

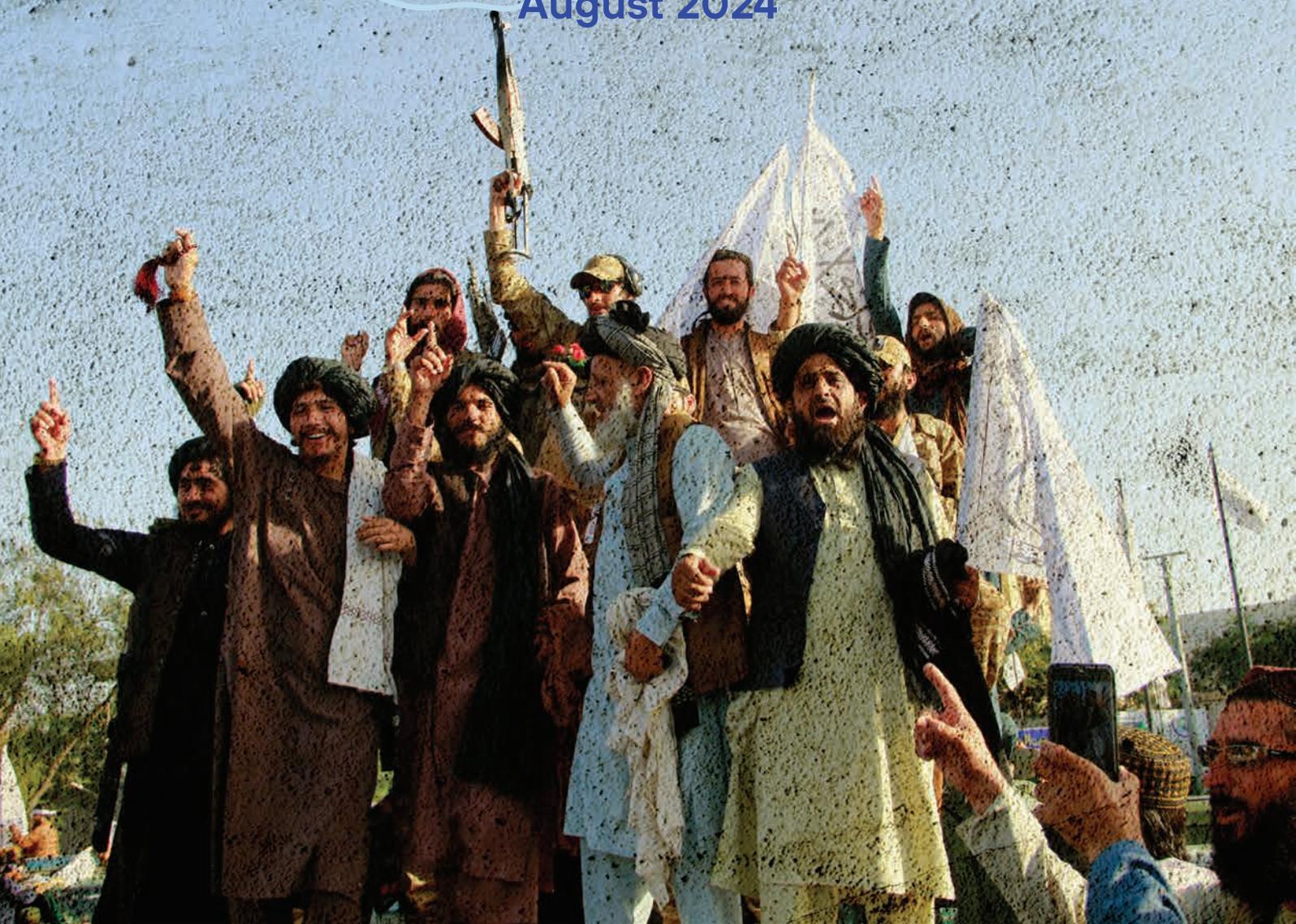


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RAWADARI

The Afghanistan Mid-Year Human Rights Situation Report

January-June 30 2024

August 2024



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

While the number of explosions and suicide attacks in Afghanistan decreased in the first six months of 2024 (January-30 June 2024), resulting in fewer violations of the right to life, there has been a disturbing rise in forced disappearances, torture resulting in death, arbitrary detention, and the implementation of cruel and inhumane punishments. The number of arbitrary detentions have doubled and the number of enforced disappearances have tripled compared to the same period in 2023. The Taliban's failure to uphold human rights principles, the absence of protection mechanisms, and the continued impunity from punishment and legal accountability are some of the contributing factors for the worsening human rights situation and the increase in various forms of human rights violations during this reporting period.

Our findings indicate that former government employees and their families, civil society activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and critics of Taliban continue to face violent and retaliatory attacks from the de facto authorities (DFA), the Taliban. The human rights situation of women and girls has continued to deteriorate due to the Taliban's discriminatory and repressive policies and increasing enforcement of these policies. During this period, the Taliban have continued to impose and enforce severe restrictions on access to justice, the right to education, the right to work, and the freedom of movement for women across the country.

This report also covers the Taliban's discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities. The Taliban have engaged in discriminatory practices in providing government services, access to resources, opportunities, and national services, and distribution of humanitarian aid to vulnerable ethnic and religious groups. They have also hired or dismissed individuals from government positions based on their political beliefs or ethnic and religious identity. The suppression of differing religious beliefs, the imposition and enforcement of severe restrictions on religious



Photo: Sohrab Omar



freedoms, and coercion of religious minorities to convert are other Taliban violations that Rawadari has documented in this period.

This report aims to present an accurate depiction of the current human rights situation in Afghanistan, highlighting significant incidents of violations of civil and political rights, the human rights situation of women and girls, and the human rights violations targeting vulnerable ethnic and religious groups in the first six months of 2024.

METHODOLOGY

