of 3 000 facilities in 2010.⁹⁶⁰ Due to the cuts in US foreign aid, 422 additional health facilities had been suspended by 31 August 2025, impacting over 3 million people in 30 provinces, according to Health Cluster and WHO.⁹⁶¹

Amid the Taliban takeover, many healthcare professionals left the country or quit their jobs.⁹⁶² Already under the previous government, there was a significant shortage of healthcare staff, with the number of doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, and pharmacists in relation to the population size being well below WHO’s thresholds⁹⁶³ for ‘critical shortage’.⁹⁶⁴ There were about 10.3 health workers per 10 000 individuals in Afghanistan in 2023 and 2024.⁹⁶⁵ This figure can be put in relation to the WHO’s recommended 44.5 key health workers per 10 000

⁹⁵¹ UN Afghanistan, Annual report 2023, 19 April 2024, [url](#), p. 5; Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 51

⁹⁵² Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 51

⁹⁵³ Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 16, 51; Nasari, A. et al., Let Afghan women work: maternal health depend on it, The Lancet, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁴ HRW, “A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future”, Afghanistan’s Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), Afghan doctors warn of healthcare crisis as international aid cuts bite, 25 September 2023, [url](#); Turkmani, S. and Currie, S., Afghanistan’s fragile health system faces catastrophe without immediate international funding, BMJ, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁵ HRW, “A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future”, Afghanistan’s Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁵⁶ HRW, “A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future”, Afghanistan’s Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); BBC News, Afghanistan earthquake: What foreign aid is getting in?, 8 July 2022, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁷ Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, 2025, 19 December 2024, [url](#); WHO, Afghanistan, Who’s Health Emergency Appeal 2025, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁵⁸ Salem, M. R. et. al, The current situation of health equity in underserved areas of Afghanistan, Frontiers in Public Health, 24 September 2024, [url](#); Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, 2025, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁹ HRW, “A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future”, Afghanistan’s Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); Clark, K., The End of US Aid to Afghanistan: What will it mean for families, services and the economy?, AAN, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁰ Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁶¹ Health Cluster and WHO, Afghanistan: Suspended/Closed Health Facilities due to the U.S. Government Work-Stop Ban (Update as of 31 August 2025), 31 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶² HRW, “A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future”, Afghanistan’s Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁶³ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, Policy Brief, Role of Private Sector in Fight Against Covid-19 in Afghanistan, 30 April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

⁹⁶⁴ WHO, Working together for health, 2006, [url](#), pp. 11–12

⁹⁶⁵ Neyazi, N. et al., Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country’s capacity for Universal health coverage, April 2025, Conflict and Health, [url](#); Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 16



population.⁹⁶⁶ There is a particular shortage of female health staff, exacerbated by the de facto government's restrictive policies on women,⁹⁶⁷ and gender segregation in medical facilities.⁹⁶⁸ The prohibitions on women taking university courses and medical training furthermore blocks new generations female doctors,⁹⁶⁹ nurses and midwives from graduating.⁹⁷⁰ There are also shortages in specialists.⁹⁷¹ Furthermore, many healthcare personnel lack necessary qualifications.⁹⁷² For example, research published in *Conflict and Health* in 2024, outlined how medical personnel across Afghanistan generally lacked awareness of common noncommunicable diseases (NDCs),⁹⁷³ which includes chronic diseases such as heart attacks, stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes.⁹⁷⁴ Meanwhile, in 2025, WHO estimated that NDCs accounted for 43 % of deaths in Afghanistan.⁹⁷⁵ There are moreover shortages in medicines,⁹⁷⁶ and the provision is highly reliant on NGO support.⁹⁷⁷ However, stocks sometimes run out within days when there are many patients.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁶⁶ Neyazi, N. et al., Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country's capacity for Universal health coverage, April 2025, *Conflict and Health*, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁷ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); Bjelica, J., Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time we just don't go", AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁶⁸ MSF, Excluding women from medical institutes threatens the future of healthcare in Afghanistan, 6 December 2024, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan's Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁹ Health Policy Watch, 'Are We Not Human?' Afghan Women in Despair After Taliban Ban Them from Nursing and Midwifery, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Veiled rebellion: Female medical students go underground in Afghanistan, 30 December 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁰ Health Policy Watch, 'Are We Not Human?' Afghan Women in Despair After Taliban Ban Them from Nursing and Midwifery, 19 December 2024, [url](#); UN News, Afghanistan: UN condemns Taliban ban on women attending medical classes, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁷¹ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); Bjelica, J., Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time we just don't go", AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 21, 38

⁹⁷² RFE/RL, Unreliable Medical Tests Force Afghans to Seek Treatment Abroad, 13 June 2025, [url](#); Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁷³ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁴ WHO, Noncommunicable diseases, 25 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁵ WHO, Afghanistan's hidden epidemic of noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, 21 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁶ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); MSF, Earthquake in Afghanistan: MSF's response, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁷ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); MSF, Persistent barriers to access healthcare in Afghanistan: An MSF report, 6 February 2023, [url](#), p. 24

⁹⁷⁸ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#)



As mentioned, rural areas in particular face gaps in accessing quality healthcare⁹⁷⁹ and are disproportionately affected by shortages in clinics, health staff,⁹⁸⁰ and medicine.⁹⁸¹ Provincial hospitals reportedly often only had supplies of basic medications and referred patients in need of other medication (including for NDCs) to private pharmacies.⁹⁸²

Moreover, health facilities suffer from poor infrastructure and a lack of medical equipment.⁹⁸³ This includes health facilities across Afghanistan⁹⁸⁴ and ‘on all levels’, as reported by Doctors Without Borders (MSF).⁹⁸⁵ For example, according to a 2024 study, a large maternal centre in Kabul City only had one ultrasound machine, and, due to the lack of basic laboratory equipment, hospitals in all of Kabul’s neighbouring provinces referred patients in need of CT scans to the capital.⁹⁸⁶ There are also generally high bed occupancy rates, with up to three patients sharing beds in some facilities.⁹⁸⁷ The 2024 study found that many health facilities were built about 40 years ago and are in need of refurbishment as they were designed for a significantly lower number of patients, as well as a significantly lower number of beds per room.⁹⁸⁸ Some facilities moreover lack reliable electricity supply,⁹⁸⁹ struggle to heat the facilities during winter,⁹⁹⁰ and lack ventilation systems to cool the facilities during summer.⁹⁹¹ According to the 2024 study, some child patients had died due to lack of heating.⁹⁹²

⁹⁷⁹ Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, 2025, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Women for Afghan Women, Building Health, 17 January 2025, [url](#); Alavi, L. J., Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 26

⁹⁸⁰ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#); Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, 2025, 19 December 2024, [url](#); BBC Media Action, Understanding how to increase uptake of WASH, nutrition and child health services in Afghanistan, June 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁹⁸¹ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#); BBC Media Action, Understanding how to increase uptake of WASH, nutrition and child health services in Afghanistan, June 2024, [url](#), p. 21

⁹⁸² Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#); See also: van Gurp, M. et al., The availability of essential medicines in public healthcare facilities in Afghanistan: navigating sociopolitical and geographical challenges, Health Policy and Planning, April 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸³ Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan, 2025, 19 December 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, Unreliable Medical Tests Force Afghans to Seek Treatment Abroad, 13 June 2025, [url](#); MSF, Pressure grows on hospitals in Afghanistan, as paediatric patient numbers rise, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁴ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#); MSF, Pressure grows on hospitals in Afghanistan, as paediatric patient numbers rise, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁵ MSF, Pressure grows on hospitals in Afghanistan, as paediatric patient numbers rise, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁶ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁷ MSF, Earthquake in Afghanistan: MSF's response, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁸ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁹ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#); ICRC, Afghanistan: A year of responding to numerous humanitarian challenges, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁰ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), In Afghanistan's battered healthcare system, power cuts can prove fatal, 17 January 2023, [url](#)

⁹⁹¹ Women for Afghan Women, Building Health, 17 January 2025, [url](#); Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁹² Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)



The health system is also burned by outbreaks of infectious diseases⁹⁹³ such as measles, acute watery diarrhoea, and malaria⁹⁹⁴ as well as natural disasters causing severe injuries.⁹⁹⁵

Many Afghans face economic barriers to access healthcare.⁹⁹⁶ In some provinces, the de facto authorities have introduced fees for public healthcare,⁹⁹⁷ but also in public institutions that are supposed to provide free healthcare, patients may have to pay for basic services, including child delivery, surgeries,⁹⁹⁸ and medicines if supplies are short.⁹⁹⁹ Although the general security situation has improved in recent years which facilitates travel to health centres,¹⁰⁰⁰ distances¹⁰⁰¹ and costs associated with travelling may also impact household decisions whether to seek healthcare.¹⁰⁰² Meanwhile, the general ability to pay for healthcare has worsened since the takeover.¹⁰⁰³ Some incur debts to fund health services¹⁰⁰⁴ or delay care until their condition becomes urgent.¹⁰⁰⁵ Women and children (in particular women in poor and rural areas and with disabilities¹⁰⁰⁶) have been disproportionately affected by the deterioration in healthcare accessibility.¹⁰⁰⁷ Restrictions on women's travel have furthermore limited women's mobility,¹⁰⁰⁸ and have hampered the work of mobile health teams.¹⁰⁰⁹ Moreover, the requirement of both female medical staff and female patients to be accompanied by a *mahram* in some areas impact women's access to healthcare,¹⁰¹⁰ as well as the general

⁹⁹³ Humanitarian Action, Health, [2024], [url](#)

⁹⁹⁴ WHO, Afghanistan, Emergency Situation Report, September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁵ Arab News, Doctors warn US aid cuts leave rural Afghanistan without healthcare, 25 March 2025, [url](#);

TOLOnews, Doctors Warn of Critical Shortages in Quake-Affected Eastern Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁶ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", *Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis*, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁷ Alavi, L. J., *Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health in Afghanistan*, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 29

⁹⁹⁸ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); See also: Emergency, Access to emergency, critical and operative care in Afghanistan: Perspectives from Afghan people in 11 provinces, 26 June 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁹⁹ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁰ MSF, Earthquake in Afghanistan: MSF's response, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰¹ MSF, Dying to reach health care in Afghanistan, 17 June 2024, [url](#); Intersos, Afghanistan: when access to healthcare is just a dream, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰² Bjelica, J., Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time we just don't go", AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 4; Arab News, Doctors warn US aid cuts leave rural Afghanistan without healthcare, 25 March 2025, [url](#); MSF, Bringing health care to Afghanistan's remote Bamyan province, 6 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰³ Valente, M. et al., Access to care in Afghanistan after august 2021: a cross-sectional study exploring Afghans' perspectives in 10 provinces, *Conflict and Health*, 22 April 2024, [url](#); HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", *Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis*, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁴ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁵ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, *Conflict and Health*, 24 April 2024, [url](#); MSF, Pressure grows on hospitals in Afghanistan, as paediatric patient numbers rise, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁰⁰⁷ MSF, Pressure grows on hospitals in Afghanistan, as paediatric patient numbers rise, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁸ Guardian (The), Millions of Afghans lose access to healthcare services as USAID cuts shut clinics, April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁹ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", *Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis*, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁰ Alavi, L. J., *Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health in Afghanistan*, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 34–35



shortage in female staff in areas where women are only permitted to be seen by female health personnel.¹⁰¹¹

Mental health needs have increased in Afghanistan in recent years, and have become more noticeable at health clinics amid an increase in people seeking help.¹⁰¹² In 2025, WHO estimated that one in five Afghans live with a mental health condition.¹⁰¹³ The de facto government's restrictions on women have also reportedly driven up the rates of mental health issues among women.¹⁰¹⁴ Meanwhile, many provincial hospitals and primary healthcare services lack mental health services, as reported by WHO,¹⁰¹⁵ and mental health services have not been prioritised among donors.¹⁰¹⁶ According to a representative of the de facto Ministry of Public Health's mental health department, cited in local media, Afghanistan would need 3 000 mental health counsellors to meet the national demand, while 1 100 were active in May 2025. Meanwhile, the representative stated that there were about 130–150 mental health specialists across Afghanistan, while the double would be needed.¹⁰¹⁷ These figures could not be corroborated with other sources within the time constraints of drafting this report. According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the absence of local mental health services is a primary barrier to seeking help, and there is also a lack of specialised professionals. Travel distances to access services also pose a barrier for many, especially for conditions requiring multiple sessions.¹⁰¹⁸ Another barrier to seeking help is the stigma surrounding mental health issues.¹⁰¹⁹ In some communities, individuals with mental health issues may be ridiculed, humiliated and ostracised,¹⁰²⁰ why many conceal their issues.¹⁰²¹

3.6. Focus on Kabul City

Estimates of the number of inhabitants of Kabul City range from about five¹⁰²² to six million people.¹⁰²³ The population has grown significantly since 2001,¹⁰²⁴ when it stood at about

¹⁰¹¹ UN Women, FAQs: What it's like to be a woman in Afghanistan in 2025, 7 August 2025, [url](#); HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#);

¹⁰¹² BBC News, 'No-one comes for us': The women trapped in Afghanistan's mental health system, 19 August 2025, [url](#); Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹³ WHO, Afghanistan's hidden epidemic of noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, 21 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁴ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); BBC News, 'No-one comes for us': The women trapped in Afghanistan's mental health system, 19 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁵ WHO, Afghanistan's hidden epidemic of noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, 21 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁶ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁷ Pajhwok News, Global support key to reducing Afghanistan mental health crisis, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁸ UNFPA, Mental Health Assessment, 2024, [url](#), p. 87

¹⁰¹⁹ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); BBC News, 'No-one comes for us': The women trapped in Afghanistan's mental health system, 19 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁰ IOM, Displacement Trends and Challenges in Afghanistan since August 2021, 2022, [url](#), p. 7; UNFPA, Mental Health Assessment, 2024, [url](#), p. 66

¹⁰²¹ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); UNFPA, Mental Health Assessment, 2024, [url](#), pp. 66, 87

¹⁰²² Afghanistan, de facto authorities, Estimated Population of Afghanistan 2025-26, September 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Kabul Now, UN Says Over 40% of Afghanistan's Urban Population Lives in Kabul, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰²³ Mercy Corps, Kabul's Water Crisis, April 2025, [url](#), p. 3; BBC News, Inside the Taliban's surveillance network monitoring millions, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁴ Mercy Corps, Kabul's Water Crisis, April 2025, [url](#), p. 3



500 000 people, as reported by AP.¹⁰²⁵ The city has, however, not been able to keep up with the pace of urbanisation as regards infrastructure development.¹⁰²⁶ According to UN-Habitat, reporting in 2025, 80 % of Kabul's urban population lived in informal settlements.¹⁰²⁷ The de facto authorities have initiated several infrastructure projects, including road construction.¹⁰²⁸ Many living on usurped land have seen their houses being demolished in such projects and have not been compensated for their loss of land and shelter. As a result, many have reportedly been pushed into homelessness.¹⁰²⁹ Meanwhile, AP reported on a 'boom' on the high-end real estate market in Kabul City, with increased demand for luxury homes due to the improved security situation following the Taliban takeover in 2021.¹⁰³⁰

Kabul City is facing a water resource crisis due to plummeting groundwater levels. According to a report of the NGO Mercy Corps, the capital approaches a tipping point, where water extraction significantly exceeds the recharge of water resources. Moreover, Mercy Corps found that most of the limited groundwater available to the city population is dangerous to consume, with 80 % of the groundwater being contaminated by dangerously high levels of chemicals, sewage and toxins.¹⁰³¹ The city might go dry by 2030, according to UNICEF.¹⁰³²

Most residents of Kabul City rely on salaried jobs, day-wage labour, and small-scale trade to make a living. However, the city's labour market has been experiencing rising unemployment rates amid decreased job opportunities within the de facto government and a shrinking NGO sector resulting from aid cuts.¹⁰³³ The recent influx of returnees has further exacerbated the situation, intensifying competition for limited job openings,¹⁰³⁴ and securing casual labour has become increasingly difficult.¹⁰³⁵ According to data collected for Austrian Staatendokumentation in 2025, the monthly salary for entry-level employees with a university degree and three years' work experience was equivalent to EUR 250–450, depending on the position. Skilled daily-wage labourer earned an amount equivalent to EUR 10–14, and unskilled labourers typically earned EUR 4–5.¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰²⁵ AP, Thanks to peace, two unexpected worked are echoing across Afghanistan's capital: Luxury housing, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁶ Khaama Press, Kabul's Urban Crisis: 80% Living in Unplanned Settlements, Says UN-Habitat, 13 April 2025, [url](#); ARTF, ARTF Results, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰²⁷ UNICEF Afghanistan [X], posted on 29 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁸ Guardian (The), Revealed: the truth behind the Taliban's brutal Kabul 'regeneration' programme, 18 November 2024, [url](#); TOLONews, Kabul Municipality Leads Citywide Development Initiatives, 21 July 2025, [url](#); Arab News, Vulnerable Afghans struggle as Taliban rebuild Kabul roads, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁹ Sadat, S. A. and Clark, K., A Place to Call Home: What is driving up house prices in Kabul and pushing the poorest residents into homelessness?, AAN, 14 December 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), Revealed: the truth behind the Taliban's brutal Kabul 'regeneration' programme, 18 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁰ AP, Thanks to peace, two unexpected worked are echoing across Afghanistan's capital: Luxury housing, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰³¹ Mercy Corps, Kabul's Water Crisis, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 20

¹⁰³² UNICEF Afghanistan [X], posted on 29 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰³³ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), pp. 3–5

¹⁰³⁴ TOLONews, Unemployment Crisis in the Country; Youth Say They Can't Find Jobs, 15 September 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Unemployment Crisis in Afghanistan: Kabul Residents Struggle Amid Deepening Hardship, 5 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁵ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 5; TOLONews, Daily Wage Workers Struggle for Jobs in Kabul, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁶ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 5



According to IPC, 1 282 624 people in Kabul City (25 % of the total urban population) experienced 'crisis' conditions in terms of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) in March and April 2025. Over 2 million inhabitants (40 %) were experiencing 'stressed' conditions (IPC Phase 2).¹⁰³⁷ Amid rising food prices and loss of income,¹⁰³⁸ many households in Kabul City struggle to afford food,¹⁰³⁹ and in particular nutritious food.¹⁰⁴⁰ According to research carried out for Staatendokumentation, the costs for a five-member household to meet their minimum daily requirement of bread, vegetables, and occasional protein exceeded the income of a daily-wage labourer by far.¹⁰⁴¹ Sources also reported on individuals relying on a stable salary income struggling to purchase more expensive food.¹⁰⁴²

As mentioned, the influx of returnees to Kabul City has led to a significant increase in demand for housing, and rental prices have surged,¹⁰⁴³ with rents more than doubling in some areas.¹⁰⁴⁴ According to data collected for the Austrian COI unit in 2025, 'the average rent for a three-room apartment in downtown Kabul' was about AFN 18 000 (EUR 230), while rents for similar apartments in the outskirts of the city were about AFN 10 000 (EUR 128).¹⁰⁴⁵

Kabul City reportedly has the highest concentration of healthcare professionals in Afghanistan,¹⁰⁴⁶ including specialised physicians.¹⁰⁴⁷ Moreover, in urban areas such as Kabul there are more hospitals and clinics offering a wider range and more advanced healthcare,¹⁰⁴⁸ as well more private healthcare options.¹⁰⁴⁹ However, healthcare facilities in the capital also

¹⁰³⁷ IPC, Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for March - April 2025 and Projection for May - October 2025, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁸ Pakteen, H. and Shapour, R., The Daily Hustle: At Nawruz and Eid al-Fitr, a shopkeeper reflects on high food prices, AAN, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁹ Action contre le Faim, Kabul's Hunger Crisis: Residents Struggle to Afford Food, 29 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁰ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 9; Hasht-e Subh, Rising Vegetable Prices Push Low-Income Families in Kabul Into Severe Hardship, 15 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴¹ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁴² Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Pakteen, H. and Shapour, R., The Daily Hustle: At Nawruz and Eid al-Fitr, a shopkeeper reflects on high food prices, AAN, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴³ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Sadat, S. A. and Clark, K., A Place to Call Home: What is driving up house prices in Kabul and pushing the poorest residents into homelessness?, AAN, 14 December 2024, [url](#); TOLONews, Kabul Residents Struggle as Rents Soar, 28 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁴ TOLONews, Kabul Residents Struggle as Rents Soar, 28 August 2025, [url](#); Sadat, S. A. and Clark, K., A Place to Call Home: What is driving up house prices in Kabul and pushing the poorest residents into homelessness?, AAN, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁵ Austria, Federal Officer for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Socio-Economic Landscape, 27 October 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁰⁴⁶ Neyazi, N. et al., Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country's capacity for Universal health coverage, April 2025, Conflict and Health, [url](#); Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁷ Neyazi, N. et al., Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country's capacity for Universal health coverage, April 2025, Conflict and Health, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁸ Satarzadeh, L. et al., Understanding patient perceptions of access to healthcare centers in one of the major cities of Afghanistan, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁹ Neyazi, N. et al., Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country's capacity for Universal health coverage, April 2025, Conflict and Health, [url](#)



experience staffing gaps,¹⁰⁵⁰ supply shortages,¹⁰⁵¹ and cost barriers for patients.¹⁰⁵² In a survey carried out by IPSOS for the Austrian Staatendokumentation, 46 % of respondents in the cities of Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, and Herat indicated that they could access medication and 35 % had access to and could afford visiting a general practitioner. Meanwhile, 45 % of respondents indicated that they had access to medication but were unable to pay for it, and similarly 37 % had access to a general practitioner but could not pay for the service. 9 % had no access to medicines at all and 28 % had no access to primary healthcare.¹⁰⁵³

¹⁰⁵⁰ Neyazi, N. et al., Assessing the health workforce in Afghanistan: a situational analysis into the country's capacity for Universal health coverage, April 2025, Conflict and Health, [url](#); RFE/RL, Exodus Of Doctors Leaves Afghans Scrambling For Treatment, 22 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵¹ Lamberti-Castronuovo, A. et al., Exploring barriers to access to care following the 2021 socio-political changes in Afghanistan: a qualitative study, Conflict and Health, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵² Hasht-e Subh, Self-Medication in Kabul: Poverty and a Failing Health System Put Lives at Risk, 26 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵³ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, Dossier: Socio-Economic Survey 2025 - Afghanistan, 28 August 2025, [url](#)



4. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population

4.1. Officials of the former government

4.1.1. General amnesty and its implementation

Soon after their takeover in 2021, the Taliban issued a general amnesty for individuals who had served in the former government's civil administration and security forces. Since then, senior de facto officials have reiterated the de facto government's commitment to the amnesty, calling for it to be upheld.¹⁰⁵⁴ The amnesty's text has not been available beyond general references to its existence,¹⁰⁵⁵ and according to UNAMA this has caused uncertainties around its temporal scope and consequences for breaching it.¹⁰⁵⁶ The challenging information environment complicates research on the issue, with the de facto authorities reportedly preventing reports on killings,¹⁰⁵⁷ by deterring media,¹⁰⁵⁸ victims and family members.¹⁰⁵⁹

Despite the amnesty, extrajudicial killings of former civil and security personnel,¹⁰⁶⁰ as well as arbitrary arrests and torture, have been documented.¹⁰⁶¹ There have not been any 'large-scale purges'¹⁰⁶² or massacres,¹⁰⁶³ as amid previous power-shifts in Afghan history.¹⁰⁶⁴ Sources have indicated that the killings that have occurred have not been part of a 'nationwide policy'¹⁰⁶⁵ or an orchestrated campaign,¹⁰⁶⁶ as this would have caused significantly more deaths.¹⁰⁶⁷ However, in 2025, a joint investigative media report suggested some level of systematicity in the targeting of former security officials as three former elite soldiers had been tortured by de

¹⁰⁵⁴ UNAMA, No safe heaven: Human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan, July 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁰⁵⁵ Afghanistan International, Former Afghan President's Daughter Draws Attention During Meeting With Abdullah, 28 April 2025, [url](#); International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁰⁵⁶ UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁰⁵⁷ Germany, BAMF, Länderkurzinformation Afghanistan, Situation ehemaliger Sicherheitskräfte (ANSF), October 2024, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁵⁸ Rawadari, Afghanistan, Human Rights Situation Report 2023, March 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 11

¹⁰⁵⁹ Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁰⁶⁰ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 19; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2024, 1 May 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁶¹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 28

¹⁰⁶² Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰⁶³ Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 17; Richard Bennet in Radio Sweden, Konflikt: Dödshoten mot Sveriges medarbetare i Afghanistan, 12 January 2024, [url](#), 25:40–25:48

¹⁰⁶⁴ Homayun Nadiri, K., Brokers, Bureaucrats, and the Quality of Government: Understanding Development and Decay in Afghanistan and Beyond, January 2017, [url](#), pp. 164, 166, 172; HRW, Afghanistan, The Forgotten War: Human Rights Abuses and Violations of the Laws Of War Since the Soviet Withdrawal, February 1991, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan: Blood-Stained Hands: II. Historical Background, 2005, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁵ International Crisis Group, Afghanistan's Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁰⁶⁶ International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023

¹⁰⁶⁷ International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023; International Crisis Group, Afghanistan's Security Challenges under the Taliban, 12 August 2022, [url](#), p. 23



facto officials to extract contact details of former colleagues.¹⁰⁶⁸ Rawadari reported that similarities in methods and victim selection among recorded killings indicated a more systematic and coordinated effort.¹⁰⁶⁹

Sources have stressed that perpetrators have not been held accountable¹⁰⁷⁰ and described a climate of impunity around the issue of targeted killings.¹⁰⁷¹ When commenting on the functioning of the de facto administration in general, Timor Sharan, Director of the research organisation Afghanistan Policy Lab, stressed the high level of ambiguity and lack of control of operative de facto officials, allowing them to unpredictably conduct arrests and abuse anyone without being held accountable.¹⁰⁷² The de facto administration itself also sometimes struggled to locate arrested individuals within its own structures.¹⁰⁷³

While killings and other abuse against former military and civil government employees have been reported,¹⁰⁷⁴ retired former government officials have staged regular street protests to demand their pensions.¹⁰⁷⁵ Some senior members of the former government have also been able to remain in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁷⁶ This includes former President Hamid Karzai,¹⁰⁷⁷ the former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah,¹⁰⁷⁸ and the leader of the political party Hezb-e Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.¹⁰⁷⁹ The de facto government has not awarded them with any role in the de facto government or given them any advisory status, but they continue to meet with segments of society.¹⁰⁸⁰ Karzai has been publicly advocating for *inter alia* women's access to education,¹⁰⁸¹ and Hekmatyar has been publicly voicing concerns over the de facto administration's legitimacy and its ability to maintain security.¹⁰⁸² Meanwhile, Abdullah has reportedly avoided public commentary and maintains a lower profile.¹⁰⁸³ They

¹⁰⁶⁸ Lighthouse Reports, Hunted by the Taliban, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 16

¹⁰⁷⁰ UN, Afghanistan's Taliban responsible for revenge killings, torture of former officials, 22 August 2023, [url](#);
Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 19;
Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹⁰⁷¹ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights: April 2024, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 71; Rahimi, H. and Watkins, A., Taliban Rule at 2.5 Years, CTC Sentinel, January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹⁰⁷² Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹⁰⁷³ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025; ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 48

¹⁰⁷⁴ UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 6–9

¹⁰⁷⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 10; Sabawoon, A. M., Where Are My Rights? Afghan retirees appeal for their pensions, AAN, 22 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁶ Afghanistan International, Taliban Leader Reportedly Pressures Hamid Karzai Into Exile, 28 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁷ Afghanistan International, Taliban Lifts Ban on Former President's Travel, Claim Sources, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁸ Amu TV, UN's DiCarlo meets with Karzai, Abdullah in Afghanistan, 19 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁹ TOLONews, No Restrictions Imposed on Former Govt Officials: Mujahid, 28 April 2023, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁰ Afghanistan International, Former Afghan President's Daughter Draws Attention During Meeting With Abdullah, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸¹ Afghanistan International, Former Afghan President's Daughter Draws Attention During Meeting With Abdullah, 28 April 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Karzai: Ban on Girls' Education Key to Lack of Intl Recognition, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸² Afghanistan International, Hekmatyar Warns Of Rising Instability, Calls For Legitimate Government In Afghanistan, 24 February 2025, [url](#); Ariana News, Hekmatyar: We need a legitimate government in Afghanistan, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸³ Afghanistan International, Former Afghan President's Daughter Draws Attention During Meeting With Abdullah, 28 April 2025, [url](#)



have however faced some restrictions,¹⁰⁸⁴ including travel restrictions for Karzai and Abdullah in 2022 and 2023.¹⁰⁸⁵ Hekmatyar was evicted from his government-owned home in Kabul City in March 2024,¹⁰⁸⁶ and in April 2025, the Taliban Supreme Leader issued an order to shut down all active offices of Hezb-e-Islami, arrest affiliated staff, and confiscate party assets.¹⁰⁸⁷

Immediately after the Taliban takeover in 2021, most male civilian former public officials resumed their duties within the new de facto administration,¹⁰⁸⁸ as most of the former administration's structure was retained.¹⁰⁸⁹ Most female civil servants were however sent home¹⁰⁹⁰ and have not been invited back to work.¹⁰⁹¹ There has moreover been a gradual exchange of personnel, where those who used to work for the former government have been replaced by individuals loyal to the Taliban.¹⁰⁹² Most new recruits to the de facto authorities have been ethnic Pashtuns,¹⁰⁹³ and also in Hazara-dominated areas such as Bamyan and Daykundi most employees of minority communities have been replaced with Pashtuns.¹⁰⁹⁴

Although most former security personnel have been dismissed in favour of Taliban members,¹⁰⁹⁵ some have been retained or invited back to work due to their specialist skills.¹⁰⁹⁶ Sources reported on the de facto authorities making use of biometrics to identify former government personnel, and dismiss them from the de facto security forces.¹⁰⁹⁷ In research for Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep) from November 2024, former ANDSF members stated that they were 'prevented from leading a normal life', not being allowed to serve in the de facto security forces, constantly fearing arrests, and facing 'hurdles in simple tasks such as registering a vehicle' – sometimes the de facto police refused

¹⁰⁸⁴ Diplomat (The), Bridging the Gap: Karzai, the Taliban, and the US Dilemma in Afghanistan, 1 April 2025, [url](#); TOLONews, Abdullah Abdullah Leaves Afghanistan, 1 May 2022, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁵ TOLONews, Karzai's Relatives Confirm Ban On His Travel Abroad, 6 September 2023, [url](#); TOLONews, Abdullah Abdullah Leaves Afghanistan, 1 May 2022, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁶ AW, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar relocated from state-owned land by Taliban officials, 30 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁷ Rudabe, Taliban Orders Closure of Hezb-e-Islami Offices and Arrest of Party Staff in Widening Crackdown, 14 April 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Orders Closure of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami Offices, Arrest of Members, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁸ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 31

¹⁰⁸⁹ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 17

¹⁰⁹⁰ International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; ACAPS, Afghanistan, Scenarios, April 2023, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰⁹¹ AAN, Deepening Discrimination: A dossier of reports about Afghan women, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹² Norway, Landinfo, Temanotat, Afghanistan, Situasjonen for afghanske menn, 20 January 2025, [url](#), p. 13;

Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 17; van Bijlert, M., How The Emirate Wants To Be Perceived, AAN, July 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰⁹³ Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 44; Norway, Landinfo, Temanotat, Afghanistan, Situasjonen for afghanske menn, 20 January 2025, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰⁹⁴ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 18; Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁰⁹⁵ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰⁹⁶ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 19; Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024, and email communication 13 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units

¹⁰⁹⁷ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 18; Afghan analyst, online interview 1 October 2024, and email communication 13 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with Austrian, Norwegian and Swedish COI units.



registration as they could identify the person as having served in the ANDSF as the process involves biometric registration.¹⁰⁹⁸

The de facto authorities have announced that former officials returning from abroad will be ensured safety,¹⁰⁹⁹ and established the ‘Commission for the Return and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures’ in March 2022.¹¹⁰⁰ As mentioned, following the US entry ban on Afghan citizens in June 2025, the de facto prime minister reiterated the general amnesty¹¹⁰¹ and said that all who fled after the collapse of the former government were free to return home under safe conditions.¹¹⁰² The commission claimed that 1 223 former government officials had returned via the commission by July 2025.¹¹⁰³ These figures could not be corroborated.

