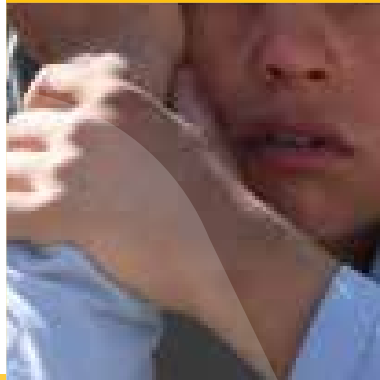




RAWADARI · رواداری

REPRESSION, REGRESSION & REVERSAL:

One Year of
Taliban Rule in
Afghanistan



15 August 2021 – 15 August 2022



About Rawadari:

Rawadari is an Afghan human rights organisation that aims to deepen and grow the human rights culture of Afghanistan, ultimately reducing the suffering of all Afghans, especially women and girls.

Rawadari helps build an Afghan human rights movement, monitors human rights violations, and pursues justice and accountability for violations. Rawadari works with individuals and collectives inside and outside Afghanistan.

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Introduction

This report covers major human rights violations in Afghanistan in the period of August 15, 2021–August 15, 2022. The findings of the report is based on reporting from the field in 29 provinces across Afghanistan. The first part of the report covers violations of the right to life, right to dignity, arbitrary arrests and detention, the situation regarding access to justice, the right to freedom of expression and media and other fundamental rights as well as the limitations imposed on the rights of women & girls. The second part of the report covers violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) including civilian casualties, torture and mistreatment, rape, intentional destruction of public and private property. All the incidents, figures and information included in this report has been confirmed by at least three credible and independent sources. We acknowledge possible underreporting of violations due to the challenges of accessing and verifying information on violations due to the limitations imposed by the de-facto authorities (DFA), the Taliban.

During these 12 months, structures and institutions that were shaped based on the previous Afghan constitution have collapsed. The current laws – and the previous constitution, which established the basic rights and freedoms of citizens – were abolished. Consequently, the legal guarantees of human rights protections of Afghans were lost. The absence of legal mechanisms to protect human rights has contributed to the regression in the human rights situation. DFA have also abolished the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission further weakening protection for human rights. On the international front, the reduced public human rights reporting by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, absence of many embassies on the ground, as well as a very limited presence of and coverage by the international media during the past year have impacted the shrinking space for human rights.

While security events have declined in number during this period, continued armed conflicts, especially deadly terrorist attacks, have taken a heavy toll on the people of Afghanistan. For instance, in the period of one year, **1174 civilians have been killed and 1548 civilians have been injured** either in terrorist attacks or by the armed conflict.

The regression in the human rights situation has had devastating consequences – especially for women and girls. As a result of systematic and targeted discrimination by the authorities, women have been deprived of some of their most fundamental human rights, such as the right to education and employment. Ethnic and religious minorities have also particularly suffered in the past year. Members of religious and ethnic minorities have been exposed to discrimination by the authorities and have fallen victim to deadly terrorist attacks

During this period, the Taliban have shut down the activities of dozens of civil society organizations, media, and independent news agencies. As a result, freedom of expression, freedom of press, and access to information – which have been important achievements in Afghanistan during the last two decades – have been widely limited throughout the country. In the first year of Taliban’s rule (August 2021–August 2022), 151 journalists have been arrested and 46 journalists have faced violence and intimidation. Thus, while some violations of human rights are reported on Afghan media, public access to comprehensive information about cases of violations has become severely limited.

The DFA have dealt with their critics and opponents with violence, and according to the findings of Rawadari, **hundreds of former government employees, journalists, and human rights defenders have been arrested, tortured, and even killed. 916 individuals, including employees of the former government particularly members of the Afghan security forces and their family members and relatives, journalists, civil society activists and other civilians, have been arbitrarily detained by the Taliban in this period.**

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Methodology

Rawadari has collected information related to human rights violations from reliable and independent local sources, including eyewitnesses, victims, and victims' relatives. The findings and information contained in this report are locally verified and double-checked against several sources. The information that follows is obtained from local informed sources in the provinces of Kabul, Kandahar, **Herat, Nangarhar, Bamyan, Kunar, Uruzgan, Helmand, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Daikundi, Sari pol, Takhar, Ghor, Midan Wardak, Ghazni, Panjshir, Parwan, Baghlan, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Farah, Nimroz, Badghis, Kapisa, Nuristan, Laghman, and Balkh.** In addition, information published by credible organizations are cited (with attribution) in this report.

Rawadari emphasizes that documenting and obtaining the required information regarding cases of human rights violations during the past year has been difficult, as the Tali

ban's General Directorate of Intelligence has prevented the publication of any information related to human rights violations and dealt violently with those recording or investigation specific cases. The number of incidents and violations might be much higher than what Rawadari has been able to verify and confirm due to the limited access to information. All events and figures included in this report have been confirmed by at least **three reliable sources.**



Part One

Human Rights Situation

Based on the findings of Rawadari, human rights have been widely and systematically violated in Afghanistan over the past year (15 August 2021-15 August 2022) due to the Taliban's lack of commitment to compliance with human rights standards and lack of deterrent mechanisms. This section covers the most major violations as monitored by Rawadari.