The information included in this report has been obtained through continuous monitoring of the human rights situation during the first six months of 2024. Rawadari's observers used questionnaires and consulted various local sources in 31 provinces¹ of the country to investigate, document, and record incidents of violations of civil and political rights, as well as violations of the human rights of women and vulnerable ethnic and religious groups in the country. Key sources for this report include victims and their families, eyewitnesses, , civil society activists and human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, influential social figures, government employees, staff of educational and health institutions, and staff of relevant national and international organizations.

Additionally, the report utilizes decrees, orders, and audio, video, and written documents issued by the Taliban over the past six months that were available to Rawadari. Previous reports published by Rawadari and other human rights organizations are also referenced in the this report.

Rawadari's findings indicate that access to information during the first half of 2024 has been significantly challenging compared to the same period in 2023 due to increased restrictions imposed by the Taliban. The Taliban have created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation to prevent the dissemination of information related to human rights violations. The General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) , the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV) , the Departments of Information & Culture, and provincial governor offices are playing key roles in enforcing strict limitations on access to information.

Among these, the GDI monitors the activities of individuals, particularly civil society activists, journalists, media outlets, human rights defenders, educational institutions, lawyers, and health centres nationwide. The GDI summons activists, journalists, and human rights defenders, forcibly obtaining commitments from them to refrain from providing information to the media and human rights organizations. Interviewees have reported to Rawadari that the Taliban have threatened them with arrest and torture if they share information with media outlets or human rights organizations.

¹ Heart, Nimroz, Badghis, Daikundi, Ghor, Farah, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Kabul, Parwan, Maidan Wardak, Kapisa, Sar-e-pul, Samangan, Ghazni, Bdakshsan, Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Nangrahar, Kunar, Kandahar, Urzgan, Zabul, Hilmand, Bamyan, Logar, Faryab, Balkh and Jawzjan



In fact, Rawadari has documented cases where relatives and family members of victims have been arrested and imprisoned for speaking with the media and human rights organizations. Therefore, the prevailing atmosphere of fear and distrust has forced citizens, especially victims and eyewitnesses into silence.