There have been reports of sporadic cases in which former government officials have been killed, subjected to arbitrary arrests and torture after returning to Afghanistan,¹¹⁰⁴ including individuals who had been personally invited back by the Taliban as reported by Rawadari in August 2024.¹¹⁰⁵

4.1.2. Records of extrajudicial killings and other abuse

Most recorded violations against former government officials and ANDSF members occurred in the months following the Taliban takeover in 2021 and 2022.¹¹⁰⁶ Research conducted by Human Rights Watch at the time indicated that more than 100 former members of the security forces were killed in the period 15 August–30 October 2021.¹¹⁰⁷ The New York Times released a documentary in April 2022, in which it stated that in the first semester of Taliban rule it had documented the killing or enforced disappearance of 490 former government officials and former ANDSF members. It also noted that many more killings likely occurred but remained unverified as victims’ relatives were too afraid of retribution to speak out.¹¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, by 30 June 2023, UNAMA had documented 218 extrajudicial killings, and almost half had taken place during the first four and a half months of Taliban rule in 2021.¹¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹⁸ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁰⁹⁹ TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Pledges Safety for Returning Afghans, 21 May 2022, [url](#); Ariana News, EA reassures returning Afghan politicians and military figures of their security, 22 May 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁰ Arab News, Former government officials return to Kabul at Taliban invitation, 8 June 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁰¹ TRT World, Taliban urges Afghans to ‘return to your country’ after new US travel ban, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰² AP, The Taliban leader slams Trump’s travel ban on Afghans and calls the US an ‘oppressor’, 7 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰³ TOLONews, Contact Commission Issues Security Cards to Returning Former Officials, 27 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁴ UNAMA, No safe haven: Human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 17–18

¹¹⁰⁵ Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 11

¹¹⁰⁶ UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁰⁷ HRW, No Forgiveness for People Like You, Executions and Enforced Disappearances in Afghanistan under the Taliban, November 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁰⁸ New York Times (The), The Taliban Promised Them Amnesty. Then They Executed Them [Online video], 12 April 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁹ UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), p. 6



Former government officials and security personnel have continued to face retaliatory violence,¹¹¹⁰ including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment.¹¹¹¹ In subsequent human rights reports by UNAMA covering 1 January–30 September 2025, the organisation documented 27 killings of former ANDSF members. UNAMA moreover documented 52 arbitrary arrests and detentions and 11 instances of torture and ill-treatment of both former civil and security personnel of the former government.¹¹¹² Several arrests documented in January–March 2025 had taken place in Panjsher and Kabul and ‘pertained to individuals affiliated with the former government of Afghanistan being arrested on allegations of affiliation with the National Resistance Front.’¹¹¹³

Rawadari also recorded a decrease in killings but noted that the challenging information environment may be a possible explanation of the downward facing trend, rather than an improvement of the situation. In the first six months of 2025, the organisation recorded 20 killings of former government officials, in contrast with the same period in 2024 and 2023 when respectively 51 and 55 killings were recorded.¹¹¹⁴

4.1.3. Motives and victim profiles

The exact motives behind recorded killings of former government personnel have been difficult to discern, including due to the pervasive ‘revenge culture’ in Afghanistan¹¹¹⁵ which brings in personal feuds,¹¹¹⁶ tribal allegiances, and past conflicts into the issue.¹¹¹⁷

The Human Rights Research League (HRRL) identified revenge motives in almost all their recorded killings of former military and security personnel in the first two years after the Taliban takeover.¹¹¹⁸ The de facto authorities have dismissed violations of the amnesty as the result of personal animosities.¹¹¹⁹ In response to a report by UNAMA from 2025, the de facto authorities have also dismissed revenge motives as being behind any breaches of the amnesty, and claimed any such incidents have occurred ‘in the course of professional police duties’.¹¹²⁰ Rawadari noted that in killings recorded by the organisation in the first six months of 2025, the accounts of de facto officials differed significantly from those of the victims’ families

¹¹¹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 1

¹¹¹¹ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights, Afghanistan 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, No safe haven: Human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan, July 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹¹¹² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July–September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹¹³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹¹⁴ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 17

¹¹¹⁵ International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; International journalist, online interview 3 October 2023

¹¹¹⁶ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹¹⁷ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 3 August 2025, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁸ HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), p. 41

¹¹¹⁹ HRW, Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Afghanistan, 11 October 2023, [url](#); Lighthouse Reports, Hunted by the Taliban, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²⁰ UNAMA, No safe haven: Human rights risks faced by persons involuntarily returned to Afghanistan, July 2025, [url](#), p. 21



and local sources. According to Rawadari, accusing victims of criminality has been a common tool of the de facto authorities to hide the true motive behind a killing.¹¹²¹

Victims of recorded killings and other abuse have been both military and civilian personnel of the former government.¹¹²² Several sources have indicated to the EUAA that was not possible to identify any pattern as regards who is being targeted and not among these groups.¹¹²³ For example, the hierarchal rank of victims have seemingly not impacted their exposure,¹¹²⁴ as victims have included profiles that held various different positions.¹¹²⁵ The individuals' circumstances may also impact a person's exposure, for example their having a poor human rights record or access to tribal protection. However, as noted by Sharan, amid the lack of accountability efforts, also de facto officials target people with great impunity, committing crime and extorting ransoms from families of former government officials who are perceived to have the means to pay.¹¹²⁶

Victims of killings held various former ranks in data collected by Rawadari in the first six months of 2025, comprising former soldiers, a former local police officer, a former provincial police officer, a former NDS employee, and a former military commander.¹¹²⁷ In 2025, UNAMA recorded killings of only former ANDSF members, while instances of arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment involved both former civil and security personnel of the former government.¹¹²⁸ HRRL documented killings in October 2022–June 2023, which included various victim profiles, both civil and military staff holding various ranks, including service personnel in households of former officials.¹¹²⁹ UNAMA has earlier provided a breakdown of their data covering 800 human rights violations against former government officials collected in the period 15 August 2021–30 June 2023, which outlined victim profiles including military (31 %), police (26 %), provincial and district departments (22 %), NDS (15 %), central government and national authorities (4 %), and judges and prosecutors (2 %).¹¹³⁰

Individuals accused of being active in or collaborating with anti-Taliban groups have been targeted in killings and arrests by the de facto authorities.¹¹³¹ This profile reportedly often

¹¹²¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 17–18, 20

¹¹²² UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 6–9; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2024, 24 July 2024, [url](#), p. 6; Rawadari, Afghanistan, Human Rights Situation Report 2023, March 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹¹²³ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023

¹¹²⁴ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹¹²⁵ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), pp. 46–47, 49–51, 53, 55–56, 58, 61–62, 64, 68

¹¹²⁶ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹¹²⁷ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 19

¹¹²⁸ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹²⁹ HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), pp. 46–47, 49–51, 53, 55–56, 58, 61–62, 64, 68

¹¹³⁰ UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹³¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 15; UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 8–9



overlaps with former security personnel from areas with a history of armed resistance, being disproportionately targeted and perceived as ‘potential resistance fighters’, regardless of their actual involvement.¹¹³² More information is available in section [4.3. Persons with perceived affiliation to anti-Taliban groups](#).

In the PeaceRep study, authors Mawli Atta ur Rahman Saleem and Michael Semple suggested that former commanders of auxiliaries of the former government, such as the Afghan Local Police (ALP), have been ‘singled out’ in arrests and killings.¹¹³³ Some former security forces employees have also had their homes raided¹¹³⁴ or have been arrested¹¹³⁵ over accusations of possessing government weapons.¹¹³⁶

Many women who had served in the police and the security forces under the former government went into hiding after the Taliban takeover.¹¹³⁷ According to research carried out by Human Rights Watch in 2024, former women police and security personnel have faced threats, harassment and violent home searches by the de facto authorities. Some have been able to return to work or return to the police headquarters to collect their belongings – although they have been treated with suspicion and pressured to disclose contact information of former colleagues. Human Rights Watch further reported that many women have been living in fear of being reported by their neighbours, and that many had cut off contacts with former colleagues as a safeguard. Additionally, some had been experiencing threats from people who they had investigated. Family members who opposed their female relatives’ work in the police were also using the powershift as an opportunity to punish them with threats and violence.¹¹³⁸

Some sources stated that the local contexts and local arrangements impact whether the general amnesty has been upheld or not.¹¹³⁹ Sharan stated that the local tribes had negotiated settlements with the Taliban in some areas. For example, in Khost Province, former members of the Khost Protection Force had been spared from retaliation, and in Kandahar Province, following significant violence targeting members of the Achakzai tribe affiliated with General Raziq, a negotiated deal eventually brought an end to these killings. (More information on the targeting of individuals associated with Raziq is available in the [2023 EUAA COI Report Afghanistan Country Focus](#) (p. 70)). Sharan further noted that local settlements had been effective in reducing retribution in southern provinces and in Panjsher, but emphasised that

¹¹³² Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 27, 31

¹¹³³ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 27, 31

¹¹³⁴ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 27, 31

¹¹³⁵ Afghanistan International, Taliban Members ‘Detain’ Three Ex-Servicemen in Laghman, 2 November 2024, [url](#)

¹¹³⁶ Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 15; UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 8–9; Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 27, 31

¹¹³⁷ Guardian (The), Hungry, hunted, terrified: unending plight of the Afghan women who served in military and police, 14 August 2023, [url](#)

¹¹³⁸ HRW, Double Betrayal, Abuses against Afghan Policewomen, Past and Present, October 2024, [url](#), pp. 17, 19–22

¹¹³⁹ International journalist, online interview 3 October 2023; HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), p. 69; Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025



most regions lack such agreements, and that the longevity of these settlements is uncertain.¹¹⁴⁰

4.1.4. Targeting of family members

According to a human rights expert interviewed by the Norwegian COI Unit Landinfo in 2023, family members of former government officials may face various ill-treatment from the Taliban, including harassment, arrests, and, in some instances also killings.¹¹⁴¹ Reports published by Rawadari and HRRL in the same year outlined that family members of individuals who had left Afghanistan were being targeted,¹¹⁴² including wives, children and brothers of former security officials,¹¹⁴³ and brothers to former civil government employees.¹¹⁴⁴ These organisations also recorded cases in which family members had been detained and killed together with former military officials.¹¹⁴⁵ In more recent reports on targeted killings and arrests of former officials, UNAMA and Rawadari did not outline cases in which family members had been targeted,¹¹⁴⁶ while Afghan media in exile has been reporting on individuals cases in which family members of former civil and security officials have been arrested.¹¹⁴⁷

Kerr Chioyenda and Sharan noted that family members have been targeted to put pressure on former security officials,¹¹⁴⁸ including to force targets to come out of hiding.¹¹⁴⁹ Sharan stated that some girls related to former government officials have been forced to marry de facto officials.¹¹⁵⁰ Sara de Jong, Professor in Politics and International relations with the University of York, also noted how targeting sometimes shifted to other family members, and gave as an example families in which several brothers had served in foreign forces or security forces in different capacities. If the prime target would leave the country, the target sometimes moved to another family member that had a less significant background. Professor de Jong further noted that mostly male family members had been targeted in killings, although female family members might have been exposed to other forms of violence that go undocumented.¹¹⁵¹

¹¹⁴⁰ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹¹⁴¹ Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Familiemedlemmer til personer med tilknytning til republikke, 20 November 2023, [url](#), pp. 2–3

¹¹⁴² Rawadari, Human Rights Situation In Afghanistan: Mid-year Report 1 January to 30 June 2023, August 2023, [url](#), p. 12; HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), pp. 46–49

¹¹⁴³ HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), pp. 47, 60

¹¹⁴⁴ HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), p. 54

¹¹⁴⁵ Rawadari, The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 11; Rawadari, Human Rights Situation In Afghanistan: Mid-year Report 1 January to 30 June 2023, [url](#), pp. 16, 18; HRRL, Those We Left Behind, November 2023, [url](#), pp. 39, 49, 52, 54, 60

¹¹⁴⁶ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July–September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2025, [url](#), p. 6 Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January–June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁷ Kabul Now, Taliban Detains Former Advisor to Abdullah Abdullah and His Son in Kapisa, 21 January 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Detains Son of Former Security Official in Daykundi, Sources Report, 31 January 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Former ANDSF Member Commits Suicide After Taliban Detains His Wife, Sources Report, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁸ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹¹⁴⁹ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹¹⁵⁰ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹¹⁵¹ de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025



4.1.5. Former judges and prosecutors

The general amnesty reportedly extends to former judges and lawyers.¹¹⁵² All judges that served under the former government were ousted after the Taliban takeover¹¹⁵³ and replaced with male Taliban-affiliated judges – most being ethnic Pashtuns, as reported by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan.¹¹⁵⁴ However, some former male judges with administrative experience and considered ‘professional’ were asked to return, according to AAN interlocutors.¹¹⁵⁵ International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) noted that this only concerned a ‘handful’ cases of people being called back for limited or temporary roles.¹¹⁵⁶

Prosecutors were not formally dismissed, but were initially told not to come to work after the Taliban takeover.¹¹⁵⁷ Some reportedly resumed their work at the de facto prosecutor’s office,¹¹⁵⁸ although their legal and operational status was unclear and ‘varied substantially’ between regions, according to ILAC.¹¹⁵⁹ In 2023, the de facto Attorney General’s Office was replaced with the de facto ‘Directorate of Supervision and Prosecution of Decrees and Orders’.¹¹⁶⁰ Research for Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) suggested that the mandate of this new institution indicated a role of ensuring compliance and enforcement of decrees, edicts and other instructions, rather than investigating crime and lawsuits. The term ‘prosecutor’ had moreover been replaced with ‘observer’ in the decree.¹¹⁶¹ Kerr Chioyenda noted that prosecutors have no real role in the current justice system.¹¹⁶²

Many prosecutors and judges left Afghanistan amid the Taliban takeover or went into hiding.¹¹⁶³ Among the 800 human rights violations documented by UNAMA in the period 15 August 2021–30 June 2023, 2 % targeted former judges and prosecutors.¹¹⁶⁴ In more recent reports, UNAMA does not indicate victim profiles, although civil former government personnel has been subjected to arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment.¹¹⁶⁵ In February 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan stated that former judges and lawyers

¹¹⁵² New York Times (The), Afghan Women Who Once Presided Over Abuse Cases Now Fear for Their Lives, 20 October 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁵³ UN OHCHR, UN experts: legal professionals in Afghanistan face extreme risks, need urgent international support, 20 January 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹¹⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 31

¹¹⁵⁵ Clark, K. and Shapour, R., What do the Taliban Spend Afghanistan’s Money on?, AAN, March 2023, [url](#), p. 36

¹¹⁵⁶ ILAC, Justice Matters: A Status Report on Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover, 2023, [url](#), pp. 21–22

¹¹⁵⁷ ILAC, Justice Matters: A Status Report on Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover, 2023, [url](#), pp. 13, 21

¹¹⁵⁸ Clark, K. and Shapour, R., What do the Taliban Spend Afghanistan’s Money on?, AAN, March 2023, [url](#), pp. 36–37; Hasht-e Subh, Reactions to Kabul Suicide Attack: Internal Purge or ISIS Strikes?, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁹ ILAC, Justice Matters: A Status Report on Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover, 2023, [url](#), pp. 21–22

¹¹⁶⁰ TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Abolishes Attorney General’s Office, 18 July 2023, [url](#); Rawadari, Latest Taliban decree on Attorney General’s Office (AGO) further erodes rule of law in Afghanistan, 25 March 2023, [url](#)

¹¹⁶¹ Ramizpoor, M. A. A., Restrictions of Civic Space in Afghanistan Under the Taliban – From Religious Ideas to Actions, RWI, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 41, 55

¹¹⁶² Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹¹⁶³ Clark, K. and Shapour, R., What do the Taliban Spend Afghanistan’s Money on?, AAN, March 2023, [url](#), pp. 36–37; Independent (The), The female Afghan judges trapped in hiding, fearing reprisal from the Taliban, 7 April 2024, [url](#); Times (The), ‘Afghanistan has fallen off the agenda and been put on hold’, 7 March 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁴ UNAMA, A barrier to securing peace: Human rights violations against former government officials and former armed force members in Afghanistan, 22 August 2023, [url](#), pp. 5–6

¹¹⁶⁵ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January–March 2024, 1 May 2024, [url](#), p. 6; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April–June 2025, 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 5; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July–September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6



were among the groups ‘severely affected by human rights violations’ by the de facto authorities¹¹⁶⁶ and noted that also defence lawyers were met with suspicion and faced threats and harassment.¹¹⁶⁷ In an earlier report, the same source reported on 20 prosecutors being killed across Afghanistan in the period 1 January 2023–31 January 2024.¹¹⁶⁸

All female judges, attorneys, and prosecutors have been barred from working within the de facto justice system, and the association of female judges is inactive.¹¹⁶⁹ Amid the de facto authorities’ relicensing of lawyers, women have been excluded from registering, meaning that no women lawyers are registered to practice law.¹¹⁷⁰ Women who previously served as legal professionals face threats and harassment, as reported by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan.¹¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, some women lawyers continue to provide legal support to other women,¹¹⁷² although informally and outside court settings.¹¹⁷³ Sometimes women lawyers reportedly accompany clients to court, but never in an official capacity.¹¹⁷⁴

Most female former judges have been evacuated, and those who remain have reportedly been living in hiding fearing reprisals from the de facto authorities as well as former convicts who they had previously sentenced – who in some cases were Taliban members.¹¹⁷⁵

4.2. Persons formerly affiliated with foreign forces

This chapter should be read in conjunction with section [4.1. Officials of the former government](#).

The general amnesty extends to individuals affiliated with foreign forces.¹¹⁷⁶ Many of these individuals were evacuated from Afghanistan soon after the Taliban takeover in 2021,¹¹⁷⁷ and those who remain have reportedly been living in hiding,¹¹⁷⁸ including interpreters.¹¹⁷⁹ In an

¹¹⁶⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 47

¹¹⁶⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 37

¹¹⁶⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 29 February 2024, [url](#), para. 85

¹¹⁶⁹ Austria, Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, Afghanistan: Afghan legal system under the Taliban, 9 April 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹⁷⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 36, 38

¹¹⁷¹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 38

¹¹⁷² Femena, A Voice from Afghanistan: An Interview with an Afghan Woman Lawyer, 29 September 2025, [url](#), 7:10–7:47

¹¹⁷³ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 38, 40; Femena, A Voice from Afghanistan: An Interview with an Afghan Woman Lawyer, 29 September 2025, [url](#), 7:51–8:36

¹¹⁷⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 38, 40

¹¹⁷⁵ Times (The), ‘I am going to find you’: the plight of Afghanistan’s female judges, 16 August 2025, [url](#); PassBlue, Four Years After the Taliban’s Return, Afghan Women Judges Go Deeper Underground, 7 August 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁶ AP, Afghanistan: more than 100 believed killed despite Taliban amnesty offer, says UN, 31 January 2022, [url](#); BBC News, Amid violent reprisals, Afghans fear the Taliban’s ‘amnesty’ was empty, 31 August 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁷ Lighthouse Reports, France’s forgotten Afghan spies, 12 April 2023, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 84; NPR, Three years after the U.S. withdrawal, former Afghan forces are hunted by the Taliban, 25 September 2024, [url](#); de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025

¹¹⁷⁹ Boston Herald, Manuel: Afghan interpreters left behind fight for survival, 11 October 2024, [url](#); de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025

interview with Radio Sweden in January 2024, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan described people who used to serve foreign forces as particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, perceived as having worked 'for the enemy'.¹¹⁸⁰ Similarly, Professor de Jong noted that the de facto authorities perceive those who served foreign forces as 'traitors', with interpreters being prime targets. The same source emphasised that the amnesty was not being felt among this group, nor among those serving the former security forces.¹¹⁸¹

A major data leak from the British Ministry of Defence in 2022 revealed the names of over 18 000 Afghans who worked for the British forces and some of their family members. Following the leak, the UK evacuated 4 500 former Afghan allies believed to be at risk of retribution in a secret resettlement programme.¹¹⁸² As of 16 July 2025, the British Defence Secretary had no information on Afghan allies being killed following the data breach,¹¹⁸³ while Afghans whose names were on the list and remained in Afghanistan stated that they were living in hiding and moving frequently, fearing for their lives.¹¹⁸⁴ Research published by the organisation Refugee Legal Support in October 2025 found that among 350 Afghans affected by the data breach, 21 reported on family members remaining in Afghanistan being killed because of the breach, and 28 on former colleagues being killed. Additionally, the de facto authorities had conducted house searches in 210 instances (including of family members' homes), and 99 persons had received direct death threats. Respondents included former members of Afghan special forces, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the ANDSF, and the NDS, as well as interpreters, guards, and GardaWorld contractors.¹¹⁸⁵ Moreover, the anonymous caseworker who raised the alarm of the data breach compiled a dossier with 200 names of individuals allegedly killed following the breach, including former Afghan special forces soldiers, and in some cases their family members. According to the caseworker, a special unit of the de facto security forces, 'Yarmok 60', was hunting down people on the list.¹¹⁸⁶

A joint media investigation recorded over 110 killings and several cases of torture of former ANDSF members since 2023 until mid-2025. The investigation noted that these cases were likely an undercount; many other cases were not included as they could not be corroborated. Among those killed were former security officials who worked in special forces funded or supported by US and British troops. Some killings were attributed to 'unknown gunmen' while others died following torture in detention by the de facto authorities. According to the investigation, three former soldiers of the special forces were tortured in attempts to extract contact details of their former colleagues.¹¹⁸⁷ Freelance journalist Beth Bailey, who is engaged in the evacuation of Afghans who supported US troops, said that she receives accounts of revenge killings of American allies in Afghanistan on a monthly basis.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸⁰ Radio Sweden, Konflikt: Dödshoten mot Sveriges medarbetare i Afghanistan, 12 January 2024, [url](#), 25:10

¹¹⁸¹ de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025

¹¹⁸² New York Times (The), U.K. Secretly Resettled 4,500 Afghans in Britain After Huge Data Breach, 15 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁸³ BBC News, Defence secretary 'unable to say' if anyone killed after Afghan data breach, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁴ Independent (The), Inside the £7bn secret scramble to save lives after MoD data breach, 12 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁵ UK Parliament, Refugee Legal Support, Written evidence submitted by Refugee Legal Support, October 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁸⁶ UK Parliament, Written evidence submitted anonymously, October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁷ Lighthouse Reports, Hunted by the Taliban, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁸ France 24, Uncertainty for Afghans who supported US after Taliban takeover, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

Professor de Jong cautioned against relying on the number of recorded killings to assess the situation of Afghans who served foreign forces. She noted that many of them, especially interpreters, have been evacuated – meaning that the potential targets are no longer present in Afghanistan. Moreover, those remaining in the country have adopted survival strategies, such as living in hiding apart from their families, but they are unable to lead a normal life.¹¹⁸⁹

Although Professor de Jong noted that anyone who had a role associated with Western forces could be a potential target, she also mentioned that individual circumstances may impact a person's exposure – including the sensitivity of the mission that they were involved in (e.g. security, intelligence, combat versus less sensitive development projects). Some staff were moreover recruited from outside the area of operation, which in some cases could potentially lower their exposure to be targeted if they were to return to their area or origin. Professor de Jong noted that those recruited locally were often people carrying out 'unskilled' labour such as cleaners, drivers, and guards. While these people might not be 'prime targets', they may at the same time be 'known targets' as they were part of the local communities in which the operations took place.¹¹⁹⁰

4.3. Persons with perceived affiliation to anti-Taliban groups

4.3.1. Suspected affiliates of resistance groups

In 2022, various sources started reporting on reprisal attacks by the Taliban, including arbitrary arrests and killings of civilians, in areas associated with resistance groups, mostly in Panjsher Province,¹¹⁹¹ but also in the provinces of Baghlan, Takhar¹¹⁹² and in Daykundi.¹¹⁹³ The situation had reportedly calmed by 2023,¹¹⁹⁴ but some reports suggest that killings¹¹⁹⁵ and arrests have continued, targeting individuals suspected of being affiliated with resistance groups.¹¹⁹⁶ This includes Rawadari that recorded 18 killings of civilians accused of cooperating with military and political opponents in 2025, including the NRF and the AFF. The organisation identified 'anyone accused of cooperating with anti-Taliban groups' as one of the primary targets of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture. In many cases, the Taliban was believed to have been involved in such killings.¹¹⁹⁷ In January–

¹¹⁸⁹ de Jong, S., online interview, 20 October 2025

¹¹⁹⁰ de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025

¹¹⁹¹ AI, Afghanistan: Taliban's cruel attacks in Panjshir province amount to war crime of collective punishment – new report, 8 June 2023, [url](#); AW, Investigating Evidence of Prisoner Executions in the Panjshir Valley in September 2022, 17 October 2022, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir, 10 June 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁹² Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; Gossman, P., Associate Asia Director of Human Rights Watch, online interview, 12 May 2022; HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir: Collective Punishment Over Armed Group's Actions Is Unlawful, 10 June 2022, [url](#); BBC News, Afghan resistance attack Taliban, sparking reprisals in Panjshir, 16 May 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁹³ UNICEF, [X], posted on: 25 November 2022, [url](#); RFE/RL, Survivors Of Deadly Taliban Raid On Hazara Village In Afghanistan Demand Justice, 20 December 2022, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁴ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹¹⁹⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹¹⁹⁶ AW, Taliban detains Panjshiris amid crackdown on resistance, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁷ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 16, 19

March 2025, UNAMA recorded arrests in Panjsher and Kabul of individuals affiliated with the former government on allegations of being NRF affiliates.¹¹⁹⁸ AW recorded 138 arrests of men originating from Panjsher (NRF's former stronghold¹¹⁹⁹) in the period 1 January 2024–30 January 2025, both in Panjsher Province and in other areas of the country such as Kapisa and Kabul. AW reported that these arrests likely targeted suspect affiliates to resistance groups.

¹²⁰⁰

Individuals accused of being associated with resistance groups have reportedly often been former security force personnel.¹²⁰¹ According to Saleem and Semple, former security force personnel in areas with a history of armed resistance were disproportionately targeted, being perceived as 'potential resistance fighters' regardless of their actual involvement.¹²⁰² Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan reported on individuals originating from Panjsher being targeted by the de facto authorities because of their geographical origin and the presumption of being in allegiance with anti-Taliban groups.¹²⁰³ Kerr Chiovenda observed that Tajik men had been arrested on 'blanket assumptions' of being NRF affiliates, including in areas far from the group's former strongholds.¹²⁰⁴

Previous reports from 2023 suggested that also family members of individuals suspected of having ties to resistance groups had been targeted by the de facto authorities to obtain information, scare and intimidate them.¹²⁰⁵ An anonymous human rights expert told Landinfo in 2023 that a whole family was killed due to suspicions of having links to NRF.¹²⁰⁶ More recent information on the treatment of family members could not be found within the time constraints of drafting this report.

4.3.2. Suspected ISKP affiliates

Intense killings and abuses of suspected ISKP affiliates and supporters were reported in October and November 2021 in the provinces of Nangarhar¹²⁰⁷ and Kunar¹²⁰⁸ – previous strongholds of the ISKP.¹²⁰⁹ In their efforts to restrain the ISKP, the de facto authorities targeted Salafist communities in these areas,¹²¹⁰ with reports of extrajudicial killings, beheadings, mutilation and severe torture,¹²¹¹ including of prominent members of the Salafi community and other civilians without actual links to the ISKP.¹²¹² According to Saleem and Semple, about

¹¹⁹⁸ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁹⁹ RFE/RL, Taliban's Arrest Of Ethnic Uzbek Commander Sparks Clashes In Northern Afghanistan, 29 January 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁰ AW, Taliban detains Panjshiris amid crackdown on resistance, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁰¹ AW, Taliban detains Panjshiris amid crackdown on resistance, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁰² Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 27, 31

¹²⁰³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 52

¹²⁰⁴ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹²⁰⁵ Latifi, A., interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 9 October 2023; Rahimi, H., online interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 4 October 2023

¹²⁰⁶ Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Familiemedlemmer til personer med tilknytning til republikke, 20 November 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹²⁰⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 4 March 2022, [url](#), para. 26

¹²⁰⁸ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Execute, 'Disappear' Alleged Militants, 7 July 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁹ Centre on Armed Groups, Drivers of ISKP Recruitment in Afghanistan, August 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹²¹⁰ RFE/RL, Senior Clerics Caught In The Crossfire Of The Taliban's Intensifying War With IS-K, 24 August 2022, [url](#)

¹²¹¹ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Execute, 'Disappear' Alleged Militants, 7 July 2022, [url](#)

¹²¹² Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23

1 300 Salafis were killed in Nangarhar Province in this period.¹²¹³ Killings and disappearances were also reported in other eastern areas, as well as in northern provinces and in Kabul.¹²¹⁴ The situation had reportedly calmed by the second half of 2022,¹²¹⁵ and sources reported on the de facto authorities adopting a more sophisticated approach, with 'less frequent but more targeted detentions'¹²¹⁶ and efforts to suppress Salafi-leaning teachings at universities.¹²¹⁷

In 2024, an Afghan researcher stated that there were still reports of young Salafists with suspected ISKP-links being kidnapped from their homes, beheaded and killed in extrajudicial killings in Nangarhar Province, although casualties were much lower than in 2021–2022. According to the source, this was partly due to most targets having been killed or having relocated to other provinces. This included mosque imams of Jalalabad who lived elsewhere and concealed their identity.¹²¹⁸ Other sources also reported on suspect ISKP affiliates being targeted in 2025, including Rawadari that reported on one case of a Salafi religious scholar being shot dead in Badakhshan Province, allegedly for having ties with the ISKP.¹²¹⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan reported on Salafis being targeted by the Taliban on the presumption that they are in allegiance with armed groups.¹²²⁰ Afghanistan experts Orzala Nemat and Antonio Giustozzi reported on a general suspicion against Salafis, due to suspected links with the ISKP. In their research, Salafi elders recounted discrimination from the Taliban, also in areas where there was no longer ISKP activity.¹²²¹

In 2024, the Afghan researcher divided Salafists into two different groups: those being part of the Jamaat al-Dawah party, which pledged allegiance to the Taliban in 2020 (which involves most Salafists in Kunar, and some in Nangarhar), and those not being part of it. The latter group had been targeted, while Salafists under Jamaat al-Dawah had not.¹²²² Similarly, International Crisis Group reported that the de facto authorities 'differentiated between Salafi groups espousing political goals and others focusing on social change', with those pledging allegiance to the de facto government and 'involved themselves in non-political work, such as preaching, appear[ing] to have been tolerated, albeit grudgingly'.¹²²³

¹²¹³ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹²¹⁴ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23; Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian and Swedish COI units.