1. Violation of the Right to Life

Although fewer security events have occurred in the past year compared to previous years, and there has been a significant reduction in the number of casualties in face-to-face conflicts, the continuation of armed conflicts and terrorist attacks over the past year has nevertheless taken lives of civilians in Afghanistan. According to information and findings of the Rawadari 2,932 individuals have been killed or injured in total during one year of Taliban rule as a result of deadly terrorist attacks and targeted assassinations.

• Civilian Casualties

Our findings illustrate that 2,722 civilians – including 1,794 men, 110 women, 525 children, and 293 other individuals whom we have not been able to identify – have been killed or wounded throughout Afghanistan during the year studied. From these statistics we deduced: 1) 1,174 people were killed including 862 men, 48 women, 249 children, and 15 other people whose identity is unclear. 2) 1,548 individuals were injured including 932 men, 62 women, 276 children, and 278 other people with unknown identity. These individuals were victims in a variety of security events, including terrorist attacks.

• Targeted Killings

Two hundred and ten people – primarily employees of the security institutions of the previous government, judges, defence lawyers, human rights defenders, prosecutors, individuals affiliated with 'popular uprisings', former staff of the government and non-government institutions, and civilians accused

of collaborating with the ISKP (Islamic State Khorasan Province), and National Resistance Front – have been systematically and wilfully killed and wounded during the one year of Taliban rule studied. These individuals were killed in the provinces of Kandahar, Ghor, Jalalabad, Kunar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Daikundi, Herat, Balkh, Panjshir, Badakhshan, Kabul, Kunduz, Takhar, and Sari-pol.

After taking control over Afghanistan, the Taliban has resorted to retaliatory measures to identify and pursue individuals affiliated to former government and also non-governmental institutions. They have raided houses and residential buildings in different parts of the country. After identifying such individuals, the Taliban have mistreated, tortured, and even killed them. During the first three months of Taliban's rule, as many as 121 people – including employees of security institutions of the previous government, people associated with popular uprisings, judges and lawyers, human rights defenders, employees of non-governmental institutions, and local elders – were targeted and killed. For example, on September 8, 2021, 4 members of former Afghan National Police (ANP) in Kandahar province were arrested at their homes and shot. In addition, from 25 August to 2 November 2021, at least 61 people, residents of Nangarhar province were killed – among them 38 people accused of connection and cooperation with Daesh (also known as the Islamic State), 10 civilians (including 2 women) for unknown reasons, 3 religious scholars, 4 employees of the previous government, 3 activists, and 1 journalist. Local sources have told Rawadari that the names of 31 victims in Nangarhar Province have been identified and that these individuals were killed on the charge of collaborating with Daesh. Some of these people were beheaded, and some of their bodies were hung from the trees.

There are also reports of such killings in Badakhshan by the Taliban. Upon Taliban's arrival to Badakhshan, there have been several cases of disappearances, where the corpses were later found in rivers, valleys and on mountains. According to local residents, the Taliban try to break into people's houses at night and move them to unknown locations. The corpses are later found in mountains and valleys.

For example, in a case in the centre of Badakhshan Province, the Taliban killed a former commander of popular uprisings on June 23, 2022. The local Taliban arrested him at home, and his body was later found in the nearby river. Additionally, during the first three months of Taliban rule, the bodies of seven former government employees were found in the river. Furthermore, on November 24, 2021, the corpse of an employee from the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) who was arrested by unknown armed men at his home in Kunduz province was found 20 days after being shot. The Taliban in Takhar province also shot and murdered 23 employees of former government from May 11-15, 2022.

These cases occurred despite the Taliban's previous announcement of an amnesty for the former employees of government and non-government institutions and their pledge that no one would be charged or punished for cooperation with the previous government or national and international non-governmental institutions. This amnesty does not seem to have been upheld in action.

2. Violation of the Right to Human Dignity

There are serious and credible allegations of Taliban mistreatment and torture of employees of the previous government, especially military personnel and employees of security institutions. Additionally, numerous cases of field trials and extra-legal punishment have been reported.

● Torture and Abuse

Information obtained from local sources indicates that the Taliban have committed widespread torture and ill treatment during its one-year rule over Afghanistan. Based on the findings of this report, approximately 440 people were tortured and mistreated during the last year. Torture victims are mainly the employees of the previous government, as well as opponents and critics of the Taliban, journalists, female protesters, and human rights defenders. It should be noted that due to the imposition of extensive restrictions and the application of strict regulations by Taliban, access to detention centres and documentation of additional cases of torture and ill treatment has not been possible for Rawadari.

Based on information obtained from reliable, local sources, the Taliban arrested, harassed, and tortured former government employees and even arrested relatives and family members of these individuals. For instance, in October 2021, the Taliban tortured and mistreated a man in Nangarhar province because his son was a former soldier. On September 11, 2021, the Taliban in Parwan province kept a journalist under surveillance for hours in a bathroom for organizing demonstrations, and eventually tortured him with a cable. The journalist suffered serious injuries as a result. In Herat province, people who managed to escape from Taliban detention centres said that they were severely tortured and treated cruelly. Meanwhile,

a human rights defender from Kandahar province told Rawadari that the Taliban subjected him to beatings, waterboarding, electric shocks, and various forms of physical torture after his arrest. Moreover, the victims of torture have pointed out that the Taliban warned them that if they talked to the media about the behaviour of the Taliban officials, would not only re-arrest or kill them but will also arrest their family members.