In addition to these restrictions, the Taliban have instructed all de-facto government departments to refrain from publishing decrees, orders, and other important documents without explicit permission and instruction.² Another barrier to access to information is the lack of active telecommunications networks in villages and remote areas that complicates outreach to victims and survivors. Therefore, this report includes only the human rights violations that Rawadari has been able to document, and the actual number of violations and cases might be higher.

² Rawadari, Restrictions, Suppression and censorship: the state of access to information and freedom of expression in Afghanistan, Page 9, May 2024
https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/RW_PressFreedom_Eng.pdf

PART ONE

VIOLATIONS OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

This section of the report focuses on the state of civil and political rights, drawing on Rawadari's monitoring and documentation in the first six months of 2024. The section covers violations of the right to life, infringements on right to liberty, violations of the right to human dignity, and restrictions on peaceful assembly.





VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE

In this reporting period, at least 367 people were killed or injured across 30 provinces³ of the country. These casualties resulted from explosions and suicide attacks, remnants of explosives from past conflicts, or targeted and extrajudicial killings. Of these, 239 people were killed and 128 others were injured. The fatalities included 178 men, 17 women, and 44 children. The injured include 78 men, 2 women, and 48 children. Victims included former government employees and their family members, women, children, ethnic elders, and Taliban opponents and critics.

Rawadari had registered 516 cases of violations of the right to life in the first six months of 2023. This indicates a 28.8 % decrease in violations of the right to life during the first half⁴ of 2024 compared to the same period in the previous year. However, this reduction in numbers might partially be due to the severe restrictions on access to information, particularly restrictions on access to information about the targeted, suspicious, and extrajudicial killings by the Taliban. The Taliban prevent the dissemination of information related to targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings through intimidation and threats. Families of victims have informed Rawadari that the Taliban have prohibited them from expressing their opinions or providing information to the media and human rights organizations. Consequently, Rawadari has been unable to ascertain the identities of several victims of targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings, preventing us from documenting some cases.

1 - Civilian Casualties Resulting from Targeted Explosions and Suicide Attacks

The findings of this report indicate that during the first six months of 2024, at least 69 civilians were killed or injured as a result of targeted suicide and explosive attacks in the provinces of Kabul, Kandahar, Nimroz, and Bamiyan. Among them, 34 were killed and 35 were injured.

Rawadari had recorded 111 cases of civilian casualties due to explosions and suicide attacks in the first six months of 2023. These statistics show a 37.8 percent decrease compared to the first six months⁵ of 2023.

On 7th January 2024, an explosive device planted on a passenger bus in Dasht-e-Barchi, in West of Kabul, killed 2 civilians and injured 14 others. The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for this attack. On 21st March 2024, a suicide attack near a private bank in Kandahar city resulted in the killing of at least 12 civilians and injuring 3 others. This attack was also claimed by the IS. Furthermore, on 20th May 2024, an explosion in Kandahar city killed one person and injured three others.

On 18th May 2024, an armed attack on foreign tourists in the provincial centre of Bamiyan province resulted in 6 killings, including three foreign nationals, and injured 7 others. Additionally, on the 4th and 15th April 2024, airstrikes by Pakistani military forces killed at least 8 people in parts of Khost and Paktika provinces.

³ Herat, Nimroz, Badghis, Daikundi, Ghor, Farah, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Kabul, Parwan, Maidan Wardak, Kapisa, Sar-e-Pul, Samangan, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Nangrahar, Kunar, Kandahar, Urzgan, Zabul, Hilmand, Bamiyan, Logar, Balkh and Jawzjan

⁴ Rawadari, the Human Rights Situation in first six months of 2023, Page 7, August 2023 <https://rawadari.org/120820231648.htm/>

⁵ Same, page 7, August 2023 <https://rawadari.org/120820231648.htm/>



2 - Civilian Casualties Resulting from Landmine Explosions and Explosive Remnants of War

During the first six months of 2024, at least 105 people were killed or injured due to landmine explosions, unexploded ordnance, and other explosive remnants from previous conflicts. Among these, 49 were killed and 56 were injured. This statistic represents an increase compared to the same period last year when the number of casualties was 63 cases.