¹²¹⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 7 December 2022, [url](#), para. 36; International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023

¹²¹⁶ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹²¹⁷ International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan, A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹⁸ Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian and Swedish COI units.

¹²¹⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 22

¹²²⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 52

¹²²¹ Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹²²² Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian and Swedish COI units.

¹²²³ International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan, A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)



4.4. Women and girls

4.4.1. General situation under Taliban rule

Several edicts, decrees and declarations have been issued restricting women's and girls' rights since the Taliban takeover, including limitations on their freedom of movement, expression and behaviour, as well as their access to education, employment, healthcare, justice, and social protection.¹²²⁴ The de facto government has held the position that they do protect women's and girls' rights, but in line with *sharia* and Afghan societal norms.¹²²⁵ Afghan women activists abroad have meanwhile been engaged in a campaign on referring to the situation in Afghanistan as 'gender apartheid'.¹²²⁶ In July 2025, the ICC issued arrest warrants for the Taliban Supreme Leader and the de facto Chief Justice on charges of 'crime against humanity of persecution on gender grounds' against Afghan women and girls.¹²²⁷

During the initial phase after the Taliban takeover, the enforcement of directives and restrictions on women and girls was not consistent,¹²²⁸ however a more complex and systematic enforcement model has reportedly taken hold, limiting the variance that existed across the country.¹²²⁹ Meanwhile, however, regional inconsistencies and variations still exist,¹²³⁰ although restrictions increased with the 'Morality law', enhancing a culture of fear.¹²³¹ Based on interviews on-the-ground, the AAN found that enforcers were sometimes going above and beyond issued restrictions, and many women have been 'self-policing',¹²³² and 'self-censoring or restricting their behaviour pre-emptively'.¹²³³ Some sources suggest that policies were less strictly enforced in urban areas, and that women had found ways to adapt and navigate over the years.¹²³⁴ However, as reported by the AAN enforcement, it may sometimes be harsher in urban areas, such as Kabul City, as in more traditional rural areas there are fewer enforcers that show greater respect for the population, and might be hesitant to challenge local women's behaviour fearing bad reactions from their male relatives.¹²³⁵

¹²²⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 17; USIP, Tracking the Taliban's (Mis)Treatment of Women, n.d., [url](#)

¹²²⁵ UN Human Rights Council, The phenomenon of an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls, 13 May 2024, [url](#), para. 18

¹²²⁶ The End Gender Apartheid Campaign, n.d., [url](#)

¹²²⁷ ICC, Situation in Afghanistan: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II issues arrest warrants for Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

¹²²⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 22-23;

¹²²⁹ UN Women, Gender alert: Four years of Taliban rule: Afghan women resist as restrictions tighten, 29 August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹²³⁰ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 25-27; UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹²³¹ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹²³² Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²³³ Bishnaw, The PVPV Law and its Impact on Women and their Communities, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹²³⁴ Afghan Eye, Navigating Constraint: Women's Education, Work, and Healthcare in Taliban-Era Afghanistan, 1 July 2025, [url](#); Afghan analyst, email, 5 January 2026

¹²³⁵ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)



The enforcement of restrictions targeting women and girls has reportedly increasingly expanded from the de facto authorities to local community and family members.¹²³⁶ Men may be held accountable for the behaviour of female family members and thus have an incentive to ensure that none of their family members are found committing offences.¹²³⁷ In several instances recorded by the UN, male family members or community elders had to give guarantees of future good behaviour for detained or arrested women,¹²³⁸ especially for protesters and women accused of failure to observe *hijab* requirements.¹²³⁹ More information on the enforcement of instructions on dress codes and gender segregation is available in section [1.2.7. Enforcement of selected restrictions on personal freedoms](#).

A compilation of national decrees and instructions issued by the de facto authorities since the Taliban takeover is available in Annex 3: Lists of decrees and instructions. During the reference period of this report the de facto government issued the following instructions:

- a ban on women attending medical classes, including programs in midwifery and nursing (2 December 2024),¹²⁴⁰
- a ban on windows overlooking neighbours' courtyards, kitchens, wells and other areas used by women in newly constructed buildings (28 December 2024).¹²⁴¹

4.4.2. Freedom of expression and assembly

After the Taliban takeover, women staged peaceful protests¹²⁴² against the restrictions imposed on their rights. The de facto security forces responded to some of these protests with force, intimidation, arrests, arbitrary detentions and ill-treatment.¹²⁴³ Some women activists were detained and subjected to ill-treatment such as sexual violence and torture.¹²⁴⁴ Consequently, the numbers of outdoor women protests decreased sharply and protesters

¹²³⁶ Guardian (The), How ordinary men became unpaid Taliban enforcers in their own homes, 9 June 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 11

¹²³⁷ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 11; van Bijlert M., In pursuit of virtue: Men's view on the Islamic Emirate's restrictions on Afghan women, AAN, January 2025, [url](#), p. 13

¹²³⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 57; UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹²³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 57

¹²⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan's Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 26

¹²⁴¹ France24, Taliban leader bans windows overlooking places 'usually used by women', 29 December 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 21

¹²⁴² Reuters, Protests get harder for Afghan women amid risks and red tape, 4 October 2021, [url](#)

¹²⁴³ HRW, Afghanistan: Women Protesters Detail Taliban Abuse, 20 October 2022, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023 [url](#), paras. 29-30

¹²⁴⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 30; Rawadari, Torture and ill-treatment: The state of prisons in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, 25 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 12, 27-57

turned to other alternatives,¹²⁴⁵ such as indoor protests,¹²⁴⁶ graffiti¹²⁴⁷ and social media posts.¹²⁴⁸ By 2024, women protests were only occasionally reported.¹²⁴⁹ During the reference period, women protested against the ban on medical training for women in December 2024 in several provinces.¹²⁵⁰ According to Afghan media in exile, women retirees participated in protests demanding their pensions in Kabul City on 16 September 2025;¹²⁵¹ some of them were reportedly beaten by guards outside the de facto Pension Department.¹²⁵²

In the 'Morality law', the sound of a woman's voice 'in a song, a hymn, or a recital out loud in a gathering' is described as something that 'should be concealed' and as a 'wrongful act'.¹²⁵³ The de facto MPVPV has later indicated that the law does not prohibit the voice of women 'when it is necessary for them to speak' such as during shopping,¹²⁵⁴ and that it only applies to situations of reciting the Quran and singing loudly.¹²⁵⁵ Regarding the impact of the provisions on women's voices on the daily lives of women, Rahimi noted, in October 2025, that in some provinces, women would not appear in public or would not speak to men regardless of what the Taliban edicts may be. He stated that he is not aware of a strong push to stop women from appearing in public or engaging in everyday activities, such as shopping, where this was the norm before. For example, in Herat and in areas where it has been the norm for women to do the shopping, they have continued to do so as well as going out and about with their lives.¹²⁵⁶

Rahimi however noted that the restriction on women's voices had been enforced by bans on radio with female broadcasters, with efforts across the country to get rid of such channels. However, it varied depending on the province. In Kandahar Province, female radio broadcasters were not allowed, whereas TOLONews still had female reporters appearing on television with a mask.¹²⁵⁷ Other sources also reported that in some provinces, women's voices

¹²⁴⁵ AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 12–13; Reid R., Manoeuvring Through the Cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, 15 June 2025, [url](#), p. 68

¹²⁴⁶ AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 12–13; Guardian (The), Women banned from celebrations as Taliban marks fourth anniversary of Afghanistan takeover, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁷ IPS, Afghan Women Defy Taliban Repression With Underground Protests, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁸ BBC News, What happened to the women who took on the Taliban?, 14 June 2024, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Afghan Women, Erased From Public Life, Are Turning to Instagram, 22/03/2025, [url](#); AW, Digital Resistance: Women's Activism Under Taliban rule, October 2024, [url](#), pp. 12–14

¹²⁴⁹ Al Jazeera, Afghan women stage rare protests, braving Taliban reprisals, 8 March 2024, [url](#); AW, Afghan women protest Taliban's policies on International Women's Day, 8 April 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 16; AW, Taliban ban women from medical studies, sparking protests across provinces, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁵¹ Hasht-e Subh, Dozens of Retirees, Including Women, Stage Protest in Kabul, 16 September 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Women rally in Kabul against unpaid pensions, 16 September 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁵² Amu TV, Women rally in Kabul against unpaid pensions, 16 September 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁵³ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 13, 22

¹²⁵⁴ BBC News Persian, حکومت طالبان: صدای زنان در موارد ضروری ممنوع نیست [Taliban government: Women's voices are not prohibited in essential cases], 3 October 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹²⁵⁵ MPVPV [X], posted on: 26 October 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 33

¹²⁵⁶ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹²⁵⁷ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

have been banned from television and radio broadcasts.¹²⁵⁸ Moreover, UNAMA received reports about women's radio stations in various provinces being told that they were not allowed to operate unless they had a license registered to a man,¹²⁵⁹ and persons interviewed by Rawadari indicated that the de facto authorities punish people who attempt to record and broadcast the voice of a woman or a girl.¹²⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch also noted that de facto officials have detained media workers, *inter alia*, for violating prohibitions on broadcasting women's voices.¹²⁶¹ Nevertheless, in some provinces, women's voices continue to be heard in radio programmes, and some women-run radio stations remain in operation.¹²⁶²

4.4.3. Freedom of movement

Since the Taliban takeover women have been instructed not to travel more than 72 km without an accompanying male relative (*mahram*),¹²⁶³ and since March 2022, unaccompanied women have been barred from boarding domestic or international flights.¹²⁶⁴ Women and girls have moreover been restricted from accessing public spaces such as public bathhouses, gyms and parks,¹²⁶⁵ and in some areas, there have been further restrictions on unaccompanied women accessing to certain religious sites such as shrines¹²⁶⁶ and restaurants.¹²⁶⁷ Drivers of commercial vehicles have been instructed not to pick up female passengers without a *hijab* covering their hair (26 December 2021),¹²⁶⁸ and the 'Morality law' further specifies that women offered transport are not to be uncovered, unaccompanied or 'sit or mingle with an unrelated man' (31 July 2024).¹²⁶⁹

¹²⁵⁸ AFP, Afghan women not barred from speaking to each other: morality ministry, 9 November 2024, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, 19 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 36-37, Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹²⁶⁰ Rawadari, Excluded and deprived: the educational crisis for women and girls in Afghanistan, 21 November 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹²⁶¹ Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶² UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 17; UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 33

¹²⁶³ RFE/RL, Afghan Women Banned From Making Trips Unless Escorted, 26 December 2021, [url](#); RFE/RL, Afghans Fear For Their Rights As Taliban Resurrects Religious Policing, 6 January 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁴ Reuters, Taliban ban women in Afghanistan from flying without male chaperone, 27 March 2022, [url](#); Bjelica J., What Do Young Afghan Women Do? A glimpse into everyday life after the bans, AAN, 17 August 2023, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁵ Bjelica J., What Do Young Afghan Women Do? A glimpse into everyday life after the bans, ANN, 17 August 2023, [url](#); UN Women, Gender alert: Four years of Taliban rule: Afghan women resist as restrictions tighten, 29 August 2025, [url](#), p.4

¹²⁶⁶ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, 19 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 36, 72; USIP, Tracking the Taliban's (Mis)Treatment of Women, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁶⁷ Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); USIP, Tracking the Taliban's (Mis)Treatment of Women, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁶⁸ EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), pp. 43–45, 100

¹²⁶⁹ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 20

The restriction on solo travelling of women has sometimes been enforced for shorter distances than 72 km,¹²⁷⁰ reportedly even for short trips¹²⁷¹ or leaving the house.¹²⁷² In 2023, journalist Ali Latifi stated that the restriction was implemented inconsistently, being ignored by ‘thousands of women’ still going out on a daily basis.¹²⁷³ Yet, since the ‘Morality law’ the implementation and the enforcement of the *mahram* requirement intensified.¹²⁷⁴ In several instances, it was more stringently enforced than stipulated in the current laws.¹²⁷⁵ Women are increasingly self-regulating¹²⁷⁶ and some ‘limit their outings to essential needs or avoid going out altogether’¹²⁷⁷ or ‘rarely leave the house, or only with a man’.¹²⁷⁸

Even though the de facto MPVPV has stated that the *mahram* regulation is not absolute and does not apply for families without male relatives,¹²⁷⁹ it has been described as a source of distress for women without a *mahram* in their family.¹²⁸⁰ Women without access to a *mahram* were described as having a particularly precarious situation, as the restrictions made it more difficult for them to access services and humanitarian assistance.¹²⁸¹ It is not possible to say from what age a boy can be considered as a woman’s *mahram*.¹²⁸² Some situations allow young boys to accompany a woman,¹²⁸³ and the enforcement of the *mahram* requirement is reportedly sometimes circumstantial, with women being allowed to accompany each other for shorter trips in some more conservative provinces,¹²⁸⁴ and women traveling in groups of other women.¹²⁸⁵

¹²⁷⁰ UN Human Rights Council, The phenomenon of an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls, 13 May 2024, [url](#), para. 34; Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷¹ van Bijlert M., In pursuit of virtue: Men’s view on the Islamic Emirate’s restrictions on Afghan women, AAN, January 2025, [url](#), p. 32

¹²⁷² Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷³ Latifi, A., interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 9 October 2023

¹²⁷⁴ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), paras. 16, 19, 27; UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 15

¹²⁷⁵ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 39; Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 54

¹²⁷⁷ Bishnaw, The PVPV Law and its Impact on Women and their Communities, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹²⁷⁸ AAN, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁹ Ruttig T., Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 43; BBC News Persian, حکومت طالبان: صدای زنان در موارد ضروری ممنوع نیست [Taliban government: Women’s voices are not prohibited in essential cases], 3 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁰ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹²⁸¹ ACAPS, Afghanistan, Third update on Taliban decrees and directives relevant to the humanitarian response (July–December 2024), 24 December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹²⁸² ACAPS, Afghanistan, Third update on Taliban decrees and directives relevant to the humanitarian response (July–December 2024), 24 December 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹²⁸³ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 41–42

¹²⁸⁴ Clark, K., Law, Control, Fear – and some Defiance, December 2025, [url](#), p. 20

¹²⁸⁵ Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

The implementation of the *mahram* requirement has differed across the country.¹²⁸⁶ In October 2024, Ruttig noted that in the south, ‘much more pressure’ existed, whereas the de facto authorities were more flexible in Kabul. Two other persons interviewed by ACCORD in August and November 2024 also described the *mahram* regulation in Kabul as more lenient, for example in the sense that a woman could go out and purchase something without a *mahram*. A person interviewed by ACCORD in October 2024 described that in Badakhshan, women went to the market by themselves, whereas in Nangarhar, it was more conservative, and women were ‘always under the watch’.¹²⁸⁷ The AAN also reported on restrictions on women’s movement being more noticeable in some areas;¹²⁸⁸ some Afghans in the provinces of Jawzjan, Baghlan and Ghazni told the AAN that having a *mahram* was being strictly enforced, even for short distances, making it impossible for women to go outdoors alone.¹²⁸⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan noted that, within weeks of the ‘Morality law’s’ announcement, women across Afghanistan reported facing tightened restrictions on their movement, including being stopped, interrogated, and harassed at checkpoints, regardless of the distance they travelled. Even when accompanied by a *mahram*, women reported scrutiny to ensure that their *mahram* was an immediate family member. In some areas enforcers have been using loudspeakers to humiliate unaccompanied women.¹²⁹⁰ The de facto authorities have reportedly been focusing on the enforcement of the ban on using transport without a *mahram* in particular.¹²⁹¹

Sources reported on consequences for travelling without a *mahram* including arrests,¹²⁹² sometimes with ‘rigorous inspections’,¹²⁹³ harassment and beatings.¹²⁹⁴ According to Rawadari, women had also been arrested for leaving the house without a *mahram*.¹²⁹⁵

There have been cases in which unaccompanied women were barred from leaving the country¹²⁹⁶ and in some cases even despite having a *mahram*, for example when trying to go

¹²⁸⁶ AFP, Afghan women struggle under male guardian rules, 10 May 2024, [url](#); Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 40-46

¹²⁸⁷ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 44

¹²⁸⁸ Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), p. 25; Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁹ Bjelica, J., Rural Women’s Access to Health in Afghanistan: “Most of the time we just don’t go”, AAN, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 25–26; Clark, K., A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and ‘enforced’ speak about the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), paras. 53, 78

¹²⁹¹ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 37

¹²⁹² UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹²⁹³ AFP, Afghan women struggle under male guardian rules, 10 May 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁴ AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan: The Impact of the Taliban’s Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹²⁹⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 24

¹²⁹⁶ Khaama Press, A Generation in Waiting: Four Years After the Fall of the Afghan Republic, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

abroad to study.¹²⁹⁷ Reportedly, in some cases it is still possible to leave the country via the airport without a *mahram* after individual negotiations with the airport staff.¹²⁹⁸

The *mahram* requirement creates barriers for women and girls to access public services, work and conduct other activities outside their homes.¹²⁹⁹ Women have also been barred from entering de facto government offices without a *mahram*.¹³⁰⁰ According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), in some provinces, also women with a *mahram* were denied access to de facto government premises.¹³⁰¹ In general, women cannot appear in court without a *mahram*.¹³⁰² As reported by UNAMA, the de facto MPVPV have instructed health clinics, shops, markets, government offices and taxi drivers to deny services to unaccompanied women.¹³⁰³ Unaccompanied women have moreover been denied access to markets in some provinces,¹³⁰⁴ including in Uruzgan, Farah and Kandahar, as reported by UNAMA.¹³⁰⁵ Moreover, sources reported that women in some provinces have to be accompanied by a *mahram* to access healthcare facilities, and that female healthcare workers had to be accompanied by a *mahram* to go to work.¹³⁰⁶ The *mahram* requirement has also made the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to women more difficult.¹³⁰⁷

4.4.4. Access to education

Following the Taliban takeover, primary and elementary schools were reopened for both boys and girls¹³⁰⁸ after having been closed since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.¹³⁰⁹ Girls have however been denied education beyond primary level,¹³¹⁰ as the de facto authorities only reopened secondary schools for boys in September 2021.¹³¹¹ Initially, the de facto authorities policies towards girls' secondary education was inconsistent.¹³¹² In 2021–2022, some

¹²⁹⁷ BBC News, Taliban stop female Afghan students leaving country to study in Dubai, 28 August 2023, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Rights groups condemn Taliban's new curbs on women's education, movement, 28 August 2023, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁸ Sweden, Migrationsverket, Afghanistan: Identitetshandlingar, 10 October 2025, [url](#), p. 29; Mirzada R. and Shapour R., The Daily Hustle: A young women's journey home for the summer holidays, AAN, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), pp. 2–3; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 2–3

¹³⁰⁰ AFP, Afghan women struggle under male guardian rules, 10 May 2024, [url](#); Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 15

¹³⁰² UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 45

¹³⁰³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), pp. 2–3; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 2–3

¹³⁰⁴ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 15

¹³⁰⁵ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁰⁶ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 39

¹³⁰⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 98; AP Giha WG, UN Women, UN Women, Women and Girls in Crisis: 2024 Gender Analysis of Humanitarian Sectors in Afghanistan, 27 April 2025, [url](#), pp.12-13

¹³⁰⁸ TOLONews, Afghan Students Anxious as Schools Remain Closed, 16 September 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁰⁹ Al Jazeera, The Taliban closes Afghan girls' schools hours after reopening, 23 March 2022, [url](#)

¹³¹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 20 June 2023, [url](#), para. 33

¹³¹¹ Guardian (The), Taliban ban girls from secondary education in Afghanistan, 17 September 2021, [url](#)

¹³¹² HRW, Four Ways to Support Girls' Access to Education in Afghanistan, 20 March 2022, [url](#)

secondary schools for girls were able to open¹³¹³ and private secondary schools were reportedly allowed to continue to offer education for girls.¹³¹⁴ However, by 2023, sources indicated that most secondary schools had closed¹³¹⁵ in all provinces, including private secondary schools.¹³¹⁶ In 2025, the ban on secondary education for girls remains in place and secondary schools remain closed for girls.¹³¹⁷ Women's university studies were moreover 'suspended' until further notice on 20 December 2022,¹³¹⁸ and one of the last 'loopholes' to acquire higher education was closed. Women were further barred from pursuing medical education in December 2024.¹³¹⁹ PVPV inspectors have been monitoring and enforcing the Morality law and girls' education bans in educational institutions and *madrassas*.¹³²⁰ PVPV inspectors monitored compliance on how to wear proper *hijab*, compliance with the ban on girls above the sixth grade or girls who looked older; and that classrooms and offices for female and male teachers were segregated.¹³²¹ In some instances, UNAMA observed that the Morality law was applied arbitrarily in the context of girls' education.¹³²²

There have been initiatives to provide girls with education online,¹³²³ but these methods have not been 'equally accessible or sustainable'¹³²⁴ *inter alia* due to Afghanistan's unstable internet connection.¹³²⁵ Reportedly, underground secret schools have been running despite the ban.¹³²⁶ Some sources reported on such initiatives being known by the local de facto authorities in

¹³¹³ Clark K., Who Gets to Go to School? (1): What people told us about education since the Taliban took over, AAN, 26 January 2022, [url](#)

¹³¹⁴ Rubin, B., Afghanistan Under the Taliban: Findings on the Current Situation, Stimson, 20 October 2022, [url](#); Guardian (The), 'She asked me, will they kill you if they discover you?': Afghan girls defy education ban at secret schools, 13 August 2022, [url](#)

¹³¹⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 20 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 33, 36

¹³¹⁶ Durrani, P., online interview, 19 October 2023

¹³¹⁷ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#); Human Rights Watch, Taliban Deny Afghan Girls' Their Education and Future, 17 September 2025, [url](#)

¹³¹⁸ Reuters, Taliban-led Afghan administration suspends women from universities, 20 December 2022, [url](#)

¹³¹⁹ HRW, Afghanistan's Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

¹³²⁰ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 16; Rawadari, Excluded and deprived: the educational crisis for women and girls in Afghanistan, 21 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 13-14; Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); Rahimi H. and Watkins A., The Taliban's Dynamic Efforts to Integrate and Regulate Madrasas And the Motives for Doing So, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 10

¹³²¹ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 14; Clark K. and AAN-Team, A year of Propagating Virtue and Preventing Vice: Enforcers and 'enforced' speak about the Emirate's morality law, AAN, 21 August 2025, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 40

¹³²² UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 14

¹³²³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 42 ; RFE/RL, Taliban's Internet Ban Threatens Afghan Women's Livelihoods And Education, 26 September 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan Human Rights Center, Report on Access to Education for Women Under the Taliban, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 26-32

¹³²⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 33, 36

¹³²⁵ International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023; Reuters, Afghan girls struggle with poor internet as they turn to online classes, 28 March 2023, [url](#)

¹³²⁶ RFE/RL, Secret Schools Offer 'A Ray Of Hope' For Rural Afghan Girls, 20 December 2023, [url](#); CNN, 'The school is like a light for me:' The secret classrooms giving Afghan girls a chance to learn despite Taliban rules, 5 October 2023, [url](#); BBC News, Five key moments in the crushing of Afghan women's rights, 15 August 2023, [url](#); UN Women, Photo essay: A glimpse into the lives of Afghan women, 7 March 2024, [url](#); HRW, Women's Rights Activists Under Attack in Afghanistan, 30 November 2023, [url](#)



some areas, and that they ‘accepted’ or ‘informally permitted’ such initiatives¹³²⁷ or ‘shut a blind eye’ to them.¹³²⁸ In 2025, online education and underground schools remained an important lifeline,¹³²⁹ although online education programs¹³³⁰ as well as underground schools¹³³¹ were being undermined by cuts to international funding. In a survey by Bishnaw, participants reported increasing difficulties accessing non-formal learning spaces such as underground schools, online programs, and private tutoring.¹³³² Rawadari noted that, in 2024, as well as in the first half of 2025, the Taliban have been identifying and shutting down educational centres that secretly provided learning opportunities to girls.¹³³³ Some radio stations have been offering educational programs,¹³³⁴ but in some provinces, radio stations have been instructed to stop broadcasting educational programs for girls beyond grade six.¹³³⁵

In the absence of higher education opportunities many women and girls have turned to education in *madrassas*.¹³³⁶ Reportedly, no age limit is imposed¹³³⁷ and girls over the age of 12 are able to study in de facto authority-registered *madrassas* in some provinces.¹³³⁸ Female *madrassa* enrolment has augmented¹³³⁹ and a ‘significant’ number of female students have been enrolled in Taliban religious *madrassas*.¹³⁴⁰ Some sources mentioned alleged plans to restrict access to *madrassa* education for women and girls,¹³⁴¹ and several *madrassas* have been closed.¹³⁴² UNAMA reported that in some provinces de facto officials took steps to close *madrassas* to women and girls beyond grade six in late August 2025 due to violations of the *hijab* regulations, the teaching of ‘modern secular courses’ and the age of the girls.¹³⁴³ Rahimi noted in an interview of October 2025 that from the beginning, the top leadership of the Taliban have not been promoting or been fond of the idea of women attending *madrassas*, especially amid the sentiment of people using it to as a workaround to teach general topics

¹³²⁷ PRIO et al., Pathways towards Strengthening Girl’s Education in Afghanistan, December 2023, [url](#), pp. 7–8

¹³²⁸ Huck, A glimpse of life for women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule, 6 September 2024, [url](#)

¹³²⁹ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 12

¹³³⁰ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 12; Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Relentless Repression 4 Years into Taliban Rule, [url](#)

¹³³¹ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 12; CNN, ‘They do not teach us what we need’: Inside the expansion of religious schools for girls across Afghanistan, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹³³² Bishnaw, The PVPV Law and its Impact on Women and their Communities, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹³³³ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 40; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

¹³³⁴ Zan Times, The radio classrooms defying the Taliban ban, 15 September 2025, [url](#)

¹³³⁵ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 34; USIP, Tracking the Taliban’s (Mis)Treatment of Women, n.d., [url](#)

¹³³⁶ AP, With no access to education beyond the 6th grade, girls in Afghanistan turn to religious schools, 24 July 2025, [url](#)

¹³³⁷ Afghanistan Human Rights Center, Report on Access to Education for Women Under the Taliban, December 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹³³⁸ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 9

¹³³⁹ Rahimi H. and Muhammad Din F., Female Madrasas & Islamic Agency of Afghan Women, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 118

¹³⁴⁰ Afghanistan Human Rights Center, Report on Access to Education for Women Under the Taliban, December 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹³⁴¹ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 12; France24, ‘Afghan women are leading the resistance against the Taliban,’ researcher says, 25/08/2025, [url](#)

¹³⁴² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Amu TV, Sources: Several girls’ madrassas closed in Kabul, 23 August 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁴³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2



for women. He stated that there have been more efforts to make sure that female *madrassas* only focus on religious subjects and get rid of this loophole.¹³⁴⁴

4.4.5. Access to employment

Unlike the 1990s, the de facto authorities have not outright banned paid employment for women.¹³⁴⁵ Women have however faced limitations in pursuing various professions,¹³⁴⁶ and working women have been impacted by the general restrictions on them.¹³⁴⁷ Women public officials working for the previous government were instructed to stay home after the Taliban takeover,¹³⁴⁸ with exceptions in areas such as education, healthcare and certain security institutions.¹³⁴⁹ Reportedly some women still work at airports and as security in detention facilities,¹³⁵⁰ and UNAMA noted that there were female de facto MPVPV inspectors in the provincial capital of Baghlan.¹³⁵¹ Some women still work in the de facto Directorate General of Passports,¹³⁵² and additionally, as reported by Amu tv, the de facto Mol also mentioned women working in public services, and checkpoints.¹³⁵³ UN OHCHR noted that ‘some limited peripheral functions within the de facto administration were also permitted’.¹³⁵⁴ Reportedly, women could still work in the banking sector.¹³⁵⁵ In June 2024, salaries of female government employees and school teachers were cut to 5 000 afghanis.¹³⁵⁶ A letter later clarified that this applied only to women civil servants who remained at home at the de facto authorities’ request.¹³⁵⁷ Zan Times and Amu TV reported that hundreds of female professors were dismissed in May 2025.¹³⁵⁸

Women have been banned from working in international and national NGOs since December 2022, and for the UN since April 2023. Most foreign embassies were also informed in April 2023 that Afghan women could no longer work in their offices, as reported by the UN.¹³⁵⁹

¹³⁴⁴ Rahimi, H., online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units.