● Arbitrary and Cruel Punishments

The Taliban has also continuously inflicted punishments that are extrajudicial and that violate human dignity in various parts of the country. Our findings illustrate that a total of 109 individuals have been tried arbitrarily and punished by the Taliban in the last 12 months. These people have been tried and punished without any investigation or proof of accusations against them. Examples of such trials by the Taliban in the last year include the execution of four men on September 25, 2021, and the hanging of their bodies in public places, on charges of kidnapping in the city of Herat. In addition, the Deputy Governor of the Taliban for Herat province said that on May 2, 2022, two people who had entered a house with the intention to rob the home were killed, and their bodies were displayed to teach others a lesson. In another case, the Taliban flogged a man in public on the charge of adultery at a crossroads located in Trinkot city, Uruzgan province, on February 21, 2022. Local people and civil rights activists have said that the trial of this man was unfair, and it appears that the main reason for the trial was personal enmity.

On September 20, 2021, the Taliban arrested two young men and a young woman in Ghor province for “moral” crimes. In the same month, the Taliban whipped and punished two young women and a young man in Faryab province in the presence of hundreds of people; these young adults had run away with the intention of getting married.

Additionally, a Taliban official announced that they will resume the implementation of Islamic Hudud punishments (**apostasy, revolt against the ruler, theft, highway robbery, adultery, slander, and drinking alcohol**), including the implementation of Qasas, execution, and amputation. The implementation of Islamic Hudud on the accused and those suspected of these crimes in a situation where the laws have been suspended and there is no effective and accountable mechanism to ensure justice is a prominent example of violation of human dignity and human rights.

3. Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

Our findings illustrate that 916 people have been illegally and arbitrarily detained by the Taliban in the past year. These include the employees of the previous government – especially those from the former security and defence institutions as well as their relatives – journalists and civil and social activists, and other civilians. Taliban have arrested and detained many people simply due to their cooperation with government institutions and international organizations, or due to their human rights background. For example,

the Taliban arrested 360 people in Farah and Nimruz provinces alone, including civil and social activists and social media users, and subjected them to violence and ill-treatment. Meanwhile, the Taliban have arrested 205 civilians in Panjshir province on charges of cooperation with, or membership of, the National Resistance Front (NRF).

In addition, in the first days of their rule, the Taliban arrested many former security force members in Nangarhar province and transferred them to an undisclosed location. In another case, on September 10, 2021, a group of Taliban fighters attacked the house of a man who was a civil rights activist and the head of a charity foundation in Kandahar province, and beat him and his family members. On November 14, 2021, Maulvi Farid Uddin Mahmood, the head of the Afghanistan Academy of Sciences stated that “more than

80% of the people in Kabul, especially the youth have mental atheism, because America has done a lot through cultural invasion during the last two decades...” This comment by an influential Taliban figure can give other members of this group greater courage to arbitrarily arrest people and violate citizens’ rights to freedom and personal security.

4. Status of Access to Justice

After the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the Taliban, the implementation of all domestic laws was suspended. The institutions based on the constitution – including judicial bodies – were also dissolved, and the previous professional and experienced cadres were purged. The information obtained indicates that in the previous year, 1,016 professional and administrative employees of various departments of the central and provincial prosecutors as well as 2,000 judges, who were in the government departments, had been dismissed from their duties.

The Taliban have now hired new judges and employees in various departments of the judicial system, including in the central and provincial courts. These individuals were mainly educated in religious schools and are unfamiliar with the modern judicial system. They typically issue rulings based on their traditional understandings of religion and according to customary methods. Moreover, the exclusive powers of the prosecutor’s office and the courts are not separate in practice; thus, the defendants are prosecuted and punished regardless of the principles and formalities stipulated in the law and without any prosecutorial investigation. The prosecutors do not have the right to protest against the verdict of the courts, and the defendants are not considered to have the right to appeal.

The findings of this report show that for months, in several provinces, a non-professional member of the Taliban has played the role of both a prosecutor and the role of a judge. For example, many legal and criminal matters in Daikundi province have been referred to Maulvi and Mufti (clerical personal) and decided by the head of education of this province in the first months after the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In certain areas, including in Helmand province, cases are referred to clerics and imams of mosques for resolution. However, in such a situation, access to justice seems difficult or even impossible due to the current lack of legal mechanisms to support victims in obtaining justice in such

difficult and unequal conditions. For example, in a traffic incident on September 28, 2021, the Taliban seriously injured a mother and killed her 15-year-old son in the centre of Daikundi province, according to eyewitnesses. The Taliban did not arrest the perpetrator of this incident and announced the settlement of the case simply by paying six bushels of wheat flour from the warehouse of the Department of Agriculture to the victims' family. In Kandahar province, a 14-year-old child was also arrested in March 2022 on the charge of stealing 100 Afghanis (about 92p) and was detained for more than three months.