On 28 January 2024, in the Waghaz district of Ghazni province, an unexploded mortar shell detonated, killing one child and injuring five others. The explosion occurred when a child attempted to bring the mortar shell home.

In another incident, on 1 April 2024, a landmine explosion in the Zadran village in Ghazni province killed 9 children. The victims included 5 girls and 4 boys, aged between 4 and 10 years old.

On 6 June 2024, an unexploded mortar shell from past conflicts detonated in Mahmood Razi city of Kapisa province, which resulted in killing of one child and injuring three others. Furthermore, on 29 February and 18 April 2024, in the Kushk-e-Kohna and Zinda Jan districts of Herat province, at least two children were killed and five others injured due to the explosion of unexploded mortar shell.

3 - Targeted, Suspicious, and Extrajudicial Killings

Rawadari's findings indicate that during this reporting period, at least 193 people, including 181 men, 9 women, and 3 children, were killed or injured in targeted, suspicious, and extrajudicial attacks by the Taliban and unknown individuals. In the same period in 2023, Rawadari had registered 342 casualties in targeted, suspicious and extrajudicial killings. This represents a 43.5 percent decrease compared to the first six months of last year⁶, as recorded by Rawadari.

One contributing factor to the decrease in number of incidents in this area might be the limitations imposed on access to information related to targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings by the Taliban. The Taliban have created an atmosphere of fear and they exert pressure on victims' families to keep such information hidden⁷.

PERPETRATORS OF TARGETED, SUSPICIOUS, AND EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

The Taliban have consistently attributed the targeted, suspicious, and extrajudicial killings to "unknown armed individuals" and have assured the victims' families of legal redress and accountability. However, over the past three years, they have failed to provide any information about their progress on arrests of perpetrators or delivery of justice. Additionally, the Taliban resorted to force, intimidation, and threats to prevent the dissemination of any information related to these incidents.

⁶ The Human Rights Situation in first six months of 2023, Page 10, August 2023 https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/RW_AFGHumanRights2023_English.pdf

⁷ Rawadari, Restriction, Repression, and Censorship, the Situation of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression in Afghanistan, May 2024

https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/RW_PressFreedom_Eng.pdf



The Taliban have prohibited the victims' families from making any public statements or providing information to the media or human rights and, in some cases, have even arrested and imprisoned them for sharing information about the incidents. Similarly, the media and journalists have been strictly prohibited from covering these killings. Hospitals and healthcare centres are also not allowed to release or provide information about the victims' identities to the media and journalists. The victims' families in majority of cases allege that the Taliban are behind the killings, with the intention of seeking revenge against former government employees and the Taliban's opponents and critics.

1 - Targeted Killing of Former Government Employees

According to the findings of this report, during the first six months of 2024, at least 51 former government employees and their family members were victims of targeted, suspicious and extrajudicial killings or injuries. In the first 6 months of 2023, the figures for these killings at 55.

On 20th March 2024, two former military personnel were brutally killed with an axe and a hatchet in the Pasaband district of Ghor province. On 22 March 2024, a former government employee and his daughter were shot dead in Ghor. Additionally, former military personnel was suspiciously killed in the centre of Paktia province on 7 March. On 10th March 2024, a former member of the Special Unit of the Joint American and Afghan Forces was mysteriously killed in the Tani district of Khost province. The perpetrators of both incidents remain unknown to date.