¹³⁴⁵ Bjelica J., What Do Young Afghan Women Do? A glimpse into everyday life after the bans, AAN, 17 August 2023, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁶ UN Women, FAQs: Afghan women three years after the Taliban takeover, 12 August 2024, [url](#); CARE, A ‘window of hope’ for the women of Afghanistan: business training to address missing jobs, 3 June 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 48-49; UNDP, Listening to Women Entrepreneurs in Afghanistan: Their Struggle and Resilience, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁴⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 27; Latifi, A., interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 9 October 2023

¹³⁴⁹ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights, Afghanistan 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 33

¹³⁵⁰ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹³⁵¹ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹³⁵² Amu TV, Female employees in public offices face ‘severe restrictions’ by Taliban, 14 November 2024, [url](#); Sweden, Migrationsverket, Afghanistan: Identitetshandlingar, 10 October 2025, [url](#), p. 26

¹³⁵³ Amu TV, Female employees in public offices face ‘severe restrictions’ by Taliban, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹³⁵⁵ SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹³⁵⁶ AW, Confusion after Taliban decree to cap women's salaries, 16 July 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, ‘Systematic Discrimination’: Taliban's Drastic Cut In Salaries Of Female State Employees Triggers Anger, 18 June 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁷ Foschini F., Education in Hibernation: The end of a virtuous cycle of literacy and empowerment for women in Shughnan?, AAN, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁸ Amu TV, Taliban dismiss hundreds of university professors across Afghanistan, sources say, 11 May 2025, [url](#); Zan Times, Taliban dismisses hundreds of female professors from public universities in Afghanistan, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 47–48



Many NGOs reported that exemptions on the ban were negotiated with local authorities for women working in health, nutrition and education sectors.¹³⁶⁰ Since the Morality law, there has been a general increase in the enforcement of restrictions for NGOs.¹³⁶¹ In December 2024, the de facto Ministry of Economy disseminated a letter reiterating the 24 December 2022 ban of women working for domestic and international NGOs,¹³⁶² warning that NGOs not complying would lose their license to operate in Afghanistan.¹³⁶³ In reaction to this, some NGOs stopped recruiting Afghan women, as recorded by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group.¹³⁶⁴ In some provinces, women's applications for work permits related to employment in NGOs were denied, as reported by UNAMA.¹³⁶⁵ A survey by UN Women of 2025 found that the ban on women NGO workers has intensified.¹³⁶⁶ Some NGOs advised their female staff to work from home, whereas others continued to allow them to work from offices where gender-segregated facilities were available and where exemptions to the decree applied.¹³⁶⁷ In May 2025, dozens of Afghan women received death threats in relation to their work for UN agencies,¹³⁶⁸ resulting in interim measures by the UN to protect their safety,¹³⁶⁹ such as working from home.¹³⁷⁰ In September 2025, Afghan women, including local staff and contractors, were prevented from entering UN compounds by de facto security officials.¹³⁷¹

Women in other professions have also been impacted, including former women security personnel who lost their jobs amid the Taliban takeover,¹³⁷² and women lawyers and judges who have been barred from practicing.¹³⁷³ Women journalists have been facing severe restrictions and it is estimated that around 80 % of female journalists have left Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover.¹³⁷⁴ The number of female teachers has also decreased due to the

¹³⁶⁰ Clark K., Bans on women working, then and now: The dilemmas of delivering humanitarian aid during the first and second Islamic Emirates, AAN, April 2023, [url](#), pp. 8, 9

¹³⁶¹ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 12; UN Women, Tracking Impact Report on The Ban and Other Restrictions on Women for NGOs, INGOs and UN - Twelfth snapshot (June 2025), 15 July 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁶² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 98

¹³⁶³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 98; Al Jazeera, Afghanistan's Taliban rulers say will close all NGOs employing women, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁴ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹³⁶⁵ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹³⁶⁶ UN Women, Gender alert: Four years of Taliban rule: Afghan women resist as restrictions tighten, 29 August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹³⁶⁷ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 9

¹³⁶⁸ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 3; Amu tv, UN female staff in Kabul confined to homes following 'Taliban threats': Sources, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁹ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹³⁷⁰ Amu tv, UN female staff in Kabul confined to homes following 'Taliban threats': Sources, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁷¹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Amu TV, UN urges Taliban to lift ban on female staff access to its compounds, 12 September 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁷² Human Rights Watch, Double Betrayal, Abuses against Afghan Policewomen, Past and Present, 10 October 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), 'I was a policewoman. Now I beg in the street': life for Afghan women one year after the Taliban took power, 14 August 2022, [url](#)

¹³⁷³ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 39

¹³⁷⁴ Afghanistan: "The Taliban Took All My Dreams Away", Women's exclusion from the Afghan media space has meant that issues critical to women go unreported, 2 May 2025, [url](#); Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)



restrictions on secondary education for girls, on women teaching male students and other restrictions targeting women and girls.¹³⁷⁵ In July 2023, the de facto authorities ordered beauty salons to shut down.¹³⁷⁶ Several beauty salons have however continued to operate underground, but in 2025, the de facto authorities conducted house-to-house searches shutting down such salons, confiscating beauty products, and detaining women beauticians. Those arrested were later released after a warning or after they committed not to repeat the same act.¹³⁷⁷

The private sector has been one of the few areas for women to work in.¹³⁷⁸ Home-based self-employment and small-scale economic activities¹³⁷⁹ have become the predominant form of employment among women in Afghanistan.¹³⁸⁰ The de facto authorities highlight their support for women-led businesses, but have at the same time restricted women entrepreneurs.¹³⁸¹ For instance, the de facto authorities have ordered the closure of women-run shops in some provinces,¹³⁸² and have barred women from participating in some trade fairs.¹³⁸³ In November 2024, the de facto authorities have ordered the closure of all women-only cafés in Herat.¹³⁸⁴ Amid reports about the closure of women-markets in some areas,¹³⁸⁵ for example in Kandahar Province,¹³⁸⁶ in other places, women-markets are still in place.¹³⁸⁷ Women in the private sector have also been impacted by general restrictions on them,¹³⁸⁸ including travel restrictions,¹³⁸⁹ having suppliers refusing to sell material to them,¹³⁹⁰ and being requested to operate in a

¹³⁷⁵ Foschini, F., Education in Hibernation: The end of a virtuous cycle of literacy and empowerment for women in Shughnan?, AAN, 17 September 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁶ USIP, Two Years of the Taliban's 'Gender Apartheid' in Afghanistan, 14 September 2023, [url](#); New York Times (The), Taliban Shut Beauty Salons, One of Afghan Women's Last Public Spaces, 25 July 2023, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁷ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), p. 7; Amu TV, Beauticians say Taliban shut down dozens of home salons in Kabul, 8 August 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁷⁸ AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 9; AW, Taliban allegedly raid underground beauty parlours, 14 March 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), Taliban launch crackdown on Afghanistan's secret beauty salons, 30 August 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁹ Small-scale economic activities include work as seamstress, make handicrafts, tend to livestock and engage in small-scale agriculture; UN Women, Afghanistan Gender Country Profile 2024, June 2024, [url](#), p. 44

¹³⁸⁰ UN Women, Afghanistan Gender Country Profile 2024, June 2024, [url](#), p. 44; ACAPS, Afghanistan: barriers and enablers to self-employment for women, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 1

¹³⁸¹ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 15; AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 9

¹³⁸² UNAMA, *De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights*, July 2024, [url](#), p. 10; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁸³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹³⁸⁴ RFE/RL, Four Years On, UN Says Taliban Close To 'Erasing' Afghan Women From Public Life, 14 August 2025, [url](#); Amu tv, Taliban begin shutting down women-only cafes in Herat, 23 November 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁵ UN Women, Afghanistan Gender Country Profile 2024, June 2024, [url](#), p. 45

¹³⁸⁶ Afghan Times (The), From Livelihood to Silence: Taliban Crushes Women's Work Behind Closed Doors, 18 June 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, Kandahar women-only market closed, hundreds lose jobs, 7 January 2023, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁷ UNDP, What Supporting Women-Led Businesses Really Means in Afghanistan, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 48-49; UNDP, Listening to Women Entrepreneurs in Afghanistan: Their Struggle and Resilience, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁸⁹ UNDP, Listening to Women Entrepreneurs in Afghanistan: Their Struggle and Resilience, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹³⁹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#), paras. 48-49; UNDP, Listening to Women Entrepreneurs in Afghanistan: Their Struggle and Resilience, 16 April 2024, [url](#), p. 3

gender segregated environment and to cater to female consumers only.¹³⁹¹ Since the enactment of the Morality law, hurdles for businesswomen have increased.¹³⁹²

According to reports, the lack of employment prospects has increasingly pushed more women living in the main cities to stroll the streets selling second-hand goods or simple food goods from carts.¹³⁹³ In May 2024, the de facto authorities adopted anti-begging laws. Several women were arrested and detained under these laws and reportedly there have been cases of torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence and verbal abuse by de facto officials.¹³⁹⁴

4.4.6. Access to healthcare and basic services

Women's access to healthcare has been reduced by 'significant barriers', including restrictions on their movement, gender segregation, poverty, the financial cost of treatment, and a lack of female doctors.¹³⁹⁵ UNAMA reported that women's already limited healthcare access has worsened under the Morality law, with inspectors regularly visiting facilities to enforce compliance, for example regarding *hijab*, segregation and *mahram* rules.¹³⁹⁶ The requirement for women to be accompanied by a *mahram* when travelling has impacted both women seeking¹³⁹⁷ and providing care.¹³⁹⁸ In some areas, women without a *mahram* have been prevented from accessing health facilities or denied service.¹³⁹⁹ In various instances, PVPV inspectors have given instructions that female patients without a *mahram* should not be treated.¹⁴⁰⁰ In some cases, female health workers were required to have a *mahram* at work¹⁴⁰¹,

¹³⁹¹ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹³⁹² UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 39

¹³⁹³ Latifi, A., interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 9 October 2023; Sadat S. A., and Shapour R., The Daily Hustle: Women take to street peddling to feed their families, AAN, 22 July 2023, [url](#)

¹³⁹⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 56; Zan Times, Women arrested by Taliban for begging report rape and forced labour, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁹⁵ Bjelica J. and AAN-Team, Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time, we just don't go", AAN, 18 March 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), paras. 17-23

¹³⁹⁶ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9, 10, 13; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July-September 2025, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁹⁷ UNAMA, *De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights*, July 2024, [url](#), p. 3; HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁹⁸ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁹⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October- December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UN Human Rights Council, The phenomenon of an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls, 13 May 2024, [url](#), para. 40

¹⁴⁰⁰ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁰¹ HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 41; Zan Times, When working requires a man and a mahram card, 25 June, 2025, [url](#)

and since May 2025 in Kandahar Province, these *mahrams* reportedly needed an official identification card.¹⁴⁰²

Sources noted that general restrictions on women's access to education¹⁴⁰³ and the ban on women to attend medical classes from December 2024¹⁴⁰⁴ are likely to exacerbate the existing shortage in women medical staff.¹⁴⁰⁵ This has an adverse impact on the health outcome for women, given that 'cultural norms limit the treatment of women by male doctors'¹⁴⁰⁶ and that these norms restrict health-care providers in seeing patients of the opposite sex.¹⁴⁰⁷ Cuts in international funding of aid have also negatively impacted women's access to healthcare.¹⁴⁰⁸ The bans on women from working for NGOs and the UN,¹⁴⁰⁹ the restrictions on female aid workers¹⁴¹⁰ and on women in general, have moreover negatively impacted the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to women.¹⁴¹¹

Women in poor and rural areas and women with disabilities are disproportionately affected.¹⁴¹² The AAN reported that women in rural areas are confronted with several barriers in accessing healthcare, *inter alia* the lack of clinics in their vicinity, financial hardship, restrictions on their movement, as well as damaged or non-existent roads and insufficient means of transport.¹⁴¹³ Afghanistan's maternal mortality rate was already among the highest in the world, and reportedly the situation is getting worse.¹⁴¹⁴ According to research for RWI, many women and girls have no access to essential maternal health services.¹⁴¹⁵

¹⁴⁰² UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 32; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁴⁰³ Human Rights Watch, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future" Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan's Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#); UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁰⁵ MSF, Excluding women from medical institutes threatens the future of healthcare in Afghanistan, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), paras. 17-18

¹⁴⁰⁷ UN Human Rights Council, The phenomenon of an institutionalized system of discrimination, segregation, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls, 13 May 2024, [url](#), p. 40; Medscape, How Women in Afghanistan Struggle for Life and Health, 10 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁸ New Humanitarian (The), Three years on, the Taliban's Islamic Emirate is full of contradictions, 15 August 2024, [url](#); International Crisis Group, After the Aid Axe: Charting a Path to Self-reliance in Afghanistan, 2 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁹ International Crisis Group, Taliban Restrictions on Women's Rights Deepen Afghanistan's Crisis, 23 February 2023, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 11 September 2023, [url](#), para. 11

¹⁴¹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 98; AP Giha WG, UN Women, UN Women, Women and Girls in Crisis: 2024 Gender Analysis of Humanitarian Sectors in Afghanistan, 27 April 2025, [url](#), pp.12-13

¹⁴¹¹ AP Giha WG, UN Women, UN Women, Women and Girls in Crisis: 2024 Gender Analysis of Humanitarian Sectors in Afghanistan, 27 April 2025, [url](#), pp.12-13

¹⁴¹² HRW, "A Disaster for the Foreseeable Future", Afghanistan's Healthcare Crisis, 12 February 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁴¹³ Bjelica J. and AAN-Team, Rural Women's Access to Health in Afghanistan: "Most of the time, we just don't go", AAN, [url](#), 18 March 2025, p. 7

¹⁴¹⁴ RFE/RL, Every Two Hours A Woman Dies During Childbirth In Afghanistan, 15 March 2025, [url](#); Bjelica J. and AAN-Team, Is maternal mortality on the rise in Afghanistan? No official data, but much cause for concern, AAN, 28 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁵ Alavi L.J., Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health in Afghanistan, [url](#), p. 48



The policies of the de facto authorities have contributed to a the mental health crisis among women and girls.¹⁴¹⁶ The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan stated that he has been receiving alarming reports of stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and suicidal ideation, especially among young women and girls.¹⁴¹⁷ A survey by UN Women in 2025 noted that 75 % of the surveyed women described their mental health as bad or very bad.¹⁴¹⁸ Suicides among women and girls have moreover reportedly increased,¹⁴¹⁹ and AW reported on suicides being connected to education, domestic violence, forced marriage, rape and detention.¹⁴²⁰ There are only limited mental health and psychosocial support services (see section 3.5. Healthcare),¹⁴²¹ and only a handful facilities are dedicated to women's mental health, as noted by BBC News.¹⁴²²

4.4.7. Violence against women

Gender-based violence is widespread in Afghanistan.¹⁴²³ Even before the Taliban takeover there was a high prevalence of incidents of gender-based violence,¹⁴²⁴ but the issue is reportedly on the rise.¹⁴²⁵ Violence against women and girls takes place 'inside and outside of their homes',¹⁴²⁶ in both the 'public and private sphere'.¹⁴²⁷ Specific groups of women are at higher risk of gender-based violence, including women headed-households, widows, girls forced into early marriage, internally displaced and returnees, women with disabilities, as well as religious, ethnic, sexual and gender minorities.¹⁴²⁸ Even though the de facto authorities claimed to effectively combat violence against women,¹⁴²⁹ UNAMA has recorded several incidents of gender-based violence against women and girls, including murders; so-called honour killings; child marriages; forced marriages; rape; domestic violence and suicides

¹⁴¹⁶ UNHCR, Counselling offers Afghan women a safe space to share their mental health struggles, 10 October 2024, [url](#); UN Women Australia, FAQs: What it's like to be a woman in Afghanistan in 2025, 7 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 22

¹⁴¹⁸ UN Women, Gender alert: Four years of Taliban rule: Afghan women resist as restrictions tighten, 29 August 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁴¹⁹ UN News, Afghanistan: Taliban rule has erased women from public life, sparked mental health crisis, 13 August 2024, [url](#); UN Women, Afghanistan, Gender Country Profile 2024, June 2024, [url](#), p. 36; RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty), Taliban Restrictions Blamed For Surge In Suicides Among Afghans, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴²⁰ AW, Surge in female suicides linked to forced marriages, Taliban violence, and arrests, 26 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴²¹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 22; UNHCR, Counselling offers Afghan women a safe space to share their mental health struggles, 10 October 2024, [url](#); Human Rights Watch, World Report 2025: Afghanistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴²² BBC, 'No-one comes for us': The women trapped in Afghanistan's mental health system, 19 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴²³ UN Women, Afghanistan Gender Index 2024, June 2025, [url](#), p. 56; AW, Afghan Witness report reveals 'daily occurrence' of gender-based violence under Taliban rule as women suffer 'systematic erasure' from public life, 14 August 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴²⁴ UNAMA, Divergence of Practice: The Handling of Complaints of Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls by Afghanistan's de facto Authorities, December 2023, [url](#), p. 3; Human Rights Watch, No Shelter in Afghanistan, 19 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴²⁵ Rasuli H., Highlighting Afghan Women's Experiences of Violence and Access to Justice, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 56-57; RFE/RL, Taliban's Closure Of Women's Shelters Leaves Afghan Women Vulnerable To Abuse, 9 July 2025, [url](#); UN News, Four years on, here's what total exclusion of women in Afghanistan looks like, 11 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴²⁶ UN News, Four years on, here's what total exclusion of women in Afghanistan looks like, 11 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴²⁷ UNAMA, Divergence of Practice: The Handling of Complaints of Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls by Afghanistan's de facto Authorities, December 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁴²⁸ Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan: Protection Analysis Update, Update on protracted-crisis and climate-related protection risks trends, May 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁴²⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3



because of domestic violence.¹⁴³⁰ UNAMA recorded cases where de facto officials intervened to prevent violence and forced marriages, however, it also documented cases in which de facto officials were accused of being perpetrators of forced marriage, enforcing forced marriages, and encouraging a victim to stay in a marriage in which she was physically abused.¹⁴³¹

The fear of social shame to be punished for ‘immoral’ behaviour of female family members led men towards repression and violence against women,¹⁴³² with honour killings increasing according to an anonymous source interviewed by ACCORD.¹⁴³³ Afghan human rights lawyer Humaira Rasuli found in a research study that, among women exposed to domestic violence, 57 % were facing violence by husbands and other family members, while in 43 % of the cases, perpetrators also included unidentified people and de facto MPVPV enforcers in the streets, workplace, and other public places.¹⁴³⁴ Because of a culture of silence and out of fear of being stigmatised, women survivors of sexual violence rarely report sexual abuse and rape.¹⁴³⁵ Reportedly, several women who were detained have been subjected to sexual violence by the de facto authorities.¹⁴³⁶ Former female detainees face social stigma,¹⁴³⁷ rejection by their families and report continued harassment and intimidation, including by the Taliban.¹⁴³⁸

Even though there are no official data,¹⁴³⁹ sources noted that the prevalence of child, early and forced marriages has been high and on the rise.¹⁴⁴⁰ Early and forced marriages of girls have reportedly increased since the Taliban takeover¹⁴⁴¹ due to factors such as the economic and humanitarian crisis, the lack of education and employment prospects, and families’ belief that

¹⁴³⁰ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴³¹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴³² Guardian (The), How ordinary men became unpaid Taliban enforcers in their own homes, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴³³ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 71–72

¹⁴³⁴ Rasuli H., Highlighting Afghan Women’s Experiences of Violence and Access to Justice, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁴³⁵ Rasuli H., Highlighting Afghan Women’s Experiences of Violence and Access to Justice, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 25; UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 58

¹⁴³⁶ Rawadari, Torture and ill-treatment: The state of prisons in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, 25 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 54-58; UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁴³⁷ AW, The Erasure of Women, 15 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁴³⁸ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁴³⁹ Sabawoon, A. M., Living in a Collapsed Economy (4): The desperation and guilt of giving a young daughter in marriage, AAN, 20 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁰ RFE/RL, Taliban’s Education Ban On Afghan Girls Fuels Spike In Child Marriages, 13 June 2024, [url](#); Protection Cluster Afghanistan, Afghanistan: Protection Analysis Update, Update on protracted-crisis and climate-related protection risks trends January - December 2024, January 2025, [url](#); UN Women Australia, FAQs: What it’s like to be a woman in Afghanistan in 2025, 7 August 2025, [url](#); IPS, Afghanistan: Ban on Girls’ Education Linked to Rise in Forced and Child Marriage, 3 October 2025, [url](#);

¹⁴⁴¹ Savi, M. et al., Changing social norms around age of marriage in Afghanistan Data on repression and resistance under the Taliban, ODI, February 2024, [url](#)

securing a spouse for their daughters would protect them from being forced to marry a member of the Taliban.¹⁴⁴²

Corporal punishments inflicted by de facto courts for both men and women have increased under Taliban rule,¹⁴⁴³ including many cases related to *zina* (adultery or ‘running away from home’).¹⁴⁴⁴ Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the criminalisation of adultery as they are much more likely to be accused of *zina* (sex outside of marriage), often based on little or no evidence. Situations of women fleeing forced marriage or domestic violence and crimes of rape are frequently mischaracterised as adultery or other moral crimes.¹⁴⁴⁵

4.4.8. Access to justice

In December 2021, the de facto authorities issued a decree on Women’s Rights,¹⁴⁴⁶ outlawing some traditional practices, such as forced marriage of adult women, including for widows, as well as *baad* - the exchange of daughters between families or clans as a way to end feuds or disputes.¹⁴⁴⁷ In a decree of 19 March 2025, the importance of women’s free consent to marriage was re-emphasised and it was stated that perpetrators of unlawful acts against women such as ‘shooting, forcibly marrying, or violating a woman’s rights’ [to inheritance, dowry, independence] should be prosecuted in the courts of the Islamic Emirate.¹⁴⁴⁸ Taliban spokespersons frequently asserted that the de facto authorities are protecting women’s rights,¹⁴⁴⁹ and the de facto MPVPV has been presenting itself as a defender of women’s rights online.¹⁴⁵⁰

Women and girls however face severe barriers to access justice.¹⁴⁵¹ Despite the above-mentioned decrees, cases of gender-based violence have reportedly been treated inconsistently by the de facto authorities,¹⁴⁵² with many cases being resolved through informal

¹⁴⁴² RFE/RL, Taliban’s Education Ban On Afghan Girls Fuels Spike In Child Marriages, 13 June 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, Afghans Increasingly Marrying Off Young Daughters To Avoid Forced Unions With Taliban, 1 December 2022, [url](#); Sinclair, S., In the new Afghanistan, it’s sell your daughter or starve, 15 January 2024, Washington Post (The), [url](#)

¹⁴⁴³ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁴⁴⁴ UNAMA, Corporal Punishment in Afghanistan, May 2023, [url](#), pp. 13–14

¹⁴⁴⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 29; USIP, Failure to Protect: The Taliban’s Reversal of Violence Against Women Protections, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁶ Zabihullah [X], posted on: 3 December 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁷ Barnett, R., Afghanistan Under the Taliban: Findings on the Current Situation, 20 October 2022, [url](#); Philips L. and Mirzada R., Shaking the sky: Women’s attempts to claim their inheritance rights under the Emirate, AAN, February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁴⁴⁸ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Alemarah English, Decree of the Esteemed Amir-ul-Momineen (may Allah protect him) Regarding prevention of improper customs during weddings, calamities, and upon return from Hajj and Umrah, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 28

¹⁴⁵⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 86; AW, Policing Morality in Afghanistan: The Impact of the Taliban’s Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 36

¹⁴⁵¹ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), Para. 17; UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-12

¹⁴⁵² UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 11 September 2023, [url](#), para. 27; Rasuli H., Highlighting Afghan Women’s Experiences of Violence and Access to Justice, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 22

means such as mediation.¹⁴⁵³ Specialised institutions and frameworks which provided specific protections and support for women have been dismantled,¹⁴⁵⁴ leaving women with almost no access to justice and effective remedies.¹⁴⁵⁵

There are no women judges, prosecutors, and no officially registered female lawyers.¹⁴⁵⁶ Few women work in the de facto police and other institutions,¹⁴⁵⁷ reducing safe channels to report abuse or to seek redress.¹⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, almost all shelters for victims of gender-based violence have been shut down.¹⁴⁵⁹

The *mahram* requirement also creates significant barriers,¹⁴⁶⁰ as women need a *mahram* to travel and interact with the de facto authorities.¹⁴⁶¹ In court, women are often prevented from speaking for themselves and may be forced to rely on their *mahram* to speak for them.¹⁴⁶² Women seeking justice are confronted with victim blaming,¹⁴⁶³ and survivors of gender-based violence risk false accusations and self-incrimination.¹⁴⁶⁴

Women who engage with the de facto court system reportedly face a ‘hostile environment’,¹⁴⁶⁵ with de facto courts being biased against women,¹⁴⁶⁶ with some women experiencing it as humiliating and exclusionary.¹⁴⁶⁷ As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights, complaints, particularly those concerning divorce, child custody, or sexual and gender-based violence, are frequently dismissed, redirected to mediation, and seldom ruled in women’s

¹⁴⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 11 September 2023, [url](#), para. 27; UN Women, Afghanistan, Gender Country Profile 2024, June 2024, [url](#), p. 30; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October–December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 39

¹⁴⁵⁵ AI, Afghanistan: Authorities must reinstate formal legal frameworks, rule of law and end four years of injustice and impunity, 15 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵⁶ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), Para. 18; UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 39

¹⁴⁵⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 7

¹⁴⁵⁸ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 18

¹⁴⁵⁹ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 18; RFE/RL, Taliban's Closure Of Women's Shelters Leaves Afghan Women Vulnerable To Abuse, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶⁰ Bishnaw, Women’s peace brief – April & June 2025, Women’s Access to Justice under Taliban Governance, 30 April 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 43

¹⁴⁶¹ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 73

¹⁴⁶² UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 45

¹⁴⁶³ Rasuli H., Highlighting Afghan Women’s Experiences of Violence and Access to Justice, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 23; ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 74

¹⁴⁶⁴ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 74; UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 49

¹⁴⁶⁵ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 19; Bishnaw, Women’s peace brief – April & June 2025, Women’s Access to Justice under Taliban Governance, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4

¹⁴⁶⁶ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 19; Bishnaw, Women’s peace brief – April & June 2025, Women’s Access to Justice under Taliban Governance, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4

¹⁴⁶⁷ Bishnaw, Women’s peace brief – April & June 2025, Women’s Access to Justice under Taliban Governance, 30 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4



favour.¹⁴⁶⁸ According to UNAMA, in some instances, de facto officials referred severe cases, such as attempt murder, to mediation despite the victim's request for a formal judicial resolution.¹⁴⁶⁹

According to UN OHCHR, women have increasingly turned to alternate justice mechanisms such as *jirgas*, *shuras*, or mediation through religious leaders, family or community elders to resolve disputes.¹⁴⁷⁰ However, these alternate mechanisms are also described as male-dominated¹⁴⁷¹ and biased against women.¹⁴⁷² The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights noted that decisions often reflect patriarchal norms and favour male interests.¹⁴⁷³

Getting a divorce has always been difficult for Afghan women, but under the de facto authorities sources described it as having become 'almost impossible'¹⁴⁷⁴ and 'extremely challenging'.¹⁴⁷⁵ While lawyers told the AAN that stigma and shame are the main barriers preventing women from seeking divorce,¹⁴⁷⁶ the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights also reported on cases in which judges had told women reporting violence or seeking divorce that husbands can treat their wives as they wish, and women seeking divorce from abusive husbands sometimes received marriage proposals ('essentially forced') from de facto officials, or were told to present their husband to court, which was impossible in many cases.¹⁴⁷⁷ De facto courts have reportedly overturned or invalidated divorces granted under the previous government.¹⁴⁷⁸ Some women have been forced back to abusive or unwanted marriages, and in other instances women who had remarried were imprisoned for adultery.¹⁴⁷⁹ The AAN noted, however, that there seemed to be no systematic attempt to overturn divorce cases.¹⁴⁸⁰

¹⁴⁶⁸ UN OHCHR, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 19

¹⁴⁶⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: October-December 2024, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁷⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 76, 78

¹⁴⁷¹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 77

¹⁴⁷² Bishnaw, Women's peace brief – April & June 2025, Women's Access to Justice under Taliban Governance, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁴⁷³ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 77, 81

¹⁴⁷⁴ Philips L. and Mirzada R., "The Doors to Separation Are Closed for Women": Women and divorce under the Emirate, AAN, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 50

¹⁴⁷⁶ Philips L. and Mirzada R., "The Doors to Separation Are Closed for Women": Women and divorce under the Emirate, AAN, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 49, 50

¹⁴⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 51; USIP, Tracking the Taliban's (Mis)Treatment of Women, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), paras. 51, 53

¹⁴⁸⁰ Philips L. and Mirzada R., "The Doors to Separation Are Closed for Women": Women and divorce under the Emirate, AAN, 4 May 2025, [url](#)



Despite the Taliban outlawing forced marriages of adult women,¹⁴⁸¹ UNAMA documented cases in which de facto officials were accused of being both perpetrators of forced marriage, enforcing forced marriages, and encouraging a victim to stay in marriage in which she was physically abused. However, UNAMA also recorded cases in which de facto officials did intervene to prevent violence and forced marriages.¹⁴⁸² There have moreover been cases where women have had their inheritance cases recognised and successfully enforced by local de facto courts.¹⁴⁸³ In some cases, women succeeded to file their inheritance claims without a *mahram*.¹⁴⁸⁴ As reported by UN Women surveys, stigma prevents women to claim their inheritance and many are unaware of their inheritance rights in the decree on Women's Rights.¹⁴⁸⁵ The AAN also noted that attitudes to the inheritance rights for women are an obstacle, and women risk the disapproval of their community and being ostracised by their family.¹⁴⁸⁶

4.5. LGBTIQ+ persons

Already before the Taliban's return to power in 2021, individuals identifying as LGBTIQ+ reportedly faced a precarious situation, with no specific legal protections¹⁴⁸⁷ – a situation that has not changed under the de facto government, where no laws protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.¹⁴⁸⁸ Instead, the 'Morality Law', enacted on 31 July 2024, contains specific prohibitions against 'lesbianism' and anal intercourse¹⁴⁸⁹ and the enabling of 'opportunities and means' for same-sex relationships, according to UN OHCHR.¹⁴⁹⁰ A spokesperson of the de facto Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cited by CNN, declared 'acts such as sodomy, bestiality and other perversions that contravene Islamic law are illegal and perpetrators are dealt with within the legal

¹⁴⁸¹ Barnett, R., Afghanistan Under the Taliban: Findings on the Current Situation, 20 October 2022, [url](#); Philips L. and Mirzada R., Shaking the sky: Women's attempts to claim their inheritance rights under the Emirate, AAN, February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁴⁸² UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January-March 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: April-June 2025, 10 August 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁸³ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 54; Philips, L. and Mirzada, R., Shaking the sky: Women's attempts to claim their inheritance rights under the Emirate, AAN, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 29–30; Bishnaw, Women's peace brief – April & June 2025, Women's Access to Justice under Taliban Governance, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁴⁸⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 54; Philips, L. and Mirzada, R., Shaking the sky: Women's attempts to claim their inheritance rights under the Emirate, AAN, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 29–30

¹⁴⁸⁵ UN Women, Gender alert: Four years of Taliban rule: Afghan women resist as restrictions tighten, 29 August 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁴⁸⁶ Philips, L. and Mirzada, R., Shaking the sky: Women's attempts to claim their inheritance rights under the Emirate, AAN, February 2025, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁴⁸⁷ JURISTnews, Hidden Atrocities: The Unseen Struggle of Afghanistan's LGBTQ+ Community Under Taliban Rule – report and interview, 8 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁸ ILGA World Database, Afghanistan, [2025], [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁹ Afghanistan, de facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22

¹⁴⁹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 59

framework'.¹⁴⁹¹ According to Amnesty International, same-sex relations are punishable by death.¹⁴⁹² There are no registered interest groups inside Afghanistan advocating for the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons.¹⁴⁹³

The de facto authorities have been enforcing judicially ordered corporal punishment in public,¹⁴⁹⁴ including for homosexuality,¹⁴⁹⁵ 'immoral relationships',¹⁴⁹⁶ 'sodomy' and 'adultery'.¹⁴⁹⁷ As noted by AW, it is difficult to discern how many of these cases involve LGBTIQ+ persons.¹⁴⁹⁸ According to data published by Rainbow Afghanistan,¹⁴⁹⁹ at least 98 LGBTIQ+ persons were subjected to public punishment that included stoning, wall crushing, flogging ranging from 25 to 39 lashes, and imprisonment, in 14 Afghan provinces between 2022 and 2024. Additional cases involving LGBTIQ+ individuals were reported in the provinces of Wardak, Faryab, Laghman, Ghor, Parwan, Helmand, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Zabul, and Farah.¹⁵⁰⁰ The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan noted an increase in corporal punishments for 'sodomy' in 2024, 'with a significant escalation beginning in September' after the enactment of the 'Morality law'. The UN Special Rapporteur also reported on corporal punishments of people in same-sex relationships often being combined with prison sentences, and noted some individuals being sentenced to 'burial under a wall'.¹⁵⁰¹ However, as noted by Rahimi, only corporal punishments in the form of lashings have been enforced.¹⁵⁰²

Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the situation for LGBTIQ+ persons has 'significantly worsened', according to Human Dignity Trust.¹⁵⁰³ According to the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, LGBTIQ+ persons continue to face entrenched and systematic discrimination under Taliban rule.¹⁵⁰⁴ The ICC's arrest warrants for the de facto Supreme Leader and the de facto Chief of Justice, included the crime of persecution on gender grounds of 'persons non-conforming with the Taliban's policy on gender, gender identity, or expression'.¹⁵⁰⁵

¹⁴⁹¹ CNN World, 'My whole body was praying for my death': LGBTQ Afghans say they face abuse in detention as Taliban crackdown intensifies, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹² AI, The State of the World's Human Rights, Afghanistan 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), p. 100; Outright International, Country Overview, Afghanistan, [2025], [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁴ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 35

¹⁴⁹⁵ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 10

¹⁴⁹⁶ Afghan LGBT, Flogging 63 people on charges of "Sodomy" and "Adultery" by the Taliban, 7 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁷ VOA, Men, women experience near daily floggings in Afghanistan, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁸ CNN World, 'My whole body was praying for my death': LGBTQ Afghans say they face abuse in detention as Taliban crackdown intensifies, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁹ a non-profit organization established to defend the rights, dignity, and lives of members of Afghanistan's LGBTIQ+ community.