Notably, the Taliban are significantly biased against the employees of the previous government and have activated the courts against them despite the evidence. For example, in Herat province, a person approached the court and claimed that a previous government employee had taken money from him by force; the court immediately ordered the payment of the claimed amount without the necessary investigation.

Meanwhile, thousands of people are held in detention centres in the capital and other parts of the country on various charges. The Taliban keep these individuals in a single place without distinguishing the type of charge, as in Kandahar province, where approximately 2,200 people are kept in one location without the charges being specified; individuals in this province have been awaiting trial and verdicts for months.

Since the Taliban have declared the abolition of the laws governing the administration of prisons, including the law on criminal proceedings, they have removed professional and trained staff from their duties in prisons and do not allow any institutions to monitor these centres. Therefore, access to a fair trial has been limited. Consequently, the fundamental rights of the suspect and the accused during and after the trial (such as equality in front of the court, fair and public trial, compliance with the principle of acquittal, the right to have a defence lawyer, and the right to appeal against the conviction) have also been violated.

5. The Right to Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press

During the year under study, the Taliban have imposed extremely strict regulations on the

work of the media and the press. As of now, the domestic media are prohibited from publishing independent and impartial reports and are obliged to follow the policy of the DFA. A number of journalists have stated that they were ordered that no report should be published against the wishes of the authorities and that media officials should coordinate and consult with the Taliban before publishing reports. Journalists who have disobeyed this order have been subjected to violence. In addition, in a large number of provinces, female journalists have not been allowed to work in the media. The Taliban has also arrested and tortured journalists and media officials for impartial reporting, especially for coverage of protests. According to the Rawadari's findings, a total of 151 journalists were arrested and 46 others were subjected to violence and threats during one year of Taliban rule. According to an evaluation by the International Federation of Journalists and the National Union of Afghan Journalists, the activities of 318 media outlets have been censured and nearly 3,000 journalists (the majority of whom are women) have lost their jobs, after the Taliban took control of the country.

The Taliban have threatened, pursued, and harassed some civil society activists, journalists, and university professors due to their critical stances on social networks. In one case, the Taliban in Badakhshan province took a critic away from his house at night; thus far, there is no information about his fate. In addition, some social media users have complained that they have been threatened by the Taliban and have faced security problems because they have expressed their opinions and published critical posts; these individuals have stated that the Taliban called them to security centres and arrested them.

In Farah province, during the first months of their rule, the Taliban arrested and tortured 31 people for criticizing the "Islamic Emirate" on social media platforms. The Taliban has always emphasized that discussing existing problems and conflicts represents an attempt to harm the prestige and position of the DFA and therefore deserves punishment. At the same time, the Taliban ordered the media not to air dramas in which women are featured, as well as satirical and comedy programs, dramas and programs in which the role of the companions of the Prophet was portrayed, and serials that are against "the culture and religious beliefs of the Afghan people".

Due to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and suffocation, citizens are now deprived of the freedom to openly express their opinions, and the number of media outlets that previously played an important role in promoting freedom of expression and free flow of information has decreased significantly.

6. Violation of the Right to Peaceful Assembly

After the return of Taliban to power, a number of citizens, particularly women, held protests in different parts of the country to stand against the restrictions imposed by the DFA. Expressing their civil and legal demands, the protesters asked the Taliban to respect the basic rights and freedoms of Afghan men and women and to give everyone, including women and members of ethnic and religious communities the opportunity to participate in public affairs. The protests were met with violence and were suppressed by the Taliban.

In the first months of its rule, the Taliban had violently suppressed 13 civil and peaceful protests, leading to the arrest and torture of numerous protesters, including journalists who covered the demonstrations. According to the information obtained, two participants of these protests were killed, and six others were injured as a result of Taliban violence. On September 11, 2021, several local elders and influential people in Parwan province held a protest meeting which was stopped and suppressed by the Taliban military. In addition to beating the protestors with sticks, whips, and gun butts, the Taliban also arrested some of the participants and reporters and confiscated reporters' cameras and demonstrators' cell phones. The Taliban released these individuals after those arrested pledged not to repeat similar actions. Additionally, the Taliban arrested and detained 69 female protestors in Kabul and Balkh provinces for organizing protests against the Taliban during the previous year. Over that year, the Taliban have violently repressed their opponents and critics and have shown that they use violence as the tool to subdue others. In May 2022, the Taliban governor of Kabul stated in a video, that was released through social media, that "opposition to the Taliban is forbidden, and it is permissible to kill the opponents of this regime".