Moreover, on 2 February 2024, a former member of the local police was killed by unknown individuals in the Panjwai district of Kandahar province. On 1 January 2024, a former military personnel was killed by unknown individuals in the Shirin Tagab district of Faryab province, and in a similar incident on 8 March 2024, a former commander of the People's Uprising Forces was killed in the Almar district of Faryab. Meanwhile, on 23 May 2024, a former military personnel was shot dead in Pul-e-Khumri district of Baghlan province. Local sources reported that he was killed by two members of the Taliban.

Additionally, on 25 March 2024, the Taliban killed a former military personnel in Kunduz province. This man was driving a taxi to support his family after the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the return of the Taliban to power.

He was shot dead by armed Taliban members. In another case, on 20 January 2024, a former officer of the General Directorate of National Security was shot dead in his bed at night in the Baharak district of Badakhshan province. Local sources said that he was engaged in farming after the fall of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, on 5 February 2024, a former security employee of the previous government was killed by unknown armed individuals in the Aqcha district of Jawzjan province.

The findings of this report indicate that the DFA does not adhere to the general amnesty order they issued and in some instances they use the order to trap former government employees. There have been instances where some former government employees who returned to the country upon the Taliban's invitation were later killed.



For example, on 11 February 2024, a former member of the Special Forces Unit who had returned to the country from Iran upon the Taliban's invitation was shot dead in the Sayed Kheil district of Parwan province. The victim's family said he had previously been detained and tortured by the Taliban, but after being released from prison, he fled to Iran and then returned to his homeland upon the Taliban's reassurances and invitation.

Furthermore, there are other instances indicating that relatives and family members of former government employees are not spared from acts of revenge. For example, in January 2024, a relative of former member of the parliament was killed by unknown gunmen in the Kushke Rabat Sangi district of Herat province. Similarly, on 8 March 2024, a relative of a former military personnel was killed in Kabul. In another incident, on 25 March 2024, the son of a former military personnel was stabbed and injured by unknown individual in Shuhada district of Badakhshan province and who is currently under treatment in hospital.

Evidence indicates that the Taliban have not taken any action to legally address these cases or to identify and punish the perpetrators. Instead, they have threatened the victims' families to refrain from making any statements or sharing information with the media and human rights organizations.

2 - Killing of Civilians Accused of Collaborating with Opposing Groups

According to the findings of this report, during the first six months of 2024, the Taliban have killed at least 4 civilians accused of collaborating with or having connections to opposing groups. The number of cases registered by Rawadari in the same period in 2023 was 9 people.

The finding of this report indicate that in such cases, the Taliban immediately and without any investigation, collection of evidence, or the due legal process, kill their opponents and critics under the labels of "rebel," "Khawarij," or in some instances, on the accusation of being members of Islamic State. For example, on 4 February and 23 March 2024, two unidentified individuals were arrested and killed in the Shahrak district and the centre of Ghor province, respectively, on the charge of collaborating with opposing groups and attacking the Taliban. Local officials in this province stated that "they killed two rebels who intended to attack them," but did not provide any information about their identities.

Similarly, on 11 May 2024, a family member of an opponent of the Taliban was arrested in the centre of Badakhshan province, and his body was later found inside a well. On 21 May 2024, the body of a young man was found in a well in the centre of Ghazni province. The Taliban claimed that two unknown armed individuals killed him due to "illicit sexual relations". However, the victim's relatives told Rawadari that "the Taliban had arrested this young man ten days ago on the accusation of collaborating with the National Resistance Front, and we had no information about his fate until security officials claimed that they had found his body in a well."



3 - Suspicious and Extrajudicial Killings of Other Civilian Citizens

In first six months of 2024, at least 131 civilians were victims of suspicious and extrajudicial killing or injuries perpetrated by the Taliban and unknown armed individuals. Among them, 103 people were killed and 28 others were injured. The victims of these attacks included supporters of the former government, tribal elders, religious scholars, and influential local leaders. In comparison, in the first six months of 2023, at least 278 civilians were victims of suspicious and extrajudicial killing or injuries which indicates a substantive decrease.