¹⁵⁰⁰ JURISTnews, Hidden Atrocities: The Unseen Struggle of Afghanistan's LGBTQ+ Community Under Taliban Rule – report and interview, 8 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 60

¹⁵⁰² Rahimi, H., online interview, 29 October 2025

¹⁵⁰³ Human Dignity Trust, Afghanistan, summary, 3 April 2025, [url](#); VOA, Taliban continues corporal punishment, flogging 20 Afghans over alleged adultery, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁴ UN General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 69

¹⁵⁰⁵ ICC, Situation in Afghanistan: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II issues arrest warrants for Haibatullah Akhundzada and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

Amnesty International reported on LGBTIQ+ persons facing arbitrary arrests,¹⁵⁰⁶ and LGBTIQ+ rights advocates have reported on sexual violence against, and extrajudicial killings of LGBTIQ+ persons, including in detention facilities. The Afghan LGBT Organization has documented more than 50 cases of LGBTIQ+ persons being detained since August 2021, although the actual number is difficult to estimate in the absence of reliable reporting channels.¹⁵⁰⁷

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan reported on LGBTIQ+ persons having been accused of, or punished for, homosexuality often being ‘at greater risk of violence and discrimination, especially if these “offences” become known to their families and communities.’ The same source reported on male survivors of sexual violence sometimes facing punishment and revictimisation.¹⁵⁰⁸

Many LGBTIQ+ persons conceal their gender identity or sexual orientation¹⁵⁰⁹ and some live in hiding.¹⁵¹⁰ Having a norm-breaking sexual orientation or gender identity entails taboos and social stigma in the general Afghan society,¹⁵¹¹ which restrict them from ‘openly expressing their identity or appearing in public’.¹⁵¹² Already before the Taliban takeover, LGBTIQ+ persons were reported to have faced threats and harassment from the general population.¹⁵¹³ Social norms do not recognise ‘[t]he idea that an individual may have a particular orientation or that a community could exist around a common orientation or gender identity’, as reported by the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs in June 2023, and it is not acceptable to ‘[o]penly identifying as gay and putting into practice the desire to share your life with a person of the same sex’, as it ‘goes against traditional gender norms, societal codes and tribal and other codes of honour’.¹⁵¹⁴

Due to the often-visible nature of their gender expression, transgender individuals are particularly vulnerable,¹⁵¹⁵ and there have reportedly been cases of the Taliban beating such individuals and subjecting them to other forms of ill-treatment.¹⁵¹⁶ Under the former government transgender persons experienced ‘widespread discrimination, exploitation, and

¹⁵⁰⁶ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights, Afghanistan 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁷ CNN, ‘My whole body was praying for my death’: LGBTQ Afghans say they face abuse in detention as Taliban crackdown intensifies, 19 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Study on the so-called law on the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, 12 March 2025, [url](#), para. 60

¹⁵⁰⁹ HRW, “Even If You Go to the Skies, We’ll Find You”, 26 January 2022, [url](#); UN General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 70

¹⁵¹⁰ JURISTnews, Hidden Atrocities: The Unseen Struggle of Afghanistan’s LGBTQ+ Community Under Taliban Rule – report and interview, 8 November 2024, [url](#); AI, Afghanistan 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#); HRW, World report 2024: Afghanistan, Events of 2023, 12 January 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵¹¹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 29 February 2024, [url](#), para. 66; UN General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 69

¹⁵¹² ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 81, 86

¹⁵¹³ FP, What the Taliban Mean for Queer Afghans, 20 April 2022, [url](#); Fuller Project (The), Queer Afghan lives are at risk under the Taliban, 20 April 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁴ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), p. 98

¹⁵¹⁵ JURISTnews, Hidden Atrocities: The Unseen Struggle of Afghanistan’s LGBTQ+ Community Under Taliban Rule – report and interview, 8 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁶ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 86

violence', and since the Taliban takeover, the German-based organisation Rainbow Afghanistan have noted reports of genital mutilation, electric shock therapy, and gang rape of transgender persons while imprisoned.¹⁵¹⁷

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan reported in February 2025 that relatives of LGBTIQ+ persons, including those of individuals who have left the country, have faced reprisals such as detention, threats, and physical violence. According to a transgender woman, her family members were 'detained, beaten, and harassed by Taliban-affiliated individuals' after she fled, reportedly due to her gender identity.¹⁵¹⁸

4.6. Journalists and media workers

Media freedom has continued to decline, with increasing limitations placed on national and international broadcasters.¹⁵¹⁹ According to the 2025 RSF World Press Freedom Index, Afghanistan ranked 175 out of 180 countries, reflecting a decline of 23 positions compared to year 2023.¹⁵²⁰ By 2025, the Afghan media landscape has been 'decimated', as described by RSF, and 'devoid of pluralism and dissenting voices'.¹⁵²¹ More information on civic space and freedom of expression is available in section [1.1.1. Political opposition and civic space](#).

Since the Taliban takeover, the de facto authorities have issued several verbal and written instructions limiting the work of Afghan media,¹⁵²² including on publishing content that is indecent, profane,¹⁵²³ insulting national figures,¹⁵²⁴ or considered defamation and 'unproven criticism' of de facto officials.¹⁵²⁵ Article 17 of the 'Morality law' specifies that de facto MPVPV inspectors are to ensure contents of publication or public information do not contradict *sharia*, 'deride or humiliate Muslims', or include pictures of 'animate objects'.¹⁵²⁶ A compilation of relevant national decrees and instructions issued since the Taliban takeover is available in [Annex 3: Lists of decrees and instructions](#).

¹⁵¹⁷ JURISTnews, Hidden Atrocities: The Unseen Struggle of Afghanistan's LGBTQ+ Community Under Taliban Rule – report and interview, 8 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 68

¹⁵¹⁹ European Commission, 2024 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 176, para 1

¹⁵²⁰ RSF, Afghanistan, index 2025, [url](#), European Commission, 2024 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 176; Kabul Now, Taliban Ban Images of Living Beings in Herat, Now Enforced in 22 Provinces, 23 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵²¹ RSF, Afghanistan, [2025], [url](#)

¹⁵²² AFJC, The Taliban's Directives on Freedom of Media and Access to Information, 28 September 2023, [url](#); RSF, Afghanistan : the disturbing, escalating censorship suffocating the free press, 27 February 2025, [url](#); Just Security, The Taliban's Slow Dismantling of Afghan media, 10 July 2025, [url](#); دعلبي وزارت - وزارت عدليه [X], posted on: 21 August 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵²³ AAN, Decrees, Orders and Instructions of His Excellency, Amir al-mu'minin, as published in the Official Gazette on 22 May 2023, July 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵²⁴ AFJC, The Taliban's Directives on Freedom of Media and Access to Information, 28 September 2023, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁵ TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Leader Bans 'Unproven Allegations' Against Members, 22 July 2022, [url](#); Zabihullah [X], posted on: 21 July 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁶ Afghanistan, De facto authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 17; UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 9

Issued restrictions on the media have been vague and difficult to follow in practice.¹⁵²⁷ According to a compilation of the Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC), the de facto authorities have issued a number of directives that run in parallel with official laws. Although these directives have not been ‘issued by a single authority or following proper legal procedures’, they have restricted the work of journalists and media personnel.¹⁵²⁸ Reporters Without Borders (RSF) also noted a ‘particularly confusing situation for journalists’ receiving directives from various de facto authorities.¹⁵²⁹ UNAMA also outlined how the de facto authorities have established various ‘red lines’ for reporting, i.e. ‘no-go areas’, which are informal and broad. These include any content deemed contrary to *sharia*, Afghan culture, and national interests, and have been subject to ongoing and fluctuating interpretation.¹⁵³⁰

In the period 29 September–1 October 2025, Afghanistan experienced an almost complete shutdown of internet connectivity and mobile phone services.¹⁵³¹ UNAMA reported that media outlets relying on the internet to transmit, halted operations entirely, and journalists could not collect information via internet or telephone.¹⁵³² More information on this event is available in section [1.1.1. Political opposition and civic space](#).

The prohibition of images of living beings and music further limits the public information space and freedom of expression, as reported by UNAMA.¹⁵³³ While prohibitions on images of living beings existed in some areas prior to the issuance of the ‘Morality law’, these rules were progressively enforced in the media sector starting with September 2024.¹⁵³⁴ More information is available in section [1.2.7\(c\) The ban on images of living beings](#).

After the Taliban takeover, there was a large exodus of journalists,¹⁵³⁵ and some went into hiding.¹⁵³⁶ Many media outlets moreover closed.¹⁵³⁷ Out of the roughly 12 000 journalists that were active in Afghanistan in 2021, more than two thirds were estimated to have quit the profession after the Taliban takeover. In particular the number of active women journalists decreased significantly.¹⁵³⁸ 84 % of female journalists reportedly lost their jobs within two months of the Taliban takeover.¹⁵³⁹ Around half of Afghanistan’s 4 748 journalists, of which 747

¹⁵²⁷ JHR, Freedom of the Afghan Media, August 2024, [url](#), pp. 15–16, 20; USIP, Amid Taliban Repression, Afghan Media Are a Beacon of Hope, 10 August 2023, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁸ AFJC, AFJC: The Ministry of Information and Culture should respect media freedom in the use of official languages, 18 January 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁹ RSF, Afghanistan, [2025], [url](#)

¹⁵³⁰ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p.13

¹⁵³¹ RSF, In Afghanistan, new Taliban tactic to humiliate journalists: forced “confessions” broadcast online, 4 November 2025, [url](#); CNN, Taliban cuts internet across Afghanistan, 30 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵³² UNAMA, Out of reach: The impact of telecommunications shutdowns on the Afghan people, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁵³³ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁵³⁴ UNAMA, Report on the Implementation, Enforcement and Impact of the Law on the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Afghanistan, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 18; European Commission: 2024 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 176

¹⁵³⁵ RSF, Afghanistan, [2024], [url](#)

¹⁵³⁶ RFE/RL, This Is What It's Like To Be A Journalist Under Taliban Rule, 3 May 2024, [url](#); RSF, Afghanistan, [2024], [url](#)

¹⁵³⁷ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Restrict Media, 1 October 2021, [url](#); Columbia Journalism Review, What happened to Afghanistan’s journalists after the government collapsed, 17 March 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵³⁸ RSF, Afghanistan, [2024], [url](#)

¹⁵³⁹ Just Security, The Taliban’s Slow Dismantling of Afghan media, 10 July 2025, [url](#)



are female journalists, receive no pay or benefits, and AIJU warns that job security remains uncertain even in major media outlets.¹⁵⁴⁰ Reports suggest that 11 television stations and one radio station reportedly closed during 2024.¹⁵⁴¹ According to IFJ, approximately 470 media outlets remain operational in Afghanistan in 2025.¹⁵⁴²

Media workers have also been facing threats, intimidation, harassment,¹⁵⁴³ arbitrary arrests and detention by the de facto authorities.¹⁵⁴⁴ AFJC recorded at least 140 incidents of media freedom violations across Afghanistan during the first six months of 2025, representing an increase of approximately 56 % compared to the same period in 2024.¹⁵⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch reported that media restrictions in Afghanistan have led many journalists to self-censor and to concentrate their reporting on official events. In addition, journalists failing to cover such events may face reprimands, threats, or, in some instances, detention.¹⁵⁴⁶

One journalist was killed within the reference period of this report as per CPJ's records.¹⁵⁴⁷ The journalist reportedly died in crossfire on 15 October 2025 during a battle between Afghan de facto security forces and Pakistani security forces.¹⁵⁴⁸

Sources recorded cases in which journalists had been detained during 2024–2025 on allegations of various crimes, such as links to media outlets operating in exile,¹⁵⁴⁹ or producing content considered hostile to the de facto authorities.¹⁵⁵⁰ The number of arrests differs between sources, with RSF recording 17 detentions of journalists and media workers in 2025,¹⁵⁵¹ while AFJC recorded at least 20 cases in the first half of the year alone.¹⁵⁵² There were cases of journalists being arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for producing 'propaganda' against the de facto government.¹⁵⁵³ Some journalists were humiliated in videos with forced confessions, as reported by RSF.¹⁵⁵⁴ According to AFJC, reporting in May 2025, at

¹⁵⁴⁰ IFJ, Frontline Democracy Media Amid Political Churn, Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-2025, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴¹ European Commission, 2024 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 176, para 1

¹⁵⁴² Kabul Now, Taliban Ban Images of Living Beings in Herat, Now Enforced in 22 Provinces, 23 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴³ AFJC, AFJC Reports 140 Media Freedom Violations in First Half of 2025, Signifying a Sharp Increase, July 11, 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁴ RSF, Afghanistan, 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p.14; AFJC, AFJC Reports 140 Media Freedom Violations in First Half of 2025, Signifying a Sharp Increase, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁵ AFJC, AFJC Reports 140 Media Freedom Violations in First Half of 2025, Signifying a Sharp Increase, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁶ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁷ CPJ, Explore CPJ's database of attacks on the press, 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁸ CPJ, Abdul Ghafor Abed, 15 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁹ European Commission: 2024 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 176

¹⁵⁵⁰ RSF, In Afghanistan, new Taliban tactic to humiliate journalists: forced "confessions" broadcast online, 4 November 2025, [url](#); AFJC, AFJC Reports 140 Media Freedom Violations in First Half of 2025, Signifying a Sharp Increase, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵¹ RSF, World: Abuses in real time, 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵² AFJC, AFJC Reports 140 Media Freedom Violations in First Half of 2025, Signifying a Sharp Increase, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵³ AFJC, AFJC Urges Immediate Release of Detained Journalist Soliman Rahel Amid Rising Repression in Ghazni, 10 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵⁴ RSF, In Afghanistan, new Taliban tactic to humiliate journalists: forced "confessions" broadcast online, 4 November 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Court Sentences Journalist to Over a Year in Prison for Alleged Anti-Regime Propaganda, 8 January 2025, [url](#)



least 13 journalists and media workers were being held in detention or serving prison sentences ranging from several months to multiple years.¹⁵⁵⁵

As reported by Human Rights Watch, collaborating with Afghan media in exile is ‘particularly dangerous’ as the de facto authorities perceive them as linked to the opposition, a threat to their control,¹⁵⁵⁶ and as operating illegally.¹⁵⁵⁷ Various sources have reported on journalists being arrested on accusations of having collaborated with exile media,¹⁵⁵⁸ and Human Rights Watch also noted severe beatings and death threats against such individuals.¹⁵⁵⁹

Female media workers have been particularly affected by restrictions,¹⁵⁶⁰ including prohibitions on broadcasting women’s voices in some provinces,¹⁵⁶¹ gender segregation at media offices,¹⁵⁶² as well as general restrictions on women,¹⁵⁶³ including requirements for women to cover their faces¹⁵⁶⁴ and to be accompanied by a *mahram*.¹⁵⁶⁵ Female journalists have been excluded from press conferences, and are regularly denied interviews with de facto officials.¹⁵⁶⁶ In 2024, the Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization (AJSO) highlights reported on 38 % of women journalists facing major barrier to accessing information due to gender discrimination.¹⁵⁶⁷ According to the IFJ, the number of employed female journalists has dropped from 2 833 before 2021 to only 747 in 2025, a decline of 74 %.¹⁵⁶⁸

Although not specifying certain profiles, sources consulted by ACCORD reported that the de facto authorities threaten family members of individuals not complying with their rule, making it difficult for people in general to speak up.¹⁵⁶⁹ The Swiss Refugee Council furthermore reported on threats towards *inter alia* journalists extending to their family members, and that the issue of family members being targeted was most probably an underreported issue.¹⁵⁷⁰ For more information on family members of critical voices, see chapter 4.11. in the [2024 EUAA Country Focus – Afghanistan](#).

¹⁵⁵⁵ AFJC, AFJC Urges Immediate Release of Detained Journalist Soliman Rahel Amid Rising Repression in Ghazni, 10 May 2025, [url](#).

¹⁵⁵⁶ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵⁷ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁵⁵⁸ AFJC, AFJC Reports 140 Media Freedom Violations in First Half of 2025, Signifying a Sharp Increase 11 July 2025, [url](#); RSF, In Afghanistan, new Taliban tactic to humiliate journalists: forced “confessions” broadcast online, 4 November 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁵⁵⁹ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁰ European Commission: 2024 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 176

¹⁵⁶¹ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4; Zan Times, A day in the life of a woman journalist in southern Afghanistan, 1 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶² BBC Media Action, Women and the media in Afghanistan, October 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁵⁶³ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁵⁶⁴ CPJ, Taliban bans television broadcasts and public filming and photographing in Takhar province, October 28, 2024, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Ban Images of Living Beings in Herat, Now Enforced in 22 Provinces, September 23, 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁵ Zan Times, A day in the life of a woman journalist in southern Afghanistan, 1 April 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁵⁶⁶ UNAMA, Media Freedom in Afghanistan, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁵⁶⁷ AJSO, Barriers to Truth: Afghan Female Journalists’ Struggle for Access to Information in 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁵⁶⁸ IFJ, Frontline Democracy Media Amid Political Churn, Asia Press Freedom Report 2024-2025, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁹ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 12, 78–79

¹⁵⁷⁰ SFH, Afghanistan: Verfolgung von Familienangehörigen durch die Taliban, 20 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 12, 14–15



4.7. Human rights defenders and activists

Since the Taliban takeover, the space for Afghanistan's civil society has narrowed significantly,¹⁵⁷¹ in parallel to a gradual deterioration of the general human rights situation.¹⁵⁷² Already in the first weeks after their takeover, the Taliban introduced restrictions on demonstrations, requiring them to have prior official approval,¹⁵⁷³ and dissolved existing human rights protection bodies.¹⁵⁷⁴ Human rights organisations have faced administrative pressure, including demands to re-register, having bank accounts frozen, and certain activities barred.¹⁵⁷⁵ Since 2023, CIVICUS has rated civic space in Afghanistan as 'closed',¹⁵⁷⁶ which is the worst ranking on the organisations five-point scale.¹⁵⁷⁷ More information on civic space in Afghanistan is available in section [1.1.1. Political opposition and civic space](#).

According to Bertelsmann Stiftung, reporting in 2024, civil society activities have nearly vanished, and only international NGOs and humanitarian aid organisations remain.¹⁵⁷⁸ Almost all experienced human rights defenders have left Afghanistan,¹⁵⁷⁹ and those who remain are not able to work openly, but have been forced to find clandestine ways of working.¹⁵⁸⁰

Local and international NGOs operate in a restrictive environment.¹⁵⁸¹ Although some have taken adaptive measures, many civil society organisations, advocacy groups and professional associations have halted all activities.¹⁵⁸² One anonymous interviewee told ACCORD that 'humanitarian organisations were not as severely affected as other NGOs by restrictions introduced by the de facto authorities.'¹⁵⁸³ Similarly, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan reported that NGOs 'have been limited to humanitarian- and development-related activities' and have been limiting their activities in public awareness on issues such as health and hygiene, peacebuilding, and advocacy, including human rights promotion, as the de facto Ministry of Economy discouraged such activities at the end of

¹⁵⁷¹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 4 March 2022, [url](#), para. 52; Freedom House, A Needs Assessment of Afghan Human Rights Defenders, 2023, [url](#), p. 6; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 1

¹⁵⁷² UN General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 1; Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 8; UNAMA, UNAMA statement on UN day and 80th anniversary of the United Nations, 24 October 2025, [url](#); Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Afghanistan, Styre och rättskipning, 6 July 2023, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁵⁷³ Guardian (The), Taliban ban protests and slogans that don't have their approval, 8 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷⁴ Freedom House, A Needs Assessment of Afghan Human Rights Defenders, 2023, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁵⁷⁵ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 45–46

¹⁵⁷⁶ CIVICUS, Afghanistan: Activists targeted, media restricted as women further silenced by the Taliban, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷⁷ CIVICUS, Ratings, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁷⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 11, 15

¹⁵⁷⁹ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁸⁰ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, June 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Freedom House, A Needs Assessment of Afghan Human Rights Defenders, 2023, [url](#), pp. 11, 14

¹⁵⁸¹ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p.14; ACAPS, Afghanistan, Working under the ITA's evolving NGO regulations, 31 July 2023, [url](#), p.1; UN OCHA, Afghanistan: Overview of Funding Shortfall and Impact on Humanitarian Operations, 14 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸² UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, A/80/432, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para.40-41

¹⁵⁸³ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 62



2023.¹⁵⁸⁴ ACCORD reported on NGOs and international organisations having been ‘severely restricted in advocating for certain issues, such as women’s rights’, and a sources described sensitivities around terms such as ‘human rights’, ‘women’s voices’, ‘gender-based violence’, ‘democracy’ or ‘gender equality’.¹⁵⁸⁵ Women are forbidden from working for UN agencies,¹⁵⁸⁶ and the de facto authorities have called on NGOs to suspend female staff or risk losing their licenses.¹⁵⁸⁷ NGOs reported on documents signed by women staff being rejected by the de facto authorities, and that they faced pressure to replace women leaders with men.¹⁵⁸⁸

The de facto authorities cracked down on human rights defenders immediately after their takeover,¹⁵⁸⁹ in particular on protesting women activists who faced torture,¹⁵⁹⁰ imprisonment, and threats to their families.¹⁵⁹¹ Critical voices, including civil society activists and human rights defenders, have continued to face arbitrary arrest, enforce disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment as well as extrajudicial killings.¹⁵⁹² Other sources also reported on activists facing arbitrarily arrest after criticising the Taliban,¹⁵⁹³ and that arrests, disappearances and torture have been used to silence and prevent civil engagement.¹⁵⁹⁴ Rawadari reported that at least 32 civil society activists and human rights defenders, including 5 women, were arbitrarily arrested during the first half of 2025. Charges included organising training courses for women, campaigning against the Taliban or criticising their policies.¹⁵⁹⁵

Sources reported on family members of *inter alia* human rights defenders and activists sometimes being affected by the de facto authorities’ crackdown on dissent,¹⁵⁹⁶ including intimidation or reprisals,¹⁵⁹⁷ and threats extending to family members of critics.¹⁵⁹⁸ Some human rights defenders in exile have reportedly reduced their visibility fearing for the safety of remaining family members.¹⁵⁹⁹ More information on family members of critical voices is available in chapter 4.11. in the report [2024 EUAA Country Focus – Afghanistan](#).

¹⁵⁸⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), paras. 38–39

¹⁵⁸⁵ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 62

¹⁵⁸⁶ UN News, Excluded from Education, Public Life, Women, Girls Facing ‘Gender Apartheid’ in Afghanistan, Delegate Tells Security Council, 21 June 2023, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁷ UN News, ‘Absolutely the wrong path,’ Türk warns against Afghanistan’s ban on women in NGOs, 31 December 2024, [url](#); TOLONews, Ministry Orders NGOs to Suspend Female Staff, 24 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), paras. 38–39

¹⁵⁸⁹ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, June 2025, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁵⁹⁰ Akbar, S., former AIHRC chairperson, emails, 22 and 24 June 2022

¹⁵⁹¹ Atlantic Council, The Taliban’s violence ‘ignited a fierce resistance within me.’ A protester’s story, 26 August 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹² AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights, Afghanistan 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); CIVICUS, Afghanistan: The Taliban threatens to shutdown NGOs employing women and continues to criminalise activists and journalists, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹³ CIVICUS, Afghanistan: The Taliban threatens to shutdown NGOs employing women and continues to criminalise activists and journalists, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁴ Rawadari, Torture and Ill-Treatment: The state of prisons in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, June 2025, [url](#), p.16

¹⁵⁹⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025 August 2025, [url](#), pp. 8. 26

¹⁵⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), paras. 1, 24

¹⁵⁹⁷ CIVICUS, Afghanistan: The Taliban threatens to shutdown NGOs employing women and continues to criminalise activists and journalists, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁸ SFH, Afghanistan: Verfolgung von Familienangehörigen durch die Taliban, 20 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 12, 14–15

¹⁵⁹⁹ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 48



4.8. Ethnic and religious groups

4.8.1. General situation under Taliban rule

The de facto government is led by a thirty-three-member caretaker cabinet, composed of men who are predominantly ethnic Pashtuns,¹⁶⁰⁰ and Taliban members or individuals loyal to the group.¹⁶⁰¹ Most senior de facto officials, moreover, originate from Kandahar,¹⁶⁰² and other southern and southeastern Pashtun-majority provinces, whereas northern and central provinces have ‘little to no representation’, as noted by Amu TV.¹⁶⁰³ Non-Pashtun members of the cabinet include a small number of ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks,¹⁶⁰⁴ and three Hazaras serve as deputy ministers.¹⁶⁰⁵ Sikhs and Hindus have no representation in the cabinet.¹⁶⁰⁶ According to the Middle East Institute (MEI), out of approximately 1 185 individuals mapped in the Taliban leadership as of September 2025, around 90 % were Pashtuns, 5.3 % Tajiks, 2.5 % Uzbeks, 0.6 % Hazaras, and 0.4 % Turkmen.¹⁶⁰⁷

Due to their limited representation in public positions, ethnic and religious minorities face marginalisation in decision-making processes.¹⁶⁰⁸ Local communities are reportedly slightly better represented in the provinces, although they do not necessarily feel represented solely based on shared ethnicity,¹⁶⁰⁹ especially as local officials have often been appointed outside their home areas.¹⁶¹⁰ In Hazara-dominated areas some local Hazaras were appointed to de facto administration positions on district or provincial level¹⁶¹¹ and some low-level de facto government positions.¹⁶¹² However, Hazaras have largely been excluded from the de facto administration,¹⁶¹³ from senior positions, as well as within the police and intelligence service.¹⁶¹⁴

¹⁶⁰⁰ CFR, The Taliban in Afghanistan, last updated 14 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰¹ CFR, The Taliban in Afghanistan, last updated 14 August 2025, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 43, 44

¹⁶⁰² Amu TV, Exclusive: Taliban’s cabinet largely dominated by leaders from Kandahar, 16 November 2025, [url](#); Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹⁶⁰³ Amu TV, Exclusive: Taliban’s cabinet largely dominated by leaders from Kandahar, 16 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁴ EUAA, Afghanistan – Country Focus, November 2024, [url](#), p. 117

¹⁶⁰⁵ Amu TV, Taliban Housing Ministry stops sharing photos of ‘living beings’, 3 August 2025, [url](#); Ariana News, Afghanistan’s economy not dependent on foreign aid, says deputy minister Nazari, 2 August 2025, [url](#); Tolo News, Afghanistan’s Health System in 1403 Reviewed, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁶ Amu TV, Exclusive: Taliban’s cabinet largely dominated by leaders from Kandahar, 16 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁷ MEI, Taliban Leadership Tracker: Who is in power, last updated September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁸ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), paras. 62, 63; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 50; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 9 February 2023, [url](#), para. 42

¹⁶⁰⁹ Adili A. Y., The politics of survival in the face of exclusion (2): The Emirate’s accommodation and suppression of local Hazara commanders, 8 April 2025, [url](#); International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁶¹⁰ Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 22, 25–26, 28

¹⁶¹¹ Adili A. Y., The politics of survival in the face of exclusion (2): The Emirate’s accommodation and suppression of local Hazara commanders, 8 April 2025, [url](#); Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁶¹² Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶¹³ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁶¹⁴ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025



Furthermore, in many Ismaili-populated districts of Badakhshan Province, Ismailis have reportedly no representation in local offices.¹⁶¹⁵

Rawadari reported that, although the de facto authorities ‘prioritize ideological loyalty and a history of membership over ethnic and religious affiliation in their hiring process’, they have been acting discriminatorily in appointments and dismissals procedures since 2021,¹⁶¹⁶ relying on religious and ethnic criteria.¹⁶¹⁷ Primarily Pashtuns have been appointed in hiring processes,¹⁶¹⁸ and employees of ethnic and religious minorities have sometimes been collectively dismissed.¹⁶¹⁹ In the first half of 2025, several de facto government departments, including the de facto Ministry of Higher Education and universities, were restructured and many positions eliminated, disproportionately affecting non-Pashtun staff members in provinces such as Kabul, Panjshir, and Bamyān.¹⁶²⁰ Collective dismissals of Hazaras from local de facto government offices have been also reported in Daykundi, Bamyān, and Ghazni provinces.¹⁶²¹ During 2025, the de facto authorities dismissed many university professors, including in Bamyān.¹⁶²² This reportedly included many Hazara professors who were either dismissed or offered transfer to universities in Pashtun-dominated areas.¹⁶²³