7. The Right to Form and Join Trade Unions

In the course of one year of Taliban rule, no new unions, civil institutions, political parties or trade unions were established and the Taliban suppressed and prevented the activities of such bodies in some provinces. For example, the union of university professors, which was active across Afghanistan, was dissolved in Kandahar by an official letter from the Ministry of Higher Education of the Taliban. In another case, a group of young people in Parwan province decided to establish an association, which faced a negative response from the Taliban Justice Department during the registration phase. On 20 February 2022, the Chief Justice of Kandahar in a meeting with civil society ordered civil rights activists and voluntary and social charity organizations to cease their activities. A number of participants of this meeting expressed that the Chief Justice of Kandahar province claimed that the reason for this order was the lack of a specific policy regarding civic and voluntary activities. The findings of this report show that across the country, the majority of social and cultural organizations that used to operate regularly have now been dissolved and the activities of these organizations have stopped.

8. Restrictions Imposed on Women's Fundamental Freedoms

Since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, they have openly suppressed the basic rights and freedoms of women, including their right to education and participation in public life. As a first step, female employees have been prevented from returning to government offices, and women who worked in various departments of the previous government have been dismissed from their duties. In another measure, the Taliban issued a decree to defer the return of girls above the sixth grade to school; due to this decree, hundreds of thousands of female students throughout the country have been denied the right to education. Taliban's year of rule has meant a drastic & devastating regression in Afghan women's access to their fundamental rights. Afghanistan is currently the only country on the planet where girls are banned from accessing secondary education.

● Detention and Forced Disappearance

During the 12 months covered in this study, women in different parts of the country have disappeared or been arrested or killed due to their participation in protests or for working with the previous security and defence institutions. Rawadari's findings show that in the past year, 17 women have been murdered throughout the country, 9 of whom have disappeared, and 73 women have been arrested by the Taliban for exercising their right to protest. The Taliban in Kabul arrested and detained seven women who had been involved in protests in armed raid on their house, and 40 women were arrested by the Taliban after participating in a protest march in Mazar-e Sharif. In addition, a number of women have been killed due to their work with the former security institutions and civil activities. A female resident of Ghor province who was a former prison employee in the province was shot on September 4, 2021 in front of her husband and children. Two other women in Ghazni and Mazar-e Sharif who were employees of former security institutions were killed by the Taliban, and on September 16, 2021, 8 other women who were involved in organizing protests against the Taliban in Mazar-e Sharif were mysteriously killed.

The violent suppression of women's protests and activism and, the creation of an atmosphere of fear and terror have caused women pioneers in the field feel imprisoned in their homes. Taliban's imposition of extensive restrictions, as well as mandatory requirements regarding the hijab and Mahram (laws governing outfit and the policy of women being accompanied by a male chaperone outside) for women, have essentially removed the possibility of any female participation in public affairs.

● Prohibiting women from participating in public affairs

In the first days of its rule, the Taliban announced that women cannot leave the house alone and must be accompanied by a Mahram (a male chaperone). They also ordered female students and female journalists to wear a black Hijab and refrain from wearing colourful clothes. Women who have refused this order have faced violent treatment by the Taliban and, in several provinces, including Badakhshan and Bamyán, girls have been mistreated and subjected to violence by the Taliban for wearing slippers and not having thick socks to cover their

feet. The Taliban's religious regulators, which are present in the cities at all times, abuse women without Hijab and Mahram. There are also limitations on women's access to parks, recreational areas and shrines. In another decree dated 27 May, 2022, the Taliban in Kandahar province announced that women without Mahram do not have the right to use public transportation, including the taxis and rickshaws, and if they ignore the announcement, they will be reprimanded and punished. Subsequently, women in this province have received warnings from the Taliban for using public transport.

The information obtained for this report shows that domestic violence against women seems to have increased in the year studied, especially the number of 'honor' killings and mysterious murders. By suspending all domestic laws, including the Constitution and Elimination of Violence Against Women Law the Taliban has virtually eliminated access to justice for women victims of violence. Currently, there is no legal mechanism that guarantees access to justice for female victims of violence, and the Taliban's legal and judicial institutions do not deal with cases of violence against women. As a result, perpetrators of violence have complete immunity.

9. Status of Access to the Right to Education

Boys' access to schools has increased during the last year due to the reduction of violence in areas previously involved in conflicts. However, the Taliban has issued a decree prohibiting girls from attending school above the sixth grade across the country. Following a year of Taliban rule, hundreds of thousands of female students throughout the country have been deprived of their most basic human right to education.

Furthermore, during the past year, hundreds of professional and experienced staff members of academic and educational centres have fled to countries near and far due to fear of harassment or prosecution by the Taliban, and educational centres – especially universities – have lost their academic cadre. By imposing strict regulations (including separating classes for girls and boys and inspecting the Hijab of female students), the Taliban has practically eliminated opportunities for continued education for thousands of girls. Throughout Afghanistan, and especially in the south-eastern region of the country, the presence of

students in universities and educational centres has been seriously depleted. For example, in Kandahar province, the number of participants in the entrance exam for private universities has decreased by 75% compared to the same period in previous years. In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education of the Taliban has implemented changes to the curriculum, based on the ideological beliefs of the DFA.

Additionally, during the past year,

the DFA has emphasized support for the establishment of religious schools and religious education and have opposed the expansion of the modern education system. For example, the local government of the Taliban in Ghor announced that the employees of the civil and military sectors of this province are obliged to allocate one percent of their monthly salary to support religious schools.