On 25 March 2024, a tribal elder in Feroz Koh city of Ghor province was killed by members of the Taliban. On 16 January 2024, a tribal elder from Badghis province was shot and killed by unknown armed individuals in Herat. Furthermore, on 1 June 2024, a local influential figure originally from Daikundi province was mysteriously killed in the Injeel district of Herat province, with no information available about the perpetrators.

On 7 April 2024, in Wardak province an Imam of a mosque was killed by unknown individuals. Local sources stated that he was a supporter of the former government and consistently supported the national army in his speeches prior to the Taliban takeover. Additionally, on 5 April 2024, a teacher from the Technical and Vocational Institute of Wardak province was killed in the Kalakan district of Kabul province. A relative of this individual reported that he was shot to death. On 1 May 2024, a man in Gardez city of Paktia province was shot dead by the Taliban.

It is noteworthy that the Taliban have not taken any legal action to address these cases or to punish the perpetrators and have not provided any information to the victims' families about any legal follow up of these cases.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Enforced disappearances is a grave human rights violation which involves arrest, detention, or abduction of individuals by state agents or other persons or groups with the authorization, support, consent, or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or to disclose the fate and whereabouts of the persons concerned⁸. International human rights documents, particularly the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, recognize forced disappearance as one of the most severe human rights violations and a crime against humanity.⁹ According to the findings of this report, at least 35 individuals in 9 provinces of Afghanistan¹⁰ were forcibly disappeared after being detained by the Taliban during the first six months of 2024. This number, compared to the first six months of 2023¹¹ recorded by Rawadari, shows an increase of

⁸ UNGA, International Convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance, adopted in 2010, Article 2, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted in 1998, Article 7, (2) (i)

⁹ The same article 7, (1), (i)

¹⁰ Ghor, Herat, Bamyan, Kandahar, Farah, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan and Ghazni

¹¹ Rawadari, The Situation of Human Rights in first six months of 2023, Page 14, August 2023. https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/RW_AFGHumanRights2023_English.pdf



24 cases, making it three times higher. Former government employees and their family members, human rights activists, and opponents and critics of the Taliban are among the victims. The increase in forced disappearances indicates that the Taliban are systematically using it to exert revenge against former government employees and their opponents and critics.

On 23 May 2024, a resident of the Rabat Sangi district of Herat province disappeared after making statements opposing Taliban policies. There has been no information about this individual so far, and his family does not know his fate or whereabouts.

Additionally, a resident of the centre of Farah province disappeared on 7 June 2024. His family posted his photo on social media, which later revealed that he had been arrested by the Taliban and was being held at the provincial police command's detention centre. The victim's family stated that they do not know the charges against him or the reason for which he was arrested by the Taliban.

In Kandahar province, a former soldier who had fled to Pakistan due to fear from the Taliban and had recently returned to the country was arrested by the group's intelligence agency on 5 February 2024. A relative of this former soldier told Rawadari that several armed men who identified themselves as intelligence agents arrested him at his workplace, and since then, they have not received any information or update about his fate or where he is being held.

In two other incidents, the Taliban arrested five young women in the centre of Bamyan province on 16 and 18 January 2024, and since then, no information has been available about them. The Taliban have not provided any information about the reason for their arrest or their whereabouts.

On 16 February 2024, the Taliban's intelligence agency arrested six men in Takhar province and transferred them to an unknown location, with no information about their fate or whereabouts to date. The wife of one of the disappeared individuals stated that her husband was a border security officer under the former government and, after the Taliban's return to power, was engaged in farming and agricultural activities with no connections to any groups. She said she had tried to obtain information about her husband's life, death, or whereabouts but had not succeeded.