Religious freedom has been curtailed since the Taliban takeover, with a de facto government ‘who vigorously assert their interpretation of the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam’, as reported by Freedom House.¹⁶²⁴ As a result, religious and ethnic minority groups have faced severe restrictions on their freedoms.¹⁶²⁵ Saleem and Semple noted that, while a majority of Afghans adhere to the Hanafi sect, Shias and Salafis constitute two major religious minorities, and they have been ‘affected by the Taliban efforts to favour the Hanafi sect’, including pressure on Salafi *madrassas* to conform with Hanafi doctrines, and excluding Shia jurisprudence from the justice system and removing references to Shia teachings from school curriculums.¹⁶²⁶

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan noted that Afghan stakeholders have been voicing concern about ethnic and religious grievances linked to ‘discrimination, exclusion, violence and the lack of protection, as well as lack of recognition of past violations’. Although the de facto authorities have ‘emphasized unity, stability and equal rights’, they

¹⁶¹⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁶¹⁶ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁶¹⁷ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁶¹⁸ Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 44; Norway, Landinfo, Temanotat, Afghanistan, Situasjonen for afghanske menn, 20 January 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report, Afghanistan, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 33

¹⁶¹⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 5, 43

¹⁶²⁰ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁶²¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 50; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁶²² Amu TV, Taliban dismiss hundreds of university professors across Afghanistan, sources say, 11 May 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Dismisses Dozens of Staff Members, Including Lecturers, from Bamyān University, 13 May 2025, [url](#); Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶²³ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶²⁴ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024, Afghanistan, 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁵ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 62; Freedom House, Afghanistan: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report, 2025, [url](#); GPC, Afghanistan: Protection Analysis Update, Update on protracted-crisis and climate-related protection risks trends January - December 2024, January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁶²⁶ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 22–23, 25



appeared ‘unwilling to acknowledge or address such grievances’.¹⁶²⁷ Likewise, sources noted that the de facto authorities have not sufficiently documented or addressed cases of crimes and targeted attacks against minorities.¹⁶²⁸

Sources have also emphasised that women from minority communities face intersecting and various forms of discrimination.¹⁶²⁹ This discrimination was reported in the forms of ‘structural exclusion’, gender-based violence, denial of education on the basis of both gender and ethnicity¹⁶³⁰ and access to healthcare.¹⁶³¹

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan noted ‘instances of hate speech and discrimination among Afghans, including online’. De facto officials have also used derogatory terms for ethnic and religious minorities.¹⁶³² This included the de facto Minister of the MPVPV who was cited by media as comparing non-Muslims with ‘four-legged animals’.¹⁶³³

The de facto authorities have increasingly promoted Pashto as the primary language in official communication¹⁶³⁴ – replacing other languages in signs and official correspondence.¹⁶³⁵ Research for RWI suggested that this reflected a broader pattern linked to the predominance of Pashtun officials in the de facto administration, and that Tajiks, Hazaras and other minority groups have been most negatively affected.¹⁶³⁶ In predominately Hazara-populated areas, such as Daykundi, there is a requirement for government interactions to be in Pashto instead of Dari.¹⁶³⁷ According to the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights, speakers of minority languages have further noted that media programming and education in their languages ‘have become rarer’.¹⁶³⁸

In 2024, ISKP attacks targeting members of religious minorities continued to be reported,¹⁶³⁹ especially against Shia Muslims, who are predominantly ethnic Hazaras, and also Sufis.¹⁶⁴⁰ During 2025, the number of ISKP attacks has reportedly decreased, targeting mostly the de

¹⁶²⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 44

¹⁶²⁸ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 63; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶²⁹ UN CEDAW, Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Afghanistan, 10 July 2025, [url](#), para. 40; Alavi, L. J., Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 39, 43; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶³⁰ UN CEDAW, Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Afghanistan, 10 July 2025, [url](#), para. 40

¹⁶³¹ Alavi, L. J., Intersectionality and Human Rights: Ensuring Access to Maternal Health in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁶³² UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 65

¹⁶³³ Afghanistan International, Taliban Minister’s Remarks On Non-Muslims Spark Concern Among Afghan Sikhs & Hindus, 12 April 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban minister calls non-Muslims ‘worse than four-legged animals’, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁴ Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 58–59; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶³⁵ Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 58, 59; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 48; Hasht-e Subh, Public Response to Taliban Political Deputy’s Remarks: Prejudice on the Rise, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁶ Formuli, H. A., Leaving Many Behind: Examining the State of Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Afghanistan, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 59

¹⁶³⁷ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶³⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 48

¹⁶³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 49; HRW, World report 2025, Afghanistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 49



facto authorities.¹⁶⁴¹ Within the reference period of this report the UN Secretary-General recorded continuous ISKP attacks targeting the de facto authorities, and one attack targeting ethnic minorities: the Sufi community.¹⁶⁴²

4.8.2. Land disputes

After the Taliban takeover, the de facto authorities started to reclaim government land¹⁶⁴³ for infrastructure projects and to recover land they claim was usurped.¹⁶⁴⁴ Within the reference period of this report, the de facto authorities have seized large areas of land reclassified as state property in several provinces across the country, including in Ghor, Maidan Wardak, Takhar, Nuristan, Badghis, Panjshir,¹⁶⁴⁵ Logar¹⁶⁴⁶, Badakhshan,¹⁶⁴⁷ Nangarhar¹⁶⁴⁸ and Kabul provinces,¹⁶⁴⁹ and especially in urban areas.¹⁶⁵⁰ The Taliban's land reclamation process has been marked by lack of transparency and legal safeguards,¹⁶⁵¹ with affected landowners often denied the ability to file appeals, present ownership documents,¹⁶⁵² or obtain compensation.¹⁶⁵³

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights stated that land disputes, frequently between different communities or related to fertile land, resources, as well as struggles for power and wealth, 'have plagued Afghanistan for generations'.¹⁶⁵⁴ Disputes over land ownership involving individual citizens have been a recurrent issue in Afghanistan,¹⁶⁵⁵ and often resurface with

¹⁶⁴¹ The Diplomat, Is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province Losing Momentum?, 26 June 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴² UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para. 15; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 20; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 21; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 18

¹⁶⁴³ Sabawoon, A. M., Land in Afghanistan: This time, retaking instead of grabbing land?, AAN, 15 December 2023, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 108; Guardian (The), Revealed: the truth behind the Taliban's brutal Kabul 'regeneration' programme, 18 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁵ Afghanistan International, Confiscated Over 259,000 Acres Of Land In Past Month, Claims Taliban, 8 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁶ Afghanistan International, Taliban Announce Confiscation Of Vast Tracts Of Land In Logar, 25 August 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Confiscated Over 259,000 Acres Of Land In Past Month, Claims Taliban, 8 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁷ Hasht-e Subh, Seizure of Public and Private Lands: Taliban Divide the Ishkashim District Market Among Themselves, 3 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁸ Afghanistan International, Taliban Extend Land Seizures, Taking Over Influential Afghan Leader Township, 22 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁹ Tolo News, Identification of Nine State-Owned Townships in Four Provinces, 2 November 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Taliban Announce Confiscation Of Vast Tracts Of Land In Logar, 25 August 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban confiscate 31 hectares of land in Kabul's Sherpur area, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 108

¹⁶⁵¹ Khaama Press, Land Commission claims 3.9 million Jeribs of grabbed land reclaimed, 12 May 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 108

¹⁶⁵² Afghanistan International, Taliban Extend Land Seizures, Taking Over Influential Afghan Leader Township, 22 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 108

¹⁶⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 23 February 2024, [url](#), para. 61

¹⁶⁵⁵ Sabawoon, A. M., Land in Afghanistan: This time, retaking instead of grabbing land?, AAN, 15 December 2023, [url](#)

each change in power.¹⁶⁵⁶ After the Taliban takeover in 2021, there was another shift in power balance and representation of communities, including at local levels and in the legal system.¹⁶⁵⁷ This led to an increase in land disputes,¹⁶⁵⁸ as many re-erupted¹⁶⁵⁹ across different areas of the country.¹⁶⁶⁰ Land disputes have *inter alia* involved Pashtun returnees from Pakistan, most of whom are Kuchis (a nomadic pastoralist group), reclaiming land upon return.¹⁶⁶¹ Disputes between local communities and Kuchis have affected different ethnic groups, including Hazara, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turkmen, and Uzbeks.¹⁶⁶² However, such disputes have also re-emerged in provinces with a homogenous ethnic composition, often along tribal or clan-based lines.¹⁶⁶³ Afghanistan expert Fabrizio Foschini indicated that '[a]lmost every Afghan province, if not district, has its own, specific type of land dispute, often dating back some decades'.¹⁶⁶⁴ However, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan also reported in 2025 that, although disputes over land and claims of usurpation occurred across Afghanistan, they disproportionately affected minorities and internally displaced persons.¹⁶⁶⁵ The de facto authorities have reportedly supported Pashtun communities, especially in land conflicts with non-Pashtuns,¹⁶⁶⁶ while local de facto courts and Taliban-controlled commissions have consistently ruled in favour of the Kuchis,¹⁶⁶⁷ sometimes ordering the payment of compensation for alleged land-use losses¹⁶⁶⁸ to the Kuchis who raise these claims.¹⁶⁶⁹

Land conflicts between sedentary Hazara communities and nomadic Kuchi pastoralists trace back to the late 19th century,¹⁶⁷⁰ when Amir Abdur Rahman Khan displaced many Hazaras and

¹⁶⁵⁶ Sabawoon, A. M., Land in Afghanistan: This time, retaking instead of grabbing land?, AAN, 15 December 2023, [url](#); ACAPS, Afghanistan: Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁶⁵⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 23 February 2024, [url](#), para. 61

¹⁶⁵⁸ IFRC, Emergency Appeal, Operational Strategy, Afghanistan: Population Movement (Returnees), 24 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4; RFE/RL, The Azadi Briefing: Afghanistan Witnesses A Surge In Violence, 20 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 106; ACAPS, Afghanistan: Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#), p. 3; Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁰ ACAPS, Afghanistan: Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁶⁶¹ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 6, 23; Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶² ACAPS, Afghanistan: Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁶⁶³ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁶⁶⁴ Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁵ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 85

¹⁶⁶⁶ International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁶⁶⁷ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 14, 34, 35, 37; ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 83; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁸ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 34, 36, 39; Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁹ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶⁷⁰ Kabul Now, Taliban Evicts Entire Hazara Village in Bamiyan After Ruling in Favor of Nomadic Kuchis, 28 July 2025, [url](#); Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

redistributed lands to Kuchi tribes.¹⁶⁷¹ According to an academic research fellow with RWI, '[l]and has long been a deeply contested and politicized issue' in Afghanistan's Hazarajat region (the central region of the country which has historically been disputed between the Kuchis/local Pashtuns and the Hazara people). Before the Taliban's return to power in 2021, land conflicts between Hazaras and Kuchis often led to seasonal confrontations.¹⁶⁷² State interventions under previous governments lacked long-term solutions,¹⁶⁷³ thus many of these disputes had remained unresolved.¹⁶⁷⁴ Since the Taliban takeover, the land conflict in Hazarajat between Hazara communities and Kuchi has intensified.¹⁶⁷⁵ As 'a greater number' of Kuchi nomads, compared to previous years, have moved into Hazarajat¹⁶⁷⁶ and gained broader access to the region,¹⁶⁷⁷ an increase in land disputes was reported.¹⁶⁷⁸ In some provinces, Kuchis have asserted collective ownership over entire villages, basing their claims on historical rights to pasturelands as well as agricultural and residential areas,¹⁶⁷⁹ while many such claims often lack formal documentation.¹⁶⁸⁰ Land claims were also raised against Hazaras in Hazarajat region by ethnic Tajiks.¹⁶⁸¹

The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan stated that land disputes are handled through informal dispute resolution mechanisms or de facto courts.¹⁶⁸² In a previous report, the same source indicated that many legal disputes in general are resolved through informal dispute resolution processes 'both because litigants prefer those mechanisms and because judges refer disputes to them'.¹⁶⁸³ Due the absence of a clear legal framework for housing, land, and property administration since 2021,¹⁶⁸⁴ along with ambiguity in the enforcement of property laws, in cases of land and property disputes many individuals turn to

¹⁶⁷¹ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 5; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶⁷² Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 5–6

¹⁶⁷³ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 5–6

¹⁶⁷⁴ Kabul Now, Taliban Evicts Entire Hazara Village in Bamiyan After Ruling in Favor of Nomadic Kuchis, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁵ Kabul Now, Armed Kochis Kill Hazara Farmer in Behsud, Renewing Fears of Systematic Violence and Displacement, 29 July 2025, [url](#); Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁶⁷⁶ Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁷ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁶⁷⁸ Hasht-e Subh, Sources: Nomads Shoot and Kill Young Hazara Man in Maidan Wardak Province, 30 July 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Evicts Entire Hazara Village in Bamiyan After Ruling in Favor of Nomadic Kuchis, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁹ Moradi, K., "Throwing Dust in Our Eyes": Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁶⁸⁰ Kabul Now, Taliban Evicts Entire Hazara Village in Bamiyan After Ruling in Favor of Nomadic Kuchis, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸¹ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶⁸² UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 86; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶⁸³ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 12

¹⁶⁸⁴ GPC, Afghanistan: Protection Analysis Update, Update on protracted-crisis and climate-related protection risks trends January - December 2024, January 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan: Protection, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

informal dispute resolution methods,¹⁶⁸⁵ including community councils, such as Shuras¹⁶⁸⁶ and Jirgas.¹⁶⁸⁷ Abdul Ghafoor Rafiey, former director and founder of the Afghanistan Migrants Advice & Support Organization (AMASO) told ACCORD that implementation of certain rules or regulations varies by region, with these differences depending on the specific issue being addressed, such as land grabbing.¹⁶⁸⁸ Women frequently face difficulties obtaining the official documentation, including identity documents and land titles, limiting their ability to prove ownership or defend legal land claims in cases of land disputes.¹⁶⁸⁹ As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, women seeking resolution through the Taliban court system ‘face intimidation and humiliation’,¹⁶⁹⁰ while community mechanisms are often biased towards women.¹⁶⁹¹ Information in public reports published by the de facto authorities indicated that in the period 31 October 2024–3 August 2025, at least 109 local conflicts, including land disputes, had been resolved ‘through mediation by local community elders, religious scholars and the de facto authorities’ in several provinces.¹⁶⁹² Regardless of the mechanism to settle land disputes, representatives of minority communities facing such land claims ‘report feeling powerless, distrustful and fearful of the de facto authorities, often referring to their alleged bias or close connections with claimants’.¹⁶⁹³ For instance, Sharan noted that Hazaras faced limited prospects for a favourable outcome in legal disputes, including land conflict cases, due to lack of representation.¹⁶⁹⁴

In some cases, threats and violence were employed to enforce land claims,¹⁶⁹⁵ leading to disputes not reaching de facto courts.¹⁶⁹⁶ Other reports have suggested that land disputes often result in forced evictions and displacement especially of minority groups, including Hazaras, and have been facilitated or tolerated by the de facto authorities.¹⁶⁹⁷ In July 2025, Afghan media in exile reported that the de facto authorities forcibly evicted the residents of

¹⁶⁸⁵ GPC, Afghanistan: Protection Analysis Update, Update on protracted-crisis and climate-related protection risks trends January - December 2024, January 2025, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁶⁸⁶ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁶⁸⁷ EURAC Research, A traditional code and its consequences: how Pashtunwali affects women and minorities in Afghanistan, 25 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸⁸ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁶⁸⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 48, 66

GPC, Afghanistan: Protection Analysis Update, Update on protracted-crisis and climate-related protection risks trends January - December 2024, January 2025, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁶⁹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, 16 June 2025, [url](#), para. 48

¹⁶⁹¹ Humanitarian Action, Afghanistan: Protection, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹² UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 14; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 12; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 14

¹⁶⁹³ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 86

¹⁶⁹⁴ Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025

¹⁶⁹⁵ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 86; Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁶⁹⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 107

¹⁶⁹⁷ Moradi, K., ‘Throwing Dust in Our Eyes’: Nomadic-Sedentary Land Conflict in Hazarajat under the Taliban and Its Human Rights Impacts, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 13, 49; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 105; Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taliban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

Rashk village in Panjab District, Bamiyan Province – a predominantly Hazara community¹⁶⁹⁸ – after a Taliban court ruled in favour of Kuchi nomads in a decades-old land dispute, which re-emerged after the Taliban takeover. A de facto authorities' delegation, accompanied by Kuchi tribesmen, reportedly enforced a previously issued 15-day eviction order by removing belongings from houses and locking the properties, in an allegedly 'biased' legal process. Residents reportedly accused the de facto authorities of arresting villagers involved in the dispute.¹⁶⁹⁹

Although incidents of violence have reportedly occurred less frequently than during the Islamic Republic,¹⁷⁰⁰ land disputes often result in violence,¹⁷⁰¹ especially in rural areas.¹⁷⁰² Within the reference period of this report, media sources reported on several incidents of killings and injuries of individuals over land disputes, including in Nangarhar,¹⁷⁰³ Takhar,¹⁷⁰⁴ Kapisa,¹⁷⁰⁵ Nuristan,¹⁷⁰⁶ and Uruzgan provinces.¹⁷⁰⁷ These incidents referred to cases of land disputes within¹⁷⁰⁸ and between families.¹⁷⁰⁹ According to Afghan media in exile in a village of Warsaj District, Takhar Province, family members of a local Taliban commander shot a resident and physically assaulted others over a land ownership dispute. The de facto authorities reportedly arrested a relative of the commander, while the other involved remained free and threatened residents against filing complaints.¹⁷¹⁰ Exile media also reported on a Hazara farmer in Behsud District of Wardak Province being killed by armed Kuchis in July 2025, after attempting to prevent their livestock from entering his farmland.¹⁷¹¹ According to Kabul Now, the de facto

¹⁶⁹⁸ Kabul Now, Taliban Evicts Entire Hazara Village in Bamiyan After Ruling in Favor of Nomadic Kuchis, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁹ Afghanistan International, Taliban Forcibly Evict Villagers In Bamiyan Following Land Dispute With Nomads, 29 July 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Evicts Entire Hazara Village in Bamiyan After Ruling in Favor of Nomadic Kuchis, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁰ Foschini, F., The Pastures of Heaven: An update of Kuchi-Hazara disputes as spring approaches, AAN, 24 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰¹ Amu TV, Young man killed in family land dispute in eastern Afghanistan, sources say, 6 May 2025, [url](#); UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 88

¹⁷⁰² Amu TV, Young man killed in family land dispute in eastern Afghanistan, sources say, 6 May 2025, [url](#);

¹⁷⁰³ Pajhwok News, 10 killed, 22 injured in Afghanistan last week, 27 July 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 1 killed, 7 wounded over property dispute in Nangarhar, 25 July 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Young man killed in family land dispute in eastern Afghanistan, sources say, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁴ Afghanistan International, Violent Land Dispute Involving Taliban Commander Reported In Takhar, 3 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁵ Pajhwok News, 2 killed, as many wounded in Afghanistan last week, 10 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁶ Pajhwok News, 6 people killed in Afghanistan last week, 6 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁷ Pajhwok News, 3 people killed, as many injured in Afghanistan last week, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁸ Pajhwok News, Land dispute claims 2 lives in Nangarhar, 10 September 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 2 killed, as many wounded in Afghanistan last week, 10 August 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 6 people killed in Afghanistan last week, 6 July 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Young man killed in family land dispute in eastern Afghanistan, sources say, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁹ Pajhwok News, 10 killed, 22 injured in Afghanistan last week, 27 July 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 1 killed, 7 wounded over property dispute in Nangarhar, 25 July 2025, [url](#); Pajhwok News, 6 people killed, 4 injured in Afghanistan last week, 5 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁰ Amu TV, Clash over grazing land in northern Afghanistan injures six, sources say, 4 November 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Violent Land Dispute Involving Taliban Commander Reported In Takhar, 3 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹¹ Hasht-e Subh, Sources: Nomads Shoot and Kill Young Hazara Man in Maidan Wardak Province, 30 July 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Armed Kuchis Kill Hazara Farmer in Behsud, Renewing Fears of Systematic Violence and Displacement, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

authorities later detained the suspected perpetrators.¹⁷¹² In November 2025, a similar killing was reported in Daymirdad District, Wardak Province.¹⁷¹³

4.8.3. Blood feuds

In August 2025, AAN expert Sharif Akram described blood feuds or revenge killings as closely connected to notions of honour, pride and shame ‘as seen through tribal customs and centuries-old traditions in Afghan society’. Although blood feuds exist to some extent among all ethnic groups in Afghanistan, they ‘have been historically widespread’ among Pashtun tribes, especially in the south, east and southeast, representing a ‘defining feature’ of Pashtun tribal tradition’. Blood revenge is enshrined in *Pashtunwali* (traditional social, cultural, and quasi-legal code regulating the Pashtun way of life) and is called *badal*.¹⁷¹⁴ Blood feuds sometimes can start with minor incidents or disagreements escalating into long-lasting enmities.¹⁷¹⁵ These feuds do not have a specific time limit to end¹⁷¹⁶ and may last for generations.¹⁷¹⁷ Blood feuds that are not resolved, often gradually involve more family members, while they can expand from family to clan and tribe level.¹⁷¹⁸ They are frequently initiated by disputes linked to honour-related issues, often involving women or girls, the killing of a relative, land disputes,¹⁷¹⁹ inheritance,¹⁷²⁰ water rights, and family conflicts.¹⁷²¹

Akram, based on research carried out in Khost province, suggested that, in the past decades, there had been ‘shifts in cultural norms’ in Afghan society which had led to a noticeable decline in blood feuds. The same source however highlighted that, due to lack of data and documentation information, ‘as well as the complex and deeply personal nature of these conflicts’, estimating this decline is challenging. Moreover, the nature of blood feuds has reportedly changed, with their frequency and length decreasing and becoming more ‘contained’ in terms of persons involved. Increased ‘access to education, exposure to other cultures and values and inter-tribal connectivity’ were identified as some of the main factors of this change.¹⁷²² However, since the Taliban takeover in 2021, blood feud cases had been re-

¹⁷¹² Kabul Now, Armed Kochis Kill Hazara Farmer in Behsud, Renewing Fears of Systematic Violence and Displacement, 29 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹³ Hasht-e Subh, Armed Kuchis Shoot a Man Dead in Maidan Wardak Province, 17 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁴ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁵ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#); Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Pashtuns and the Pashtunwali, 10 April 2024, [url](#), p. 10; Pajhwok News, Hundreds of bloody feuds resolved in past 2 years, 28 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁶ Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Pashtuns and the Pashtunwali, 10 April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁷¹⁷ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#); Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Pashtuns and the Pashtunwali, 10 April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁷¹⁸ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁹ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#); Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Pashtuns and the Pashtunwali, 10 April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁷²⁰ Pajhwok News, Hundreds of bloody feuds resolved in past 2 years, 28 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷²¹ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷²² Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

emerging,¹⁷²³ while confidential sources interviewed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2023 indicated that cases previously processed by the former government were being reconsidered under the de facto authorities.¹⁷²⁴

Blood feuds and retaliation killings are mainly resolved through informal *jirga* resolution, and in some cases through judicial proceedings.¹⁷²⁵ Residents of Khost Province interviewed for the 2025 AAN report noted that, although new blood feuds were rare, many such conflicts remained from previous generations. However, these unresolved feuds had become less violent as tribal elders, youth and *jirgas* were ‘playing a more active role in mediation and conflict resolution’.¹⁷²⁶ In February 2024, the de facto Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs (MoBTA), as cited by local media, claimed to have resolved 1 271 disputes with the help of religious scholars and elders across the country since the Taliban takeover in 2021.¹⁷²⁷ In certain cases blood feuds can be resolved or averted through the practice of ‘blood price’, which refers to a form of compensation paid by a person or a member of a family whose rights have been violated,¹⁷²⁸ or through compensation in form of property or land.¹⁷²⁹ They may also be resolved through the practice of *baad*, which refers to the exchange of girls and women between families or clans.¹⁷³⁰ For instance, the family of the person accused of murder or manslaughter gives a bride to a male member of the victim’s family in order to end the feud.¹⁷³¹ In 2022, AAN expert Ali Mohammad Sabawoon noted that *baad* marriages were relatively rare and had become rarer in recent years.¹⁷³² However, the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum in a 2024 report, indicated that forced marriage of girls to settle feuds was ‘still common among Pashtuns’, who ‘believe that this principle can keep families safe and imposes a heavy penalty on the violator’.¹⁷³³ In December 2021, the de facto authorities issued

¹⁷²³ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), p. 97; Khaama Press, Family Feuds; Family Conflict in South-Eastern Afghanistan Kills and Injures 9 People, 10 August 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁴ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report Afghanistan, June 2023, [url](#), p. 97

¹⁷²⁵ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁶ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁷ Pajhwok News, Hundreds of bloody feuds resolved in past 2 years, 28 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁸ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#); Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Pashtuns and the Pashtunwali, 10 April 2024, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁷²⁹ Akram, S., Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, AAN, 4 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷³⁰ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, 15 June 2025, [url](#), p. 52; Butt, J., A force for good, or source of coercion? An Islamic scholar reflects on the Emirate’s morality law, AAN, April 2025, [url](#), p. 41; VOA, Taliban Edict in Afghanistan Bars Marriages Without Women’s Consent, 3 December 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷³¹ Sabawoon, A. M., Living in a Collapsed Economy (4): The desperation and guilt of giving a young daughter in marriage, AAN, 20 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷³² Sabawoon, A. M., Living in a Collapsed Economy (4): The desperation and guilt of giving a young daughter in marriage, AAN, 20 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷³³ Austria, BFA Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan: Pashtuns and the Pashtunwali, 10 April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

a decree on Women's Rights,¹⁷³⁴ outlawing some traditional practices, including *baad*,¹⁷³⁵ as un-Islamic.¹⁷³⁶

4.8.4. Hazaras and other Shia groups

(a) Background

The majority of Hazaras in Afghanistan are Shia Muslims (Twelver branch).¹⁷³⁷ A significant number follow the Ismaili Shia school of thought, while others are Sunni Muslims.¹⁷³⁸ Most Hazaras are Dari speakers.¹⁷³⁹

The Hazara community has historically faced discrimination and repression under various rules in Afghanistan,¹⁷⁴⁰ most notably under the rule of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan in the 19th century,¹⁷⁴¹ when Hazaras were enslaved, subjected to mass killings, and pushed to mass exodus.¹⁷⁴² The Taliban also engaged in massacres of Hazara civilians during their previous rule in 1996–2001.¹⁷⁴³ Before the Taliban takeover in 2021, Hazaras were targeted by attacks by both the Taliban and the ISKP.¹⁷⁴⁴ Political influence of Hazaras improved under the Islamic Republic,¹⁷⁴⁵ although they faced discrimination.¹⁷⁴⁶

¹⁷³⁴ Zabihullah [X], posted on: 3 December 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷³⁵ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, 15 June 2025, [url](#), p. 52; Butt, J., A force for good, or source of coercion? An Islamic scholar reflects on the Emirate's morality law, AAN, April 2025, [url](#), p. 41; Barnett, R., Afghanistan Under the Taliban: Findings on the Current Situation, 20 October 2022, [url](#); VOA, Taliban Edict in Afghanistan Bars Marriages Without Women's Consent, 3 December 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷³⁶ Reid, R., Manoeuvring through the cracks: The Afghan human rights movement under the Islamic Emirate, AAN, 15 June 2025, [url](#), p. 52

¹⁷³⁷ MRG, MRG alarmed by ongoing and systematic persecution of Hazaras, 19 June 2025, [url](#); ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 83

¹⁷³⁸ MRG, MRG alarmed by ongoing and systematic persecution of Hazaras, 19 June 2025, [url](#); Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷³⁹ MRG, MRG alarmed by ongoing and systematic persecution of Hazaras, 19 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁰ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 82; Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 24; Diplomat (The), The Plight of Hazaras Under the Taliban Government, 24 January 2024, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan: ISIS Group Targets Religious Minorities, 6 September 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴¹ Hasht-e Subh, Hazara Culture: A Legacy of Resilience and Awareness, 19 May 2025, [url](#); Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁷⁴² Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Hasht-e Subh, Hazara Culture: A Legacy of Resilience and Awareness, 19 May 2025, [url](#); HRW, Afghanistan: ISIS Group Targets Religious Minorities, 6 September 2022, [url](#); EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), pp. 130 – 131

¹⁷⁴³ BBC News, Afghan Hazara refugees live in fear of being deported by Pakistan, 6 December 2023, [url](#); EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), p. 132

¹⁷⁴⁴ EURAC Research, A traditional code and its consequences: how Pashtunwali affects women and minorities in Afghanistan, 25 June 2025, [url](#); MRG, MRG alarmed by ongoing and systematic persecution of Hazaras, 19 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁵ Hasht-e Subh, Shared Struggles: Kurds and Hazaras in the Fight for Identity and Survival, 27 September 2024, [url](#); Norway, Landinfo, Afghanistan: Hazaraer og afghansk opprørsbevegelse, 3 October 2016, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁷⁴⁶ MRG, MRG alarmed by ongoing and systematic persecution of Hazaras, 19 June 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Shared Struggles: Kurds and Hazaras in the Fight for Identity and Survival, 27 September 2024, [url](#)

(b) Policies and discrimination by the de facto authorities

Following their takeover, the Taliban held a series of meetings with Shia Hazara leaders from various parts of the country,¹⁷⁴⁷ and pledged to provide security for all citizens, including Hazaras,¹⁷⁴⁸ and expressing their willingness to avoid sectarian divisions.¹⁷⁴⁹ Hazaras' limited participation in de facto government positions¹⁷⁵⁰ has negatively impacted their access to government services,¹⁷⁵¹ including in obtaining official documents, such as passports.¹⁷⁵² More information on representation of Hazaras is available in section [4.8.1. General situation under Taliban rule](#). Sources noted a discrepancy between the Taliban leadership's public stance towards Shia Hazaras and the actual treatment of these communities by their rank-and-file.¹⁷⁵³ Kerr Chioyenda noted that there are sentiments among parts of the population that Hazaras are not 'proper' Muslims.¹⁷⁵⁴