These conditions, as well as the extensive economic problems facing families in Afghanistan, have caused a high proportion of eligible boys and girls to lose the opportunity to go to schools and universities.

10. Status of Access to Healthcare

The consequences of and crises caused by return of Taliban to power has also severely affected the centers providing health services. The lack of financial resources, personnel, equipment, and required medicine has limited citizens' access to health services, and the establishment and implementation of strict regulations (especially for women) have created serious challenges and problems. Throughout the country, the Taliban has declared that male doctors should not examine and treat female patients, and women without hijab and a chaperone, cannot even leave the house to receive health services. The findings of Rawadari indicate that many doctors from hospitals, clinics, and health centres left their jobs as the Taliban seized the country. Additionally, based on the information obtained, the price of medicine in the market has increased.

11. Lack of Job Opportunities and Increasing Poverty

With the return of the Taliban to power, a significant number of those who worked with the previous government (especially within the security and defence departments) did not return to their duties out of fear or due to dismissal. Journalists and certain individuals, who used to work with non-governmental organizations and institutions, have also lost their jobs. The lack of job opportunities has significantly undermined the economic status and livelihoods of families. A large group of university graduates, journalists, and employees of the previous government are now unemployed, and a huge wave of mass migration to countries near and far has begun as individuals attempt to escape the current situation.

Concurrent with these unemployment challenges, the latest United Nations' reporting indicates that 3.2 million children are suffering from malnutrition, and another 14 million children are at risk of malnutrition. Despite these nutritional challenges, the Taliban has forced people to pay tithe (*ushr*) and *zakat* throughout the country. In several provinces, such as Balkh, local officials have ordered families to prepare three meals a day for Taliban soldiers.

12. Imposing Heavy Taxes and Extortion

Various institutions within the government such as the Department of Hajj and Endowments, the Department of Agriculture, and the Municipalities collect tithes from citizens. For example, in the centre of Daikundi province, six security checkpoints have been set up by the Taliban, and each checkpoint collects 30,000 (277 Pound Sterling) to 35,000 Afghani (324 Pound Sterling) from residents in addition to tithes and other expenses for Taliban members, including money for winter fuel. In another case, a businessman in one of the provinces who wanted to transfer his cash to the Da Afghanistan Bank branch was taken to the police headquarters by the Taliban. This businessman told Rawadari that the Taliban released him from prison after providing the group around 14,000 Pound Sterling. There are also reports that the Taliban group extorted money from people on the pretext of carrying weapons in some provinces last year, obtaining huge sums of money through this extortion.

13. The Human Rights Situation of Ethnic and Religious Minorities

During the period of this report, a wide range of repressive measures and deadly terrorist attacks against ethnic and religious minorities have taken place across Afghanistan. The Hindu and Sikh minority, Hazaras, and Uzbek communities have experienced different types of discrimination during this period. The Taliban has persecuted the members of religious and ethnic minorities in different provinces. In the first few months of their rule, members of Taliban expelled the followers of the Jafari and Salafi sects from their homes and tortured, humiliated, and insulted them.

• Forced Displacement

The Sikh and Hindu communities once lived in different parts of Afghanistan. However, due to serious security threats, there are now only a few of these individuals remaining in the country. In September 2021, the Taliban destroyed one of the Hindu temples in Ghazni and stopped the restoration of two other temples. In addition, a Hindu temple in Kabul was destroyed by unknown individuals.

Additionally, based on the information obtained, more than a thousand people belonging to the Uzbek and Turkmen ethnic groups in the Qosh Tepe district of Jawzjan province were forced by the Taliban to move in November 2021, and their land, houses, and property were forcibly seized.

After taking control of Daikundi province, the Taliban also issued a decree removing 800 families belonging to the Hazara ethnic group from the districts of Pato, Gizab, Naveh Mish, and Khadir without permission to take anything with them. The Taliban forced them to move and subsequently destroyed their houses. The families were only allowed to take 50 kilos of wheat with them when they left their properties, and they have been displaced in neighbouring villages and areas. In addition, on November 12, 2021, 15 Hazara families who lived in the Khair Abad and Naw Abad areas of Dasht-e Barchi in the west of Kabul were forcibly displaced, and their houses were destroyed. The Taliban had warned the residents of Waliasr town in Mazar-e Sharif, mostly Hazara and Shia, to evacuate this township. According to local sources, the Taliban court issued a decree to vacate this town in October 2021 and then destroyed part of it. Local residents stated that 4,000 families have lived in this town for over two decades.

• Terrorist Attacks

During the year studied, 13 deadly and targeted terrorist attacks have taken place on Hazaras and Shiites in Afghanistan, resulting in the deaths and injuries of 700 people. As a result of a terrorist attack on the Sikh place of worship in Kabul, at least one worshiper was killed and seven others were injured, and during the last year, two major terrorist attacks took place on Sunni Sufi mosques in Kunduz and Kabul provinces, which resulted in the death of 93 worshipers and the wounding of 183 others. The ISKP has claimed responsibility for six attacks on ethnic and religious minorities. During its year of rule, the Taliban group has failed to take effective measures to provide security to citizens, especially at risk ethnic and religious groups.