On 3 March 2024, the Taliban arrested four former military personnel in Pasaband district of Ghor province and transferred them to an unknown location. Since then, there has been no information about their fate. Additionally, on 30 March 2024, the Taliban arrested a young man in the Shuhada district of Badakhshan province for posting a message on his Facebook page expressing sympathy for the families of "National Resistance Front" casualties. A relative of this young man stated that he expressed his sympathies on Facebook for the families of those affiliated with the National Resistance Front who were killed in battles with the Taliban. Upon returning from Iran, he was arrested by the Taliban and transferred to an unknown location. The relative mentioned that local people have repeatedly contacted the local Taliban authorities, but they have received no response regarding this young man's fate.



On 1 January 2024, the Taliban's intelligence agency arrested a man from Badakhshan province on charges of collaborating with the National Resistance Front. Since then, his family has had no information about his whereabouts or fate.

The findings of this report indicate that the GDI, the police commands, and in Herat province, the "Al-Farooq Corps" are responsible for the enforced disappearances. Among these, the GDI is the primary perpetrator.

ARBITRARY AND ILLEGAL DETENTION

According to the findings of this report, during the first six months of 2024, at least 614 individuals, including 33 women, were arbitrarily and illegally detained and imprisoned. Rawadari had registered 222 cases of illegal and arbitrary detention in the first six months of 2023. The comparison indicates that there has more than twofold increase in number of arbitrary detention and illegal arrests.

The International Human Rights documents recognize personal freedom and security as fundamental human rights, emphasizing the prohibition of arbitrary and illegal deprivation of liberty¹². However, the DFA has shown disregard for these international human rights standards and legal procedures for arresting individuals. Instead, they have engaged in widespread arbitrary and unlawful detentions of citizens.

Former government employees, Taliban opponents and critics, civil society activists, and journalists are among those who have been arbitrarily and illegally detained and imprisoned by the Taliban. The charges against these individuals include carrying weapons, collaborating with opposition groups, criticism, propaganda against the Taliban's Islamic Emirate, and disobeying regulations set by the MPVPV regarding women's dress code and movement. Illegal deprivation of liberty and torture and mistreatment remain among the most common tools that the Taliban resort to, especially to suppress former government employees and their opponents and critics.

Based on the evidence obtained, various Taliban departments are involved in illegal detention and imprisonment of individuals. For instance, in Herat province, the Departments of Education and Water and Electricity each have their own private prisons and can detain individuals for as long as they wish. According to Rawadari's findings, the GDI has committed the most arbitrary and illegal arrests in the past six months.

Similarly, MPVPV and the police commands have also illegally detained and imprisoned many people during this period.

The MPVPV has its own detention centres in all provinces, where in most cases, they punish detained individuals without formal case files or referral to courts.

¹² UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, Article 9. UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted in 1966, Paragraph 1, Article 9



Moreover, currently, there is no law to determine the conditions and duration of surveillance and detention, and for this reason, the aforementioned departments keep individuals in custody and detention for as long as they want.

1- Arbitrary Detention and Harassment of Former Government Employees

In the first six months of 2024, 64 former government employees, both civilian and military, were illegally detained and imprisoned, mainly by the Taliban's intelligence agency. A comparison of statistics indicates that the number of arbitrary arrests and detentions of former government employees in the first six months of 2024 has decreased by 12.3 percent.

Information indicates that in Ghor province, 20 former government employees, both civilian and military, were arbitrarily and illegally detained in the past six months. In Takhar province, during this period, the Taliban also arrested and imprisoned 14 former government employees and their close relatives.

On 8 January 2024, Taliban intelligence (GDI) arrested a former military member in Yakawlang No 1 district of Bamyan province. Local sources said that this individual was working as a taxi driver and the Taliban arrested him on the charges of carrying a weapon. This former military member had previously been summoned by the Taliban.

In Maimana city and Pashtunkot district of Faryab province, the Taliban arrested two former military personnel on 18 and 30 March 2024. Similarly, on 11 April 2024, they arrested and imprisoned a former soldier in Baghlan province. Additionally, intelligence forces removed two former government military officers from a passenger vehicle and arrested them on 8 and 9 February 2024, in Maidan Wardak province. These two individuals are residents of Daikundi province and were arrested on charges of carrying weapons. According to obtained information, the Taliban tortured these individuals and took money equivalent to the price of ten weapons from one of them.