The Taliban have stated that Shia Muslims are free to practice their beliefs,¹⁷⁵⁵ but they have been restricting 'religious practices that they considered discordant with their views'.¹⁷⁵⁶ Some Shia ceremonies and celebrations were allowed to take place,¹⁷⁵⁷ mainly in private spaces or in Shia mosques.¹⁷⁵⁸ However, the de facto authorities restricted the observance of *Muharram* and *Ashura* commemorations by monitoring celebrations,¹⁷⁵⁹ prohibiting holding ceremonies in open spaces¹⁷⁶⁰ or hindering participation in the ceremonies and removing religious symbols, including in Kabul, Herat, Ghazni, Parwan, Nimruz, Ghor, and Bamyan provinces.¹⁷⁶¹ In November 2024, the de facto authorities arrested two Shia clerics in Jebrael Herat

¹⁷⁴⁷ Afghanistan International, Expect Hazaras To Support Taliban Security Forces, Says Taliban Interior Minister, 9 February 2023, [url](#); Adili A. Y., The politics of survival in the face of exclusion: Hazara and Shia Actors under the Taliban, AAN, February 2023, [url](#), p. 22; USDOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 51

¹⁷⁴⁸ Khaama Press, Hazaras are Expected to Support Taliban Security Forces: Sirajuddin Haqqani, 10 February 2023, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Expect Hazaras To Support Taliban Security Forces, Says Taliban Interior Minister, 9 February 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁹ USDOS, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#), p. 51

¹⁷⁵⁰ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁷⁵¹ International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁷⁵² Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025; Mohammadi, M., Human Rights Conditions for Hazaras in Afghanistan Under the Taliban Regime, 7 February 2023, [url](#), pp. 2, 13

¹⁷⁵³ International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁷⁵⁴ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷⁵⁵ Kabul Now, Taliban Detains Two Shia Clerics in Western Afghanistan, 4 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁶ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 36

¹⁷⁵⁷ Hasht-e Subh, Ashura Under the Shadow of the Taliban: Shiites Protest Restrictions on Religious Freedom, 7 July 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Ashura commemorated amid restrictions and calls for unity, 6 July 2025, [url](#); Ariana news, 10th of Muharram observed peacefully in Afghanistan, 6 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁸ Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷⁵⁹ Hasht-e Subh, Ashura Under the Shadow of the Taliban: Shiites Protest Restrictions on Religious Freedom, 7 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁰ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 50–51; Kerr Chioyenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Kabul Now, Taliban Impose Restrictions as Shias Begin to Observe Muharram, 7 July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 50–51



Province.¹⁷⁶² Although the reason for their arrest was not clarified,¹⁷⁶³ local sources told exile Afghan media that the clerics had previously protested against the restrictions on the *Ashura* commemoration.¹⁷⁶⁴ In March 2025, the de facto authorities in Ghazni Province instructed members of the Shiite council of scholars to begin Ramadan and hold the Eid prayer according to Hanafi jurisprudence, forcing Shiites to perform Eid prayers one day earlier than their religious practice foresaw, and arresting three Shiite religious scholars for not complying.¹⁷⁶⁵ In June 2025, similar arrests were reported in Daykundi province.¹⁷⁶⁶ Furthermore, a local ban on intermarriages between Shias, including Ismailis,¹⁷⁶⁷ and Sunnis was reported in Paktia, Nimruz,¹⁷⁶⁸ and Badakhshan provinces.¹⁷⁶⁹

Shia Ja'fari jurisprudence has been excluded from the de facto judiciary,¹⁷⁷⁰ as well as from school and university curricula, being replaced with Hanafi jurisprudence.¹⁷⁷¹ The de facto authorities have instructed educational institutions to remove materials and books conflicting with Hanafi jurisprudence and considered contrary to the regime's principles and policies,¹⁷⁷² particularly those associated with the Shia sect,¹⁷⁷³ including in Bamyan, Daykundi, Ghazni, and Ghor provinces.¹⁷⁷⁴ In October 2024, the Taliban have distributed a list of 400 banned books to libraries and bookstores prohibiting their sale and mandating their removal,¹⁷⁷⁵ including those related to the Shia branch of Islam.¹⁷⁷⁶

Shia Hazaras have moreover faced discrimination.¹⁷⁷⁷ Rafiey noted that particularly Hazaras are vulnerable to discrimination in Afghanistan, as they are one of the largest minority, and also

¹⁷⁶² Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests Two Influential Shia Clerics In Herat's Jibril Town, 4 November 2024, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Detains Two Shia Clerics in Western Afghanistan, 4 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶³ Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests Two Influential Shia Clerics In Herat's Jibril Town, 4 November 2024, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Detains Two Shia Clerics in Western Afghanistan, 4 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁴ Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests Two Influential Shia Clerics In Herat's Jibril Town, 4 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 51

¹⁷⁶⁶ Afghanistan International, Taliban Arrests Clerics, Residents In Daikundi For Early Eid Observance, 9 June 2025, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban Arrests 70 People in Daikundi for Holding Eid Prayers a Day Early, 8 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁷ ZAN Times, Afghanistan's Ismailis face systematic persecution under the Taliban, 8 September 2025, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 51

¹⁷⁶⁸ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁷⁶⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 51; Hasht-e Subh, Taliban Ban Shia-Sunni Marriages in Badakhshan's Nusay District, 3 February 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁰ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Kabul Now, Taliban Intensifies Campaign Against "Banned" Books in Central Afghanistan, 27 October 2024, [url](#); ZAN Times, 'I saw them execute the others': How 14 Hazara men were killed by terrorists, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷¹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 44; ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 83

¹⁷⁷² ZAN Times, Banning 700 books and 18 subjects: The Taliban's latest effort at dismantling higher education, 16 September 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Taliban's Ideological Purge: Rewriting Afghanistan's University Curriculum, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷³ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 44; ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 83

¹⁷⁷⁴ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁷⁷⁵ France 24, Taliban govt clearing 'un-Islamic' books from Afghanistan shelves, 20 November 2024, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban issue list of 400 banned books to libraries, 26 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁶ Amu TV, Taliban issue list of 400 banned books to libraries, 26 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁷ MRG, MRG alarmed by ongoing and systematic persecution of Hazaras, 19 June 2025, [url](#); Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 25; EUAA, Afghanistan – Country Focus, November 2024, [url](#), p. 123



due to their historical experiences of facing oppression (including under the current de facto administration) owing to their ethnicity, and their classification as ‘infidels’ by the Taliban.¹⁷⁷⁸ Kerr Chiovenda noted that, although no current large-scale massacres have occurred, past violence against the group by the Taliban suggests a possibility that this may recur in the future.¹⁷⁷⁹

Sources described a perception that Hazaras benefitted too much under the former government, which needed to be revised,¹⁷⁸⁰ resulting in Hazaras being ‘systematically treated differently’ by the local Taliban.¹⁷⁸¹ As noted by Kerr Chiovenda, the de facto authorities’ treatment of Hazaras has enabled people in ethnically mixed areas ‘to express their anti-Hazara prejudice’.¹⁷⁸² Hazaras have for example been facing derogatory terms relating to their facial features,¹⁷⁸³ and their Shia identity.¹⁷⁸⁴ Meanwhile, Saleem and Semple also reported on Hazaras being discriminated by the de facto authorities, but suggested that this was only ‘tangentially related to sectarian differences’ and ‘far more plausibly explained by the history of ethnic competition’.¹⁷⁸⁵

Some sources suggested that the de facto authorities have intentionally excluded religious and ethnic minorities from humanitarian aid.¹⁷⁸⁶ For example, Rawadari reported that the de facto Rural Rehabilitation and Development Directorate in Ghazni distributing cash and food aid to nearly 10 000 families in several districts, excluded Hazara and other ethnic and religious minority communities from the initiative.¹⁷⁸⁷ Likewise, the same source reported on aid mainly being directed to non-Hazara districts in Bamyān and Ghor provinces,¹⁷⁸⁸ as well as development projects, such as road construction and water systems, being allocated to Pashtun-majority districts in Ghazni Province, while only a few small-scale projects were implemented in Shia- and Tajik-majority areas.¹⁷⁸⁹ In Badakhshan and Parwan provinces, Ismaili-majority districts were similarly excluded, with development and public projects directed to Taliban-favoured districts.¹⁷⁹⁰ More information on aid delivery and aid diversion is available in section 3.6. in the [2024 EUAA COI Report: Afghanistan – Country Focus](#).

Moreover, since 2021, the de facto authorities carried out forced evictions affecting Hazaras.¹⁷⁹¹ A joint investigation of redevelopment projects in Kabul City between 2021–2024,

¹⁷⁷⁸ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 82 – 83

¹⁷⁷⁹ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷⁸⁰ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 83–84; Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁷⁸¹ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁷⁸² Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷⁸³ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 8 October 2025, [url](#), para. 65

¹⁷⁸⁴ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷⁸⁵ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁷⁸⁶ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 42

¹⁷⁸⁷ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 49

¹⁷⁸⁸ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁷⁸⁹ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 49

¹⁷⁹⁰ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 49

¹⁷⁹¹ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025; AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Afghanistan 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#), p. 71; UN Security Council, Fourteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 1 June 2023, [url](#), para. 28

carried out by the Guardian, AW, Lighthouse Reports and Afghan media outlets, suggested that large areas of the capital were razed and many residential properties and ‘informal settlements’ often inhabited by poorer or displaced families demolished, with reports alleging deaths and injuries during eviction operations, leaving thousands homeless. The investigation also suggested that there were signs that ‘the destruction is in part linked to ethnicity’, as three of the six most affected districts were populated predominantly by Hazaras, and two by Tajiks.¹⁷⁹²

(c) Reported attacks and other incidents

Hazara women have been facing intersecting discrimination due to both their gender and minority status.¹⁷⁹³ There have been claims that de facto MPVPV particularly targeted Hazara young women during enforcement operations of the *hijab* decree.¹⁷⁹⁴ Such an operation was reported in January 2024 in predominantly Hazara and Tajik areas of Kabul City and other areas.¹⁷⁹⁵ Some women reported being beaten, abused, and subjected to derogatory anti-Hazara remarks during detention.¹⁷⁹⁶ Kerr Chiovenda noted that over-policing of dress codes was reported in Hazara-populated neighbourhoods, and Hazara women have been disproportionately affected by arrests and imprisonment, and faced derogatory comments and treatment while imprisoned.¹⁷⁹⁷

As mentioned, ethnic and religious minorities have been targeted in attacks often claimed by or attributed to the ISKP,¹⁷⁹⁸ and Human Rights Watch has criticised the de facto authorities for not providing the Shia Hazara community with sufficient protection from such attacks¹⁷⁹⁹ which had killed or injured at least 700 Hazaras as of 2022.¹⁸⁰⁰ These attacks have however declined since its peak in 2022,¹⁸⁰¹ although sporadic attacks have resurfaced in periods.¹⁸⁰² The UN did not report on any violent attacks targeting the Shia Hazara community within the reference period of this report,¹⁸⁰³ although the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan

¹⁷⁹² Guardian (The), Revealed: the truth behind the Taliban’s brutal Kabul ‘regeneration’ programme, 18 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹³ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban’s information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 37

¹⁷⁹⁴ Just Security, Hazara Women: How Gender and Ethnicity Intersect in the Taliban’s Repression, 7 March 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁵ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 22; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 23 February 2024, [url](#), para. 16

¹⁷⁹⁶ Zan Times, ‘I was arrested for the crime of being a Hazara and a woman’: The Taliban’s ‘bad hijab’ campaign targets Hazara women, 22 January 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁷ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁷⁹⁸ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 42; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 49; HRW, World report 2025, Afghanistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁹ HRW, Attacks Target Afghanistan’s Hazaras, 3 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁰ HRW, World report 2023, Afghanistan, Events of 2022, 12 January 2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰¹ International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰² UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October – December 2023 Update, January 2024, [url](#), p. 4; EUAA, Afghanistan – Country Focus, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 125–126

¹⁸⁰³ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 6 December 2024, [url](#), para 15; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 21 February 2025, [url](#), para. 20; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its

noted that unidentified individuals shot and reportedly beheaded a Shia imam in Nusay District, Badakhshan Province, in June 2025, leaving an ISKP flag at the scene.¹⁸⁰⁴

(d) Ismailis

Roughly 90 % of Ismaili Shias in Afghanistan are ethnically Hazara, living mostly in the Hazarajat region; some Ismaili communities also reside in Badakhshan Province and are classified as ethnic Tajiks.¹⁸⁰⁵ Followers of the Ismaili Shia school of thought faced ideological pressure by the de facto authorities, including conversion attempts to Sunni Islam, in Badakhshan¹⁸⁰⁶ (which is predominantly inhabited by Tajiks¹⁸⁰⁷) and Baghlan provinces.¹⁸⁰⁸ As reported by UNAMA, 50 Ismaili men were forced to convert to Sunni Islam by the local de facto authorities in Badakhshan Province in the period 17 January–3 February 2025. The men were ‘questioned on religious topics. Those who refused to convert were subject to physical assaults, coercion and death threats’.¹⁸⁰⁹ Rawadari also indicated that, since 2024 and as of the first six months of 2025, at least 203 Ismailis in Shughnan, Ishkashim, Khahan, Nasi, and Maimay districts of Badakhshan Province had been forced to convert.¹⁸¹⁰ According to Kabul Now, local sources claimed that the de facto authorities link ‘the provision of humanitarian aid to this community with their conversion to Sunni Islam’.¹⁸¹¹ Foschini however reported that ‘[t]he battle for local influence and political survival’ in Badakhshan ‘also plays out in the field of education’, and the de facto authorities have emphasised control of religious schools nationally especially in this province, ‘arguably because of concerns about rival or untrusted groups promoting “wrong” tenets or loyalties’.¹⁸¹² The de facto authorities have established several *madrassas* across Badakhshan Province,¹⁸¹³ in predominantly Ismaili-populated areas, requiring Ismaili children to enrol and follow religious education based on the Sunni faith.¹⁸¹⁴ They have banned the construction of Ismaili mosques and other Ismaili religious sites in Badakhshan Province.¹⁸¹⁵ According to media sources, in June 2025 an Ismaili man, working

implications for international peace and security, 11 June 2025, [url](#), para. 3; UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 18

¹⁸⁰⁴ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 18

¹⁸⁰⁵ ACCORD, Anfragebeantwortung zu Afghanistan: Sicherheitslage für Ismailiten in der Provinz Baghlan; Berichte über gezielte Angriffe durch die Taliban oder Hezb-e Islami, 3 April 2015, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁶ Hasht-e Subh, Religious Repression and Enforced Silence: Ismailis of Darwaz, Badakhshan Face Collective Persecution, 5 October 2025, [url](#); Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 51; Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁸⁰⁷ Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁸⁰⁸ ZAN Times, Afghanistan’s Ismailis face systematic persecution under the Taliban, 8 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁹ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January – March 2025 Update, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸¹⁰ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 51

¹⁸¹¹ Kabul Now, Taliban Detains 15 Ismaili Shia Community Members in Badakhshan, 7 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸¹² Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁸¹³ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January – March 2025 Update, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 45; Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), p. 29

¹⁸¹⁴ ZAN Times, Afghanistan’s Ismailis face systematic persecution under the Taliban, 8 September 2025, [url](#); UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: January – March 2025 Update, 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Afghanistan International, Taliban Forcibly Converting Ismailis In Badakhshan, Claims Rukhshana Media, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 46

as a security guard in the World Health Organization (WHO), was killed by unidentified perpetrators in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province, after allegedly being tortured.¹⁸¹⁶ UNAMA reported that as of 28 October 2025, no one had been arrested in connection with the killing.¹⁸¹⁷ A prominent member of the Ismaili community was shot and killed in July 2025 by unidentified armed individuals in Badakhshan Province.¹⁸¹⁸

4.8.5. Tajiks

The term Tajik in Afghanistan has been historically ambiguous and vaguely defined,¹⁸¹⁹ and can be described as signifying ‘non-Hazara Farsi speakers’,¹⁸²⁰ as many speak a variant of Dari close to the national language of Iran¹⁸²¹ – although some are Pashto-speaking.¹⁸²² Nevertheless, Tajiks form the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan.¹⁸²³ The Tajik community lacks a tribal structure. A majority of Tajiks are Sunni Muslims, but there are also those adhering to the Shia branch of Islam. Tajiks live in various areas of the country, but are mainly concentrated in northern, northeastern and western Afghanistan,¹⁸²⁴ Panjsher, and according to older sources, also in Kabul (both the province and the city), Balkh, Ghor, Takhar, and Herat (especially Herat City).¹⁸²⁵

Since 2021, several sources reported on the targeting of Tajik communities in the northeast provinces of the country, due to their perceived affiliation to armed resistance groups.¹⁸²⁶ The Afghan analyst noted in 2023 that Tajiks were among the communities more prone to violations in the aftermath of the takeover.¹⁸²⁷ More information is available in section [4.3.1. Suspected affiliates of resistance groups](#).

The de facto government cabinet reportedly include at least three ethnic Tajiks.¹⁸²⁸ According to Foschini, the de facto authorities have avoided to appoint local de facto officials originating from the district or province in question. In Badakhshan Province, however, the local population is predominantly Tajik, appointments to the local de facto governance did instead

¹⁸¹⁶ Hasht-e Subh, Murder of WHO Employee Sparks Outrage over Religious Tensions and Taliban Silence, 4 June 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Ismaili WHO Office Guard Tortured, Killed In Afghanistan, Say Sources, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁷ UNAMA, Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan: July – September 2025 Update, 28 October 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁸¹⁸ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 36; Amu TV, Aga Khan Foundation official shot dead in Badakhshan: Sources, 10 July 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Gunmen Kill Aga Khan Foundation Religious Affairs Official In Badakhshan, 6 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁹ EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), p. 144

¹⁸²⁰ Kerr Chiovenda, M., email, 29 November 2025

¹⁸²¹ MRG, Tajiks, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸²² EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), p. 144

¹⁸²³ MRG, Tajiks, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸²⁴ MRG, Tajiks, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸²⁵ Austria, Staatendokumentation, Afghanistan – Socio-Economic Survey 2021, 12 January 2022, pp. 11–12, 22, [url](#); Ali, O., The Non-Pashtun Taleban of the North (3): The Takhar case study, AAN, 29 July 2017, [url](#)

¹⁸²⁶ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023; HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Torture Civilians in Panjshir: Collective Punishment Over Armed Group’s Actions Is Unlawful, 10 June 2022, [url](#); BBC News, Afghan resistance attack Taliban, sparking reprisals in Panjshir, 16 May 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸²⁷ Afghan analyst, interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023

¹⁸²⁸ Pajhwok News, Hanif, UN officials discuss expediting aid to quake victims, 3 September 2025, [url](#); Ariana News, Afghanistan’s Army Chief of Staff dismisses Daesh threat as anti-IEA propaganda, 23 July 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Exclusive: Taliban in talks with Russia, China for trade transactions in local currencies, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

rely on high-ranking Badakhshi Taliban members, as of September 2024. Foschini suggested that this was due to the fact that the province had never been under Taliban control before, and therefore lacked support in the province.¹⁸²⁹ Since 2023, though, external de facto officials were appointed,¹⁸³⁰ an act viewed as a process of marginalising non-Pashtun northern Taliban leaders and commanders within the hierarchy.¹⁸³¹ By the end of 2023, nearly all Tajik and Uzbek Taliban in Badakhshan had been removed from any position of authority in their home areas, after being dismissed or assigned to minor positions in other provinces.¹⁸³² There were cases of local de facto officials rebelling after they or their forces were dismissed under the ongoing purges of the de facto security forces.¹⁸³³ In 2025, de facto authorities have continued to appoint external Pashtun de facto officials to Badakhshan and other mainly Tajik-populated provinces.¹⁸³⁴

As mentioned, members of ethnic and religious minorities face discrimination in hiring and dismissals procedures for de facto government positions,¹⁸³⁵ including collective dismissals.¹⁸³⁶ According to Rawadari, in the first half of 2025, in Ghazni Province the employees of some de facto government departments from some ethnic groups, including Tajiks, were removed from their positions.¹⁸³⁷ Rawadari also reported that Tajiks were excluded from equal access to government services, development projects, and humanitarian aid by the de facto authorities in Ghazni and Ghor provinces.¹⁸³⁸

Since the Taliban takeover, mainly during 2022, there have been reports of forced evictions and displacement carried out by the Taliban, affecting Tajik communities in several provinces, including in northeastern provinces, Jowzjan, Faryab, Ghor, Mazar-e Sharif, Kabul, Sar-e Pul and Takhar.¹⁸³⁹ These evictions occurred in cases of land seizure by groups perceived as supported by the de facto authorities,¹⁸⁴⁰ including Kuchis.¹⁸⁴¹

¹⁸²⁹ Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 22, 23, 25–26, 28, 38

¹⁸³⁰ Amu TV, A look at administrative structure of Taliban in Badakhshan?, 9 May 2024, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban leader appoints three new provincial governors, 26 June 2023, [url](#)

¹⁸³¹ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁸³² Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁸³³ Foschini, F., Ruling Uncharted Territory: Islamic Emirate governance in northeastern Afghanistan, AAN, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 22, 23, 25–26, 28, 38; UN Security Council, Fourteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 1 June 2023, [url](#), para. 28

¹⁸³⁴ Foschini, F., The mining sector in Afghanistan: A picture in black and gold, AAN, 30 August 2025, [url](#), p. 40

¹⁸³⁵ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁸³⁶ Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 5, 43

¹⁸³⁷ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁸³⁸ Rawadari, Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report: January-June 30, 2025, August 2025, [url](#), p. 49; Rawadari, Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁸³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 9 February 2023, [url](#), paras. 46–48; Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 9 February 2023, [url](#), paras. 46–48

¹⁸⁴¹ Kabul Now, Law of the Gun: How Local Conflicts Became Extortion Sprees, 23 January 2024, [url](#); Foschini, F., Conflict Management or Retribution? How the Taleban deal with land disputes between Kuchis and local communities, AAN, 22 December 2022, [url](#)



Since mid-2024, many farmers in Badakhshan (many from Tajik populated districts) have been protesting the destruction of poppy fields.¹⁸⁴² Some of protests have been met with violence by the de facto authorities, resulting in people killed or injured.¹⁸⁴³ Such protests flared up anew in June and July 2025,¹⁸⁴⁴ and according to the UN Secretary-General's report 10 people died and 40 were injured by the de facto authorities response, while many others were arbitrarily detained and allegedly ill-treated in the districts of Argo, Jurm and Khash.¹⁸⁴⁵ In April 2025, SpecialEurasia, a consulting and media agency specialising in geopolitical intelligence, reported on arrests of some ethnic Tajik Taliban commanders in northern Afghanistan who sided with the protesters.¹⁸⁴⁶ This information could not be corroborated with other sources.

4.8.6. Uzbeks

Around 9 % of Afghanistan's population are ethnic Uzbeks. They are Sunnis, belong to the Turkic peoples and live both in rural areas (including Jawzjan, Takhar, Faryab, Baghlan, Sar-e Pol) and in urban centres (Mazar-e Sharif, Kabul, Kandahar, Laschkargah, etc.). They are bilingual and, in addition to Uzbek they also speak Dari.¹⁸⁴⁷

A UN report published in September 2023 noted that members of *inter alia* the Uzbek community have continued to allege that the removal of their languages as official curriculum languages constitutes an 'attack' on their linguistic heritage.¹⁸⁴⁸ Amu TV noted that the National Uzbek Language Day had largely gone unrecognised under Taliban rule,¹⁸⁴⁹ and Human Rights Watch reported that there is 'virtually no media in minority languages like Uzbek'.¹⁸⁵⁰

Earlier reports suggest that Uzbeks have also been involved in land disputes. While the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team noted 'persistent reports' in 2022 of what they referred to as 'a deliberate and seemingly organized campaign by Pashtuns to dislodge ethnic Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek communities from rich agricultural land in the north',¹⁸⁵¹ ACAPS noted in 2023 that land disputes should not only be analysed 'through the lens of

¹⁸⁴² Bjelica, J., Foschini, F., Opium Cultivation in Badakhshan: The new national leader, according to UNDOC, 13 November 2024, [url](#); Amu TV, Badakhshan residents protest against Taliban, sources say, 3 July 2024, [url](#); RFE/RL, Taliban's Drug Ban, Heavy-Handed Tactics Fuel Deadly Protests In Northern Afghanistan, 15 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴³ Bjelica, J., Foschini, F., Opium Cultivation in Badakhshan: The new national leader, according to UNDOC, 13 November 2024, [url](#); Amu TV, Badakhshan residents protest against Taliban, sources say, 3 July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁴ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 31; Amu TV, Taliban units leave district in Badakhshan amid poppy crop protests: Sources, 20 June 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Protesters In Badakhshan Demand Removal Of Taliban-Appointed Governor, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁵ UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 31

¹⁸⁴⁶ SpecialEurasia, Tajik Taliban Commanders Arrested in Afghanistan Underline the Movement's Internal Frictions, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁷ Austria, Staatendokumentation, AfPAk: Grundlagen der Stammes- & Clanstruktur, 2016, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁸ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 1 September 2023, [url](#), para. 53

¹⁸⁴⁹ AmuTV, Citizens say Taliban ignore Uzbek language on National Uzbek Language Day, 20 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁰ HRW, Afghanistan: Taliban Tramples Media Freedom, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵¹ UN Security Council, Thirteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 26 May 2022, [url](#), para. 19



ethnicity’ although disputes have been politicised for ethnic mobilisation in the past – such disputes are ultimately about resources according to this source.¹⁸⁵²

In June 2025, dozens of protesters were arrested by the de facto authorities in Faryab Province after demonstrating against the de facto local police command in Daulatabad District. The protests were triggered by the arrest of several young Uzbeks accused of harassing girls, and protesters chanted slogans praising the Uzbek former warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum.¹⁸⁵³

4.8.7. Turkmen

Turkmen originate from Turkic-speaking tribes and adhere to the Sunni Hanafi school of thought.¹⁸⁵⁴ They speak Turkmen and Dari.¹⁸⁵⁵ Although their exact number is ‘uncertain’,¹⁸⁵⁶ some sources have estimated that they make up 1 % to 3 % of the Afghan population.¹⁸⁵⁷ Turkmen predominantly reside in northern Afghanistan,¹⁸⁵⁸ in provinces bordering Turkmenistan.¹⁸⁵⁹ Large numbers of Turkmen were reportedly residing in Jawzjan Province, as well as smaller numbers in the provinces of Faryab,¹⁸⁶⁰ Takhar, Samangan, Sar-e Pul, Balkh, Kunduz,¹⁸⁶¹ Badghis,¹⁸⁶² and Herat.¹⁸⁶³ They live mainly in rural areas.¹⁸⁶⁴

Since the Taliban takeover, ethnic minorities, including Turkmen, have faced marginalisation,¹⁸⁶⁵ and Turkmen have also reportedly been affected by forced evictions.¹⁸⁶⁶ According to the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, there were ‘persistent reports of a deliberate and seemingly organized campaign by Pashtuns to dislodge ethnic Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek communities from rich agricultural land in the north’.¹⁸⁶⁷

¹⁸⁵² ACAPS, Afghanistan, Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵³ Afghanistan International, Protesters Chant “Long Live Dostum” As Clashes Erupt With Taliban In Faryab, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁴ MRG, Uzbeks and Turkmen in Afghanistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁵ SCA, The Afghan Population, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁶ MRG, Uzbeks and Turkmen in Afghanistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁷ USCIRF, Afghanistan, April 2022, [url](#), p. 2; MRG, Uzbeks and Turkmen in Afghanistan, n.d., [url](#); SCA, The Afghan Population, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁸ Deccan Herald, Dominant ethnic groups in Afghanistan, 18 August 2021, [url](#); MRG, Uzbeks and Turkmen in Afghanistan, n.d., [url](#); SCA, The Afghan Population, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁹ Jamestown Foundation, Afghanistan’s Ethnic Turkmen: Enemies or Allies for Ashgabat?, 4 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶⁰ Jamestown Foundation, Afghanistan’s Ethnic Turkmen: Enemies or Allies for Ashgabat?, 4 October 2015, [url](#); Obaid, A., and Ruttig, T., Elections 2014 (22): How disenchantment with General Dostum split the Uzbek vote bank, 22 May 2014, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶¹ Obaid, A., and Ruttig, T., Elections 2014 (22): How disenchantment with General Dostum split the Uzbek vote bank, 22 May 2014, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶² Jamestown Foundation, Afghanistan’s Ethnic Turkmen: Enemies or Allies for Ashgabat?, 4 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶³ Rasekh, M. S., A Study of the Turkmen Dialects of Afghanistan: Phonology – Morphology – Lexicon – Sociolinguistic Aspects, PhD Thesis, 7 October 2016, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁸⁶⁴ Rasekh, M. S., A Study of the Turkmen Dialects of Afghanistan: Phonology – Morphology – Lexicon – Sociolinguistic Aspects, PhD Thesis, 7 October 2016, [url](#), p. 33

¹⁸⁶⁵ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Afghanistan 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#), p. 71; UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 1 September 2023, [url](#), para. 50

¹⁸⁶⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 106; AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Afghanistan 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#), p. 71; UN Security Council, Fourteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 1 June 2023, [url](#), para. 28

¹⁸⁶⁷ UN Security Council, Thirteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 26 May 2022, [url](#), para. 19

Forced evictions were reported in several provinces across Afghanistan,¹⁸⁶⁸ but particularly in the northern parts of the country, as reported by Maliha Shirzay for RWI.¹⁸⁶⁹ In many cases, forced evictions occurred as a result of land disputes and claims by persons and groups perceived to have Taliban support,¹⁸⁷⁰ such as Kuchis.¹⁸⁷¹

A UN report published in September 2023 noted that members of *inter alia* the Turkmen community has continued to allege that the removal of their languages as official curriculum languages constitutes an ‘attack’ on their linguistic heritage.¹⁸⁷²

In June 2025, Sheikh Samiullah Farahmand, a Turkmen cleric, was appointed by the de facto authorities as their ambassador to Türkiye.¹⁸⁷³ Before this appointment, he served as the de facto provincial head of the military court in Kunduz Province.¹⁸⁷⁴

4.8.8. Hindus and Sikhs

The Hindu and Sikh communities have significantly declined in numbers in Afghanistan¹⁸⁷⁵ amid an ongoing large-scale exodus since the early 1990s.¹⁸⁷⁶ Many remaining community members resettled outside of Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover.¹⁸⁷⁷ According to community representatives, only a small number of Hindus and Sikhs remain in the country,¹⁸⁷⁸ making up about 100 people in total,¹⁸⁷⁹ that are mainly concentrated in urban areas,¹⁸⁸⁰ including Kabul, Jalalabad, and Ghazni.¹⁸⁸¹ Sources in 2025 reported that less than 50 Sikhs

¹⁸⁶⁸ UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 1 September 2023, [url](#), para. 50; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 23 February 2024, [url](#), para. 62