Based on the available evidence, the attack on ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan (especially the deadly attacks against Hazaras and Shiites) has been carried out in a targeted and systematic manner illustrate that the Hazaras are at risk of genocide.



Part Two

Violation of International Humanitarian Law

Our monitoring illustrates that during the past year, the international principles and rules governing the armed conflicts have been violated, and civilians have suffered violence and serious losses of lives and financial assets.

1. Civilian Casualties

Although the number of armed conflicts and security events has declined in the last 12 months in comparison to previous years, the casualties resulting from security incidents and terrorist attacks are still significant and worrying. From August 15, 2021, to August 15, 2022, a total of 2,722 civilians (including 1,792 men, 110 women, 525 children and 293 others whose identities have not been determined) were killed or injured. Among them, 1,174 people (862 men, 48 women, 249 children and 15 others whose identity is unknown) have been killed, and 1,548 people (932 men, 62 women, 276 children and 278 other people with unknown identity) have been injured. All of these individuals are victims of various security events, including terrorist attacks.

● Property Loss During Security Incidents

Explosions of improvised explosive devices in mosques and civilian areas, bullet heads left over from previous years by the Taliban and the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and roadside mines planted by the Taliban have killed 289 civilians and injured 728 others in the past year. Children account for the largest number of these casualties. An additional 356 civilians were killed, and 626 others were injured as a result of suicide attacks during the past year, most of which were carried out by ISIS.

In addition, 463 people, mostly employees of the previous government, have been assassinated by the Taliban and other unknown agents, and 193 others have been injured. According to the findings of Rawadari, the Taliban have committed these murders in all parts of Afghanistan, especially in the provinces of Kandahar, Daikundi, Nangarhar, Panjshir, Kabul, Paktia, and Ghor and in the Balkhab district.

In the last 12 months, 47 civilians, including 15 children have been killed in airstrikes by the Pakistani forces in Khost and Kunar provinces; in one case, aerial bombardment by American forces near the international airport Hamed Karzai resulted in the deaths of 10 civilians, including 7 children. In addition, the Taliban killed 100 civilians in the Balkhab district of Sari Pul province and 32 civilians in the Panjshir province. The evidence obtained shows that the victims of these attacks had no role in or contribution towards armed conflicts.

2. Killing War Prisoners

Rawadari's findings show that during Taliban's military attacks on the Balkhab districts of Sari Pul province and Panjshir province, the Taliban also killed people who had laid down their weapons and surrendered. As many as seven people were killed in Panjshir province and four people in the Balkhab district after they surrendered to the Taliban.

3. Torture and Abuse

Torture of civilians and mistreatment of people represent additional atrocities committed by the Taliban during the past year in the armed conflict. After attacking the Balkhab district to suppress a disgruntled commander Maulvi Mehdi Mujahid, civilians (including women and children, who had no role in the conflict) all experienced violence and mistreatment from the Taliban soldiers. Local sources stated that people have been tortured and mistreated on allegations of carrying weapons and communicating with Maulvi Mehdi, or even for bringing aid to the area from the humanitarian institutions. For example, the Taliban have arrested and tortured four people in the Tark Hoch, Lidar, and Takhar areas with allegations of possessing weapons.

4. Rape

There are credible allegations of rape of women by Taliban in Balkhab district of Saripul. Local sources have reported that Taliban armed men raped a woman in the old bazaar of Balkhab district while her husband was with her. There were also other allegations of sexual assault during the night raids by Taliban that have been difficult to verify.

5. Deliberate Destruction of Property Belonging to Civilians

Based on the findings of this report, property belonging to civilians has been intentionally damaged and destroyed in the year studied, violating additional rules and principles governing armed conflicts. Local sources have confirmed that after attacking the Balkhab district of Sari Pul province, the Taliban destroyed the north-eastern part of the bazaar in this district, which was considered the main part of it. The Taliban deliberately destroyed this market with fire rockets and setting an oil tank to fire that caused 140 shops to ignite and burn.

Based on the information obtained for this study, two residential houses in an area called “Khalar” of the Balkhab district were also bombed by the Taliban and completely destroyed. The owner of one of these houses told Rawadari that they were displaced in the Gandeh Jiu and Marghoch areas and that the Taliban bombed and destroyed his house. In addition, on August 15, 2022, the Taliban set fire to four residential houses in Peryan district of Panjshir province and forced residents to leave.

6. Looting of Public and Private Properties

There are reliable reports that the Taliban, after taking control of the provinces, have looted people’s personal belongings and properties and forcibly appropriated their houses and property. Across the country, members of the Taliban have seized the residences of several former government officials and are using them as military bases, or for personal purposes. In addition, in the first days of their arrival in the provinces, the Taliban looted or misused government properties and facilities.

In Daikundi province, even some government offices, including the Department of Information, Culture and Urban Development, were in the hands of families of local officials for a long time following the arrival of the Taliban. N

Meanwhile, according to the information obtained from local sources, the Taliban took more than 70 high-speed vehicles such as Fielder, Corolla, Sarf and Tunis from the Balkhab centre, 70 motorcycles from the area of Sarakhak Balag, and about 65 other motorcycles from the village of Glorz. According to local sources, Taliban forces have looted people’s houses of valuables, jewellery, and cash.

