

PRESS RELEASE 23/01/2025

PRESS RELEASE REGARDING THE ICC PROSECUTOR'S REQUEST FOR ARREST WARRANTS IN THE SITUATION OF AFGHANISTAN.

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced today that a request has been submitted to the court for the issuance of arrest warrants for Hibatullah Akhundzada, the leader of the Taliban, and Abdul Hakim Haqqani, the Chief Justice of the Taliban's Supreme Court. The request cites their involvement in gender-based persecution in Afghanistan, which constitutes a crime against humanity.

The request will be reviewed by a panel of three judges from the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber. If approved, all member states will be obligated to cooperate and take steps to arrest the accused if they travel to these countries.

While the trial and punishment of the named individuals may take years, this move by the ICC Prosecutor is a significant step in holding perpetrators accountable, especially as Afghan women are experiencing extreme oppression. Women in Afghanistan have been systematically and widely deprived of their human rights and freedoms, including the rights to education, work, and freedom of movement. The issuance of arrest warrants is an important step for accountability and can prevent normalization of Taliban's repressive policies.

Rawadari welcomes the ICC Prosecutor's request, considering it an effective step toward ensuring accountability and combatting entrenched impunity in Afghanistan. Rawadari emphasizes the need to address all credible allegations of international crimes in the country. Since Afghanistan joined the Rome Statute in 2003, there have been widespread human rights violations that fall under the ICC's jurisdiction. We hope sufficient resources will be allocated to the court to expand its Afghanistan investigation and include other perpetrators.

We also stress that the severity of the human rights and women's rights crisis in Afghanistan requires an all tools approach including a potential case in International Court of Justice, use of universal jurisdiction, and other international accountability mechanisms.

Over the past three and a half years, Rawadari has been part of joint efforts to advocate, monitor, and document human rights violations, particularly in gathering information and evidence related to crimes against humanity in Afghanistan. Rawadari remains committed to continuing its efforts in this regard and supporting the international accountability mechanisms in collecting the necessary evidence and documentation. Rawadari will also work with victims and witnesses to raise awareness of international judicial mechanisms for addressing human rights violations, especially the procedures and practices of the ICC.