¹⁸⁶⁹ Shirzay, M., Pioneering Uzbek Women in Educational Process in Afghanistan: An Intersectional Exploration of Uzbek Women's Historical Struggles, RWI, May 2025, [url](#), p. 9; UN Security Council, Thirteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring, 26 May 2022, [url](#), para. 19

¹⁸⁷⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 106

¹⁸⁷¹ ACAPS, Afghanistan: Land conflicts and humanitarian action: a conflict sensitivity perspective, 26 July 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁸⁷² UN, General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 1 September 2023, [url](#), para. 53

¹⁸⁷³ Afghanistan International, Taliban Appoints Turkmen Cleric As Ambassador To Türkiye, 26 June 2025, [url](#); MEI, Taliban Leadership Tracker: Sheikh Samiullah Farahmand, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁴ MEI, Taliban Leadership Tracker: Sheikh Samiullah Farahmand, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁵ Indian Express, ‘Taliban says return to Afghanistan but there’s no point now, just want safety of our gurdwaras, temples’: Afghan Sikhs, Hindus meet Muttaqi, 14 October 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban minister calls non-Muslims ‘worse than four-legged animals’, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁶ Kabul Now, Afghan Hindus and Sikhs Urge Taliban to Restore Temples, Ensure Minority Rights, 14 October 2025, [url](#); Indian Express, ‘Taliban says return to Afghanistan but there’s no point now, just want safety of our gurdwaras, temples’: Afghan Sikhs, Hindus meet Muttaqi, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁷ Hasht-e Subh, Afghan Hindus and Sikhs Who Fled Religious Persecution Meet Taliban’s Foreign Minister in New Delhi, 13 October 2025, [url](#); Amu TV, Five years after deadly Kabul temple attack, Afghan Sikhs face near extinction, 25 March 2025, [url](#); Print (The), Muttaqi in Delhi, assures Sikhs & Hindus of restoration of places of worship, security under Taliban, 13 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁸ Hasht-e Subh, Afghanistan’s Sikh Community Sends Aid to Kunar Earthquake Victims, 3 September 2025, [url](#); Afghanistan International, Taliban Minister’s Remarks On Non-Muslims Spark Concern Among Afghan Sikhs & Hindus, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁹ Pajhwok News, Afghan Hindus happy with security, seek lands’ restitution, 24 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁰ Rasuli, H., Highlighting Afghan Women’s Experiences of Violence and Access to Justice, RWI, 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 55

¹⁸⁸¹ Indian Express, ‘Taliban says return to Afghanistan but there’s no point now, just want safety of our gurdwaras, temples’: Afghan Sikhs, Hindus meet Muttaqi, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

reside in Afghanistan,¹⁸⁸² in contrast to the reportedly approximately 300 members of the group residing in the country by the time of the Taliban takeover in 2021.¹⁸⁸³

Since the Taliban takeover, the ISKP has carried out attacks against Sikhs,¹⁸⁸⁴ including an attack against a Sikh place of worship in June 2022, and an explosion targeting a Sikh shop close to a Sikh place of worship in Kabul City on 27 July 2022.¹⁸⁸⁵ No attacks targeting Hindus or Sikhs were found within the reference period of this report, but in a report from February 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan noted that attacks had been targeting, *inter alia*, Sikhs and Hindus, without specifying particular incidents.¹⁸⁸⁶ According to Rafiey, due to 'their small numbers and low visibility' in the country, there have been few reports of mistreatment against Hindus and Sikhs.¹⁸⁸⁷

The Taliban have pledged to protect the rights of Sikhs and Hindus, and have given security assurances during meetings with community leaders,¹⁸⁸⁸ including at a meeting with a delegation of exile Hindus and Sikhs in New Delhi on 13 October 2025.¹⁸⁸⁹ The delegation raised several demands, including greater minority representation in the de facto government,¹⁸⁹⁰ protection and restoration of religious sites,¹⁸⁹¹ and return of seized properties.¹⁸⁹² Although the de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs assured the delegation that 'they were welcome to return' and restart their businesses,¹⁸⁹³ and claimed that the de facto authorities support the renovation of religious sites and protection of property rights,¹⁸⁹⁴ the delegation expressed scepticism, citing safety and security concerns as a major obstacle for their return.¹⁸⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸² Hasht-e Subh, Afghanistan's Sikh Community Sends Aid to Kunar Earthquake Victims, 3 September 2025, [url](#); Indian Express, Handful of Sikhs living in Afghanistan donate relief material for earthquake victims in Kunar, 3 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸³ BBC News, Afghanistan: Deadly explosion rocks Sikh site in Kabul, 18 June 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁴ Jamestown Foundation, ISKP Challenges Indian Interests in Afghanistan by Attacking Sikh Worshipers in Kabul, 9 September 2022, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Deadly attack on Sikh temple in Kabul leaves community in fear, 18 June 2022, [url](#); BBC News, Afghanistan gurdwara attack: Sikhs say 'We don't feel safe', 18 June 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁵ Indian Express, Explosion rocks Sikh man's shop near Kabul gurdwara; kin in Delhi call for India's help, 27 July 2022, [url](#); Times of India (The), Kabul Gurdwara Attacked Again, Blast Near Main Gate, 28 July 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 20 February 2025, [url](#), para. 49

¹⁸⁸⁷ ACCORD, Afghanistan: Report on the impact of the Taliban's information practices and legal policies, particularly on women and girls, February 2025, [url](#), p. 81

¹⁸⁸⁸ USDOS, 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Afghanistan, 2 June 2022, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸⁸⁹ Times of India (The), Afghan Hindus and Sikhs meet foreign minister Muttaqi; urge restoration, maintenance of gurdwaras, temples, 14 October 2025, [url](#); Hasht-e Subh, Afghan Hindus and Sikhs Who Fled Religious Persecution Meet Taliban's Foreign Minister in New Delhi, 13 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁰ Kabul Now, Afghan Hindus and Sikhs Urge Taliban to Restore Temples, Ensure Minority Rights, 14 October 2025, [url](#); Print (The), Muttaqi in Delhi, assures Sikhs & Hindus of restoration of places of worship, security under Taliban, 13 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹¹ Kabul Now, Afghan Hindus and Sikhs Urge Taliban to Restore Temples, Ensure Minority Rights, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹² Kabul Now, Afghan Hindus and Sikhs Urge Taliban to Restore Temples, Ensure Minority Rights, 14 October 2025, [url](#); Indian Express, 'Taliban says return to Afghanistan but there's no point now, just want safety of our gurdwaras, temples': Afghan Sikhs, Hindus meet Muttaqi, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹³ Al Jazeera, Afghan foreign minister in India: Why New Delhi is embracing Taliban now, 14 October 2025, [url](#); Indian Express, 'Taliban says return to Afghanistan but there's no point now, just want safety of our gurdwaras, temples': Afghan Sikhs, Hindus meet Muttaqi, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁴ Print (The), Muttaqi in Delhi, assures Sikhs & Hindus of restoration of places of worship, security under Taliban, 13 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁵ Indian Express, 'Taliban says return to Afghanistan but there's no point now, just want safety of our gurdwaras, temples': Afghan Sikhs, Hindus meet Muttaqi, 14 October 2025, [url](#)



4.8.9. Salafists

Most Salafists oppose the IS, but Salafism is the religious approach adopted by the group.¹⁸⁹⁶ In their suppression of the ISKP in the months following their takeover, the de facto authorities violently targeted Salafist communities in Nangarhar and Kunar.¹⁸⁹⁷ More information is available in section [4.3.2. Suspected ISKP affiliates](#).

Most victims of the de facto government's initial crackdown on the ISKP were reportedly ethnic Pashtuns, although a significant number of Uzbeks and Tajiks adhere to Salafism in northern Afghanistan.¹⁸⁹⁸ The Salafi identity is distinct from the Hanafi identity. Salafists, as other ethnoreligious minority groups, reportedly also experience a lack of true representation, including on district and village level, as only Taliban sympathisers have been appointed.¹⁸⁹⁹

The Salafi community has been facing some limitations on practicing their religion, including, as mentioned, pressure on Salafi *madrassas* in eastern Afghanistan to conform with Hanafi doctrines,¹⁹⁰⁰ and on praying 'Salafi-style' in mosques.¹⁹⁰¹ The Afghan researcher stated in 2024 that in areas where Salafists are in minority, they are in general not allowed to do their prayer as they want, and that some people had been arrested for praying 'Salafi-style'. The same source highlighted hostility from southern Taliban commanders, heavily influenced by Sufism, in southern Afghanistan (e.g. the provinces Paktya, Paktika, Khost, Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz). For example, to pray the way Salafists do in Kandahar would not be acceptable, and such an individual would not even be allowed to enter the mosque.¹⁹⁰² Afghanistan expert Antonio Giustozzi, as cited by the Danish COI unit, also described 'a hostility towards the Salafis in general', primarily from the Deobandi and Sufi communities in the southern parts of Afghanistan.¹⁹⁰³

The de facto authorities have closed multiple Salafi *madrassas*¹⁹⁰⁴ and reportedly also Salafi mosques.¹⁹⁰⁵ There have also been cases in which *madrassas* taken over by Hanafis, or Hanafi imams have been appointed to mosques.¹⁹⁰⁶

¹⁸⁹⁶ International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Afghanistan: A Jihadist Threat in Retreat?, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁷ RFE/RL, Senior Clerics Caught In The Crossfire Of The Taliban's Intensifying War With IS-K, 24 August 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁸ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁸⁹⁹ Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 26–27

¹⁹⁰⁰ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 22–23, 25, 27, 31

¹⁹⁰¹ International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023; UNAMA, De Facto Authorities' Moral Oversight in Afghanistan: Impacts on Human Rights, July 2024, [url](#), p. 13; Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI units at the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the Swedish Migration Agency.

¹⁹⁰² Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI units at the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and the Swedish Migration Agency

¹⁹⁰³ Denmark, Centre for Documentation and Counter Extremism, Afghanistan, Ahl-e Hadith, October 2023, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁹⁰⁴ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23; Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁹⁰⁵ Saleem, M. A. and Semple, M., Peace Matrix for Afghanistan, PeaceRep, 11 November 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁹⁰⁶ Nemat, O. and Giustozzi, A., Local Governance Under Taliban Rule 2021-2023, 4 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 30–31



Annex 1: Bibliography

Oral sources, including anonymous sources

Afghan analyst, in-person interviews. The analyst is based outside Afghanistan, but often travels to the country to conduct field-based research on the security situation, armed groups and the general situation under Taliban rule. The source requested to be anonymised for operational reasons. The source was consulted in the following instances:

- email, 5 January 2026
- email communication, 13 October 2024
- online interview, 1 October 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian, Norwegian, and Swedish COI units (Staatendokumentation, Landinfo and Unit for Migration Analysis)
- in-person interview, 25 April 2024
- email communication, 10 October 2023
- in-person interviews, 8–9 June 2023.

Afghan researcher, online interview, 12 September 2024. The source has multiple years of experience of reporting for an international organisation in Afghanistan. The source is currently not based in Afghanistan but remains in contact with sources on the ground. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Austrian and Swedish COI units (Staatendokumentation and Unit for Migration Analysis)

Akbar, S., emails, 22 and 24 June 2022. Shaharзад Akbar is an Afghan human rights activist in exile. She served as chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in 2019–2021. She is currently the Executive Director of the Afghan human rights organisation Rawadari.

Azizi, H., PhD Candidate, Flinders University, online interview, 9 September 2024. Hamid Azizi is a PhD Candidate at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. Mr. Azizi has conducted research on Afghanistan since 2007, *inter alia* for UNODC, on various topics including organised crime, illicit economy and insurgency groups.

Baheer, O., interview, 25 April 2024. Obaidullah Baheer is an adjunct lecturer with the American University of Afghanistan and has been teaching topics related to democracy, international relations, peace and conflict resolution, geopolitics and foreign policy at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He has been writing and commenting on Afghanistan for media outlets including The Washington Post, Al Jazeera, South Asian Voices, The Economist, and the Diplomat. Baheer has also engaged in aid delivery in Afghanistan through his own aid initiative ‘Save Afghans from Hunger’. Baheer has also engaged in aid delivery in Afghanistan through his own aid initiative ‘Save Afghans from Hunger’.



Durrani, P., online interview, 19 October 2023. Pashtana Durrani is a human rights activist and founder of the NGO LEARN Afghanistan (<https://learnafghan.org/>). Durrani is currently based outside Afghanistan but is still engaged in the activities of LEARN Afghanistan.

International analyst (A), interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 10 October 2023. The senior analyst is based in Afghanistan since many years and has extensive experience on researching and reporting on the security situation, as well as the political and human rights situation in the country. The source requested to be anonymised for operational reasons.

International journalist, online interview, 3 October 2023. The international journalist has reported from Afghanistan for international media outlets for several years, and covered various topics, but is currently based outside the country. The source requested to be anonymised for operational reasons.

de Jong, S., online interview, 30 October 2025. Sara de Jong is Professor in Politics and International relations with the University of York and has *inter alia* conducted research on Afghans who have worked for Western military forces, and resettlement efforts of such profiles.

Kerr Chiovenda, M., in-person meeting, 29 November 2025. Melissa Kerr Chiovenda is an anthropologist who has *inter alia* conducted research on Hazaras in Afghanistan. Kerr Chiovenda is based outside Afghanistan, but remains in contact with many sources from previous field-research.

Latifi, A., interview 8–9 June 2023, and email communication, 9 October 2023. Ali Latifi is an Afghanistan-based journalist. Latifi has reported from various parts of Afghanistan for several international media outlets, covering a range of different topics.

Rahimi, H., online interviews and email communication. Haroun Rahimi is Associate Professor and Chair of Law Department at the American University of Afghanistan, and has extensive experience on researching Afghan politics, law and governance. Rahimi was consulted in the following instances:

- online interview, 30 October 2025. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the Belgian and Romanian COI units (Cedoca and the COI unit of the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration).
- online interview, 11 September 2024. The interview was conducted by the EUAA in cooperation with the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency and Landinfo – the Norwegian COI Centre
- email communication, 4 October 2023
- online interview 8–9 June 2023.

Sharan, T., email, 27 November 2025. Timor Sharan is the Director of Afghanistan Policy Lab (<https://www.afghanistanpolicylab.com>), a research organisation specialising in applied research on Afghanistan. Sharan has written extensively on Afghan politics, security and governance for several reputable international research organisations. In 2017–2019, Sharan



served as Deputy Director-General for Policy and Programmes at the Independent Directorate of Governance under the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

The reference period should be 1 October 2024–30 November 2025.

The report should cover the general security situation as regards conflict-related violence, violent crime, and the humanitarian situation, and provide data on provincial level where available. The report should also cover treatment by the Taliban and other armed groups of the profiles listed below, as well as provide information on societal treatment where it is relevant.

Situation of the general population under Taliban rule

- International recognition status of the *de facto* authorities
- Political context and civic space, including the situation of Afghan media, the space for anti-Taliban demonstrations and other criticism of the *de facto* authorities, including on social media
- Religious freedom, general information, and information on *de facto* state and societal reactions to perceived apostasy and blasphemy, and the Taliban's implementation of *sharia*, including pressure to attend congregational prayer, enforcement of dress codes, and other restrictions on personal freedom, and impact on education
- Capital and corporal punishment
- Children serving in Taliban ranks
- Treatment of individuals returning from abroad, in particular individuals returning from Western countries, and reactions to Afghans' behaviour abroad (including on social media)

Security situation

This part should provide a country-wide overview, highlighting, where relevant, regional and in some cases provincial conflict trends. It should focus on the dynamics concerning armed resistance groups, on the one hand, and ISKP on the other. The report will also include data on security incidents and civilian casualties at a provincial level, as well as, if available, data on population and displacement.

- Presence of different armed actors
- Conflict-data and recent security trends, including a geographical overview of security trends and violence levels
- Impact on the civilian population; casualties, impact on infrastructure, displacement and returns, including a geographical overview of trends and in relation to population data
- Crime trends



Humanitarian situation

- National economic and financial situation, and poverty rates including provincial differences where relevant
- Basic subsistence and employment, including provincial differences where relevant
- Food security, including provincial differences where relevant
- Housing, including provincial differences where relevant
- Healthcare, including provincial differences where relevant
- The humanitarian situation in Kabul city, including the abovementioned topics

Treatment of selected profiles and groups of the population

- Persons formerly affiliated with security institutions of the former government (including military units, police units, NDS), and treatment of their family members
- Persons formerly affiliated with international coalition forces, and treatment of their family members
- Public officials and servants of the former government (including judicial workers), and treatment of their family members
- Treatment of individuals with a perceived affiliation to armed groups (such as the NRF and ISKP, and other groups)
- Women and girls, including:
 - Social norms, including dress-codes and behaviour
 - Women's and girls' access to healthcare, education, employment and freedom of movement
 - Women's and girls' freedom of expression and assembly, including Taliban reactions towards women-led demonstrations
 - Violence against women and girls, including forced marriage and child marriage, sexual violence and rape, domestic violence and honour violence
 - Access to justice
- Treatment of LGBTIQ+ persons
 - Social norms on gender identity and expression
 - Taliban instructions or comments on LGBTIQ+ rights
 - Violence against LGBTIQ+ persons
- Treatment of journalists and media workers
- Treatment of human rights defenders and activists
- Treatment of religious and ethnic groups, including:
 - Religious freedom under Taliban rule (including aspects related to forced religious practice)
 - Representation in the *de facto* authorities
 - Land disputes and blood feuds
 - Treatment of Hazaras and Shias
 - Treatment of other ethno-religious groups



Annex 3: Lists of decrees and instructions

This is a list of national decrees and instructions issued by the Taliban, based on research for this report, and previous reporting by the EUAA. The list aims to provide an overview of national restrictions relevant for this report but is not exhaustive.

Media and freedom of expression

- Prohibition of indecency and profanity in the media, communications and letters (6 May 2017);¹⁹⁰⁷
- prohibition of unauthorised assemblies (8 September 2021);
- media should not address topics in conflict with Islam or ‘insulting national personalities’, reports should be produced in coordination with the Taliban government’s media office (23 September 2021);¹⁹⁰⁸
- women news presenters “must” wear headscarves when appearing on screen, and men “must” wear proper clothes (22 November 2021);¹⁹⁰⁹
- prohibition of foreign drama series (March 2022);¹⁹¹⁰
- a ban of defamation and unproven criticism of [*de facto*] government officials (21 July 2022);¹⁹¹¹
- media professionals are not to publish reports that ‘contradict Islamic law and religion’, ‘deride or humiliate Muslims’ or ‘contain pictures of animate object’ (31 July 2024);¹⁹¹²
- the ‘wrongful use of tape recorders or radio; making pictures or videos of any animate object on computers or mobile phones, or any other such device’ is a ‘wrongful act’ (31 July 2024).¹⁹¹³
- a law on ‘Poetry Regulation’ (30 August 2025),¹⁹¹⁴ reportedly restricted poetry gatherings,¹⁹¹⁵ romantic poetry addressing relationships between men and women, and poetry criticising the Taliban Supreme Leader. Poets were urged to avoid references to ideological schools including feminism, democracy, communism, and nationalism.¹⁹¹⁶

¹⁹⁰⁷ AAN, Decrees, Orders and Instructions of His Excellency, Amir al-mu’minin, as published in the Official Gazette on 22 May 2023, July 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹⁰⁸ EASO, Afghanistan – Country focus, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 34, 48

¹⁹⁰⁹ EASO, Afghanistan – Country focus, January 2022, [url](#), p. 39; CNN, Women banned from Afghan television dramas under new Taliban media rules, 22 November 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁰ EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁹¹¹ TOLONews, Islamic Emirate Leader Bans ‘Unproven Allegations’ Against Members, 22 July 2022, [url](#); Zabihullah [X], posted on: 21 July 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹¹² Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 17

¹⁹¹³ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22

¹⁹¹⁴ Amu TV, Taliban leader bans romantic poetry and his criticism under new law, 31 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁵ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 5

¹⁹¹⁶ Amu TV, Taliban leader bans romantic poetry and his criticism under new law, 31 August 2025, [url](#); Print (The), As Taliban declares war on verse, Afghan women lose their only weapon, but say silence won’t last, 2 September 2025, [url](#)



- new guidelines for political analysts participating in political debates (July 2025).¹⁹¹⁷ They were urged to speak ‘in accordance with sharia’¹⁹¹⁸ and obtain an identity card from the de facto Ministry of Information and Culture before appearing in media.¹⁹¹⁹

Women and girls

- Gender segregation at private universities (September 2021). Classes should be divided at least by a curtain, women should be taught by female teachers, or in the lack thereof, elderly men with ‘good character’;¹⁹²⁰
- secondary education for girls was not reopened (September 2021);
- decree on women’s rights (3 December 2021). Women should not be considered property or being forced into marriage, widows should have a share in their husbands property;¹⁹²¹
- women barred from appearing in television dramas, soap operas and entertainment shows (November 2021);
- women news presenters ‘must’ wear headscarves when appearing on screen (November 2021);
- women travelling more than 72 km should not be offered transport unless accompanied by a close male relative (26 December 2021);
- drivers should not pick up female passengers without a hijab covering their hair (26 December 2021);
- the *de facto* Health Ministry should gender-segregate employees by separating male and female offices (16 March 2022);
- secondary education for girls is to remain closed (23 March 2022);
- airlines should not let women board without a male chaperone (27 March 2022);
- female teachers were recommended to wear hijab (15 April 2022);
- women should cover their faces (7 May 2022). Failure to comply may result in the woman’s father or closest male relative facing reprimands, imprisonment or being fired from his employment. Women should not leave their homes unless ‘necessary’;
- all female television presenters ordered to cover their faces while presenting (19 May 2022);¹⁹²²
- women are not allowed to visit recreational parks,¹⁹²³ public baths¹⁹²⁴ and gyms;¹⁹²⁵

¹⁹¹⁷ Telegraph (The), Taliban bans political debate in free speech crackdown, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁸ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 35; Telegraph (The), Taliban bans political debate in free speech crackdown, 3 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁹ UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 35

¹⁹²⁰ EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁹²¹ EASO, Afghanistan – Country focus, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 38–39

¹⁹²² EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), pp. 43–45, 100

¹⁹²³ RFE/RL, Banned From Public Parks And Bathhouses, Afghan Women Say Life Under Taliban Is Like A 'Prison', 10 November 2022, [url](#); BBC News, Afghanistan: Taliban ban women from visiting popular national park, 27 August 2023, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁴ RFE/RL, Banned From Public Parks And Bathhouses, Afghan Women Say Life Under Taliban Is Like A 'Prison', 10 November 2022, [url](#); Guardian (The), Taliban stop Afghan women from using bathhouses in northern provinces, 7 January 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁵ France 24, Taliban bans Afghan women from gyms, public baths, 13 November 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Afghan women defy Taliban gym ban with secret fitness clubs, 21 December 2022, [url](#)



- university education for women was suspended (December 2022);¹⁹²⁶
- national and international NGOs were instructed to suspend female staff members, or risk losing their licences (24 December 2022);¹⁹²⁷
- women were prohibited to work for UN organs (5 April 2023);¹⁹²⁸
- beauty salons were ordered to close within one month (24 June 2023);¹⁹²⁹
- women should cover their entire body and cover their faces to prevent *ftina* [‘social disorder or chaos, which can itself facilitate sin’] (31 July 2024);
- women’s clothes ‘should not be thin short or tight’ (31 July 2024);
- it is the responsibility of women to ‘hide their body and their face from men who are not their *mahram*’ (31 July 2024);
- Muslim and righteous women are obliged to ‘cover themselves in front of non-believing or loose women’ to prevent *fitnah* (31 July 2024);
- ‘women not covering themselves properly’, is a ‘wrongful act’ (31 July 2024);
- ‘women are not allowed to look at strange men’ (31 July 2024);
- an adult woman leaving her home ‘because of some urgent need’ is ‘duty-bound to hide her voice, face and body’ (31 July 2024);¹⁹³⁰
- the *de facto* MPVPV shall ensure that staff and drivers of commercial vehicles do not transport uncovered or unaccompanied women, or ‘allow women to sit or mingle with an unrelated man’ (31 July 2024).¹⁹³¹
- women were prohibited to attend medical education (2 December 2024).¹⁹³²
- new constructions are prohibited to include windows overlooking neighbours’ private areas where women are often visible, such as courtyards, kitchens and wells (December 2024).¹⁹³³

¹⁹²⁶ TOLONews, Lecturer Rips Up His Certificates to Protest Ban on Women’s Education, 1 January 2023, [url](#); Guardian (The), Taliban ban Afghan women from university education, 20 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁷ TOLONews, Ministry Orders NGOs to Suspend Female Staff, 24 December 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁸ UN News, Excluded from Education, Public Life, Women, Girls Facing ‘Gender Apartheid’ in Afghanistan, Delegate Tells Security Council, 21 June 2023, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁹ AP, The Taliban are outlawing women's beauty salons in Afghanistan, 4 July 2023, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁰ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 13, 22

¹⁹³¹ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 13, 20

¹⁹³² HRW, Afghanistan’s Taliban Ban Medical Training for Women, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹³³ UN Human Rights Council, The situation of human rights in Afghanistan, 5 September 2025, [url](#), para. 21; AFP, Taliban leader bans windows overlooking places ‘usually used by women’, 29 December 2024, [url](#)



Men

- Men are forbidden from looking at an unrelated woman's body or face (31 July 2024);
- men should cover their bodies from the waist down to the knees, knees included (31 July 2024);
- when 'pursuing pastimes and exercise, men are obliged to wear clothes that conceal the required parts of the body, and that are not very tight or make certain parts of the body apparent (31 July 2024).

Prayers and religious conduct

- Prayers in congregation in the mosque shall be observed by 'traders, artisans and farmers, when conducting their affairs and carrying out their functions', at set times (31 July 2024);¹⁹³⁴
- the *de facto* MPVPV shall ensure that staff and tourists at sightseeing and recreation spots observe congregational prayer (31 July 2024);¹⁹³⁵
- 'not praying', delaying one's prayers, 'omitting mandatory and obligatory prayers', and 'not praying in congregation', are 'wrongful acts' (31 July 2024);
- neglecting obligatory fasts, is a 'wrongful act' (31 July 2024);
- observing holidays that have 'no Islamic foundation', including *Nawruz*, *Shab-e Yalda*, fireworks night and other festivals, are 'wrongful acts' (31 July 2024);
- befriending non-Muslims and assisting them, imitating them in one's appearance or character, are 'wrongful acts' (31 July 2024);¹⁹³⁶
- wearing and popularising crucifixes, neckties and other such un-Islamic symbols', are 'wrongful acts' (31 July 2024).¹⁹³⁷

Other

- Leadership approval needed for *hudud* and *qisas* punishments (6 May 2017);¹⁹³⁸
- male students and teachers were called upon not to wear ties (15 April 2022);
- body building athletes should cover 'abdominal muscles and limbs with loose-fitting garments' (17 June 2022);¹⁹³⁹
- people were called on to avoid celebrating Valentine's Day (14 February 2023);¹⁹⁴⁰
- celebrations of *Nowruz* were condemned by some members of the *de facto* authorities (March 2023);¹⁹⁴¹

¹⁹³⁴ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 18

¹⁹³⁵ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 19

¹⁹³⁶ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22

¹⁹³⁷ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 14, 22

¹⁹³⁸ AAN, Decrees, Orders and Instructions of His Excellency, Amir al-mu'minin, as published in the Official Gazette on 22 May 2023, July 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹³⁹ EASO, Afghanistan – Targeting of Individuals, August 2022, [url](#), p. 45

¹⁹⁴⁰ RFE/RL, The Thrill Is Gone For Valentine's Day In Taliban-Controlled Kabul, 14 February 2023, [url](#); Khaama Press, Citizens in Afghanistan Were Not Allowed to Celebrate Valentine's Day, 15 February 2023, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴¹ Hasht-e Subh, Taliban Oppose Nowruz Celebrations, 23 March 2023, [url](#); Kabul Now, Taliban in Herat prohibit people from celebrating Nowruz, 21 March 2023, [url](#)



- a ban of poppy cultivation (5 April 2022);¹⁹⁴²
- restricted access to the social media platform TikTok and the online game PlayerUnknown's Battleground, closure of channels with 'immoral programs' (21 April 2022);¹⁹⁴³
- sorcery is prohibited (7 August 2023);¹⁹⁴⁴
- 'wrongful acts' include (31 July 2024):
 - adultery ('whether forced or consensual');
 - temporary marriage;
 - fornication;
 - lesbianism;
 - anal sex, ('even if it is with one's own wife');
 - paedophilia;
 - creating 'a platform or circumstances conducive to adultery, fornication, lesbianism, anal sex, paedophilia or gambling'.¹⁹⁴⁵
- an instruction to all universities and private education institutions are to remove books considered against Hanafi jurisprudence from their libraries (14 December 2023).¹⁹⁴⁶
- a law to prevent begging, which prohibits 'healthy' people that are able to secure one meal a day from begging, as well as the use of children and disabled people for begging (18 May 2024);¹⁹⁴⁷
- playing chess was banned (11 May 2025).¹⁹⁴⁸
- universities were instructed to remove 680 books 'conflicting with *sharia*' from the curriculum (September 2025). This included many books authored by women.¹⁹⁴⁹ The committee behind the decision confirmed to BBC News that no books authored by women were allowed to be taught.¹⁹⁵⁰
- universities were instructed to stop teaching 18 subjects 'conflicting with *sharia*' (September 2025), including on gender, women,¹⁹⁵¹ democracy and human rights.¹⁹⁵²

¹⁹⁴² AAN, Decrees, Orders and Instructions of His Excellency, Amir al-mu'minin, as published in the Official Gazette on 22 May 2023, July 2023, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁹⁴³ EASO, Afghanistan – Country focus, January 2022, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁹⁴⁴ UNAMA, Human Rights situation in Afghanistan, July – September 2023 Update, 23 October 2023, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁹⁴⁵ Afghanistan, *de facto* authorities, The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law [unofficial translation by the AAN], August 2024, [url](#), art. 22

¹⁹⁴⁶ UNAMA, Human rights situation in Afghanistan, October-December 2023 Update, 22 January 2024, [url](#), p. 6; RFE/RL, Taliban Bans Books From Minority Muslim Sects In Private University Libraries, 22 December 2023, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁷ Ariana News, IEA leader approves law on prevention of begging, 19 May 2024, [url](#); Amu TV, Taliban leader approves law to curb begging, 18 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁸ France 24, Taliban suspends chess in Afghanistan, cites religious concerns over gambling, 11 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁹ BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Taliban Bans Books by Women in Afghanistan's Universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵⁰ BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#);

¹⁹⁵¹ BBC News, Taliban ban books written by women from Afghan universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#);

¹⁹⁵² New York Times (The), Taliban Bans Books by Women in Afghanistan's Universities, 19 September 2025, [url](#)





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