Our findings show that the Taliban group looted and plundered properties belonging to former government employees and forcibly seized the personal property of people after the fall of the provincial centres. The occupation of residential houses of former government officials has occurred in all provinces, including Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar, and Herat provinces. There are also reports that the Taliban looted the property of former employees of the security agencies in Kandahar province.



Part Three

Conclusion And Recommendations

The first year of rule by the Taliban in Afghanistan has clearly shown the DFA does not have the will and capacity to uphold human rights standards. Taliban members and officials are repeatedly involved in violations of fundamental rights of citizens and with a feeling of immunity from accountability. Afghanistan is suffering from the worst women's rights crisis in the world, inflicted by the Taliban. Contrary to what is claimed, the citizens of Afghanistan have not experienced security during this period: the members of the Taliban – in the absence of the international community and strong monitoring mechanisms – have taken revenge on the employees of the previous government, and have harassed and intimidated human rights defenders and civil society activists. Taliban have arrested, tortured, harassed, and even killed individuals from these backgrounds. This brutal treatment has spread an atmosphere of fear and panic throughout the country, and for this reason we witnessed a large wave of mass migrations last year, which still is ongoing.

In addition, domestic laws – especially the constitution, which guaranteed the fundamental rights of citizens – have been suspended, and a significant number of civil society and human rights organizations have stopped their activities. As a result, access to information on human rights violations is limited. Justice has become difficult and almost impossible to ensure.

Moreover, due to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and suffocation in the country and the implementation of extremely strict policies by the Taliban, many media and press and civil society and cultural organizations have ceased their activities. Thus, freedoms of expression and the press, which are considered the most important achievements of the last two decades, have become increasingly limited with each passing day. Citizens do not currently have the courage to express their thoughts and civil demands, nor does the media outlets publish and distribute information independently and impartially.

Ethnic and religious minorities are also not immune from the security threats. The local Taliban rulers in the provinces of Daikundi, Uruzgan, Jawzjan, Balkh, and Kabul have forced hundreds of families belonging to the Uzbek, Turkmen, and Hazara ethnic groups to move out, looted their property, and destroyed their houses.

All of these events show that in the past year, human rights in Afghanistan have been in the worst possible situation and DFA has not shown any practical commitment to international human rights values and standards. The indifference of the international community and the passive role of the United Nations, which only observes the aforementioned incidents and events, have contributed to the further deterioration of the situation and provided the Taliban with more opportunities to violate human rights.

Recommendations

Based on what has been discussed in this report, Rawadari proposes the following as its most important recommendations to DFA and the international community.

1. To the Taliban

- a)** Afghanistan is a state signatory to human rights treaties and conventions. As de facto authorities, Taliban are obliged to uphold these commitments for the protection and promotion of human rights of all Afghans.
- b)** As de facto authorities Taliban must be responsive and accountable for violations of human rights including deadly attacks on religious and ethnic minorities. They are responsible for providing security for at risk communities as well as prevention and transparent investigation of targeted attacks.
- c)** Individuals and units involved in human rights violations must be held accountable. All violations must be comprehensively investigated by the de facto authorities and the perpetrators must be held to account.
- d)** All efforts must concentrate on immediate reopening of secondary schools for girls across Afghanistan and ensuring access to all levels of education for all Afghan women and girls.
- e)** The restrictions imposed on the fundamental rights and freedoms of women including the right to freedom of movement, employment and public participation must be eliminated and all barriers to their social, political, economic and social participation must be removed.

2) To the international community

a) The restrictions on the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan have devastating consequences for the country and for generations of Afghans to come. It is a collective and global responsibility to stand in solidarity with the women of Afghanistan and utilize all leverage to reopen girls' schools, ensure women's return to work in all sectors and work to lift all current restrictions on women's rights and freedoms

- b)** The Taliban should be reminded about their duty towards the Afghan public and the importance of creating inclusive mechanisms and procedures of governance at all levels where women, minorities and all marginalized groups are listened to and included.
- c)** The civic space has disappeared due to the Taliban's brutal crackdown of media, independent associations and protests. The right to freedom of assembly and expression must be upheld for Afghans to criticize and influence the DFA.
- d)** We call on the international and regional human rights organizations to regularly and continuously monitor the current human rights situation in Afghanistan and advocate and act collectively for protection of human rights in Afghanistan.
- e)** We call on the international and regional aid agencies to act urgently and effectively to support the people of Afghanistan, considering the chronic and deadly poverty, destitution, and unemployment.
- f)** We call on the United Nations Human Rights Council to facilitate an independent investigation into the genocide of Hazaras and Shiites in Afghanistan.
- g)** We call on the international and regional leaders to uphold human rights principles as the central element of their engagement with the Taliban and to hold them accountable for violations.
- h)** We call specifically on the Islamic countries to advocate and act for human rights of Afghans particularly women's right to education and work as also enshrined in Islam and the Islamic Declaration of Human Rights.



RAWADARI

For an equal and peaceful Afghanistan