The Taliban continuously harass low-ranking employees from the previous government who still work in the administration. For example, in Kandahar province, two civil servants said: "We had been harassed by the Taliban for a long time to leave our jobs and even received several warnings, but we continued our duties until they conspired against us and arrested and imprisoned us on charges of administrative corruption. One of my colleagues has not been released yet." In Herat province, an employee of the Breshna [Electric] department was dismissed from his job and referred to court in February of this year. The Taliban arrested this person on charges of administrative corruption, which was later not proven, and replaced him with someone loyal to them. In Nimroz province, after a suicide attack took place in the compound of the local provincial administration, the Taliban began interrogating and illegally detaining civil servants who had worked for the previous regime. This was despite the fact that their own forces were responsible for providing security. For this reason, a number of these employees were forced to leave their jobs. In Badghis province, the Taliban dismissed at least five employees who had worked during the republic government on various charges in the past six months.



Furthermore, since the beginning of 2024, the Taliban have banned all types of gatherings of former government security and defence employees, including private gatherings in Arghandab and Panjwai district of Kandahar province. They have warned that in case of disobedience, arrests and punishments will follow.

2 - Arbitrary detention of civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists

The findings of this report have shown that during the first six months of 2024, the Taliban arbitrarily detained and imprisoned at least 20 civil activists and human rights defenders, 9 of them women. These individuals were charged with propaganda against the Taliban and criticism of the group's repressive policies regarding Afghan women. Rawadari had recorded 47 cases of illegal and arbitrary detention of activists, human rights defender and journalists in the first six months of 2023. Comparatively, there has been a considerable decrease in number of cases we have registered in 2024.

On 3rd January and 12 February 2024, the Taliban arrested two journalists in Ghor province for supporting women's rights to education and work. Additionally, the Taliban GDI in Kandahar arrested a civil society activist on 7 April 2024 for posting critical posts on social media, and sentenced him to one month in prison. This individual has also been banned from any future civil society activities. In another similar incident, the intelligence department arrested a civil society activist in Badakhshan on 11 February 2024. This person was detained for criticizing the Taliban on Facebook.

In May 2024, the Taliban arrested a women's rights defender in Takhar province. This woman, who had been active in defending women's rights for years, was recently arrested by the Taliban for trying to prevent the marriage of an underage girl.

On 24 March 2024, the Taliban arrested a journalist in Kunduz province for reporting on a bridge that had been blown up and destroyed by the Taliban during the republic government. On 2 April the Taliban arrested a civil society activist in Herat province, and on 20 January 2024, another journalist in Jaghori district of Ghazni province. On 29 January 2024, a civil society activist in Sar-e Pul province was arrested on undisclosed charges and released on bail after a week. Also, in January 2024, the Taliban arrested a journalist and poet for publishing critical poems in Nangahar. He was released from prison after four months. In another similar case in this province, on 25 April 2024, a university professor was detained for a week on charges of criticizing the Taliban's Islamic Emirate

3 - Arbitrary detention of individuals on charges of collaborating with anti-Taliban groups

The findings of this report have shown that during this reporting period, the Taliban have detained and imprisoned at least 252 individuals on charges of collaborating with and having connections to their armed opposition groups. This figure has increased nearly fivefold, with a difference of 199 cases compared to the same period in 2023.

In this reporting period, 32 individuals in Kandahar and 30 individuals in Ghor province were illegally arrested and detained on charges of membership or collaboration with anti-Taliban groups. The



Taliban have detained these individuals on charges of collaborating with opposition groups without any evidence.

On 27 January 2024, a former government employee, along with his son and son-in-law, was arrested by the Taliban intelligence in Firoz Koh city of Ghor province. These individuals were accused of collaborating with the Islamic State, but after a week, they were declared innocent and released.

Similarly, another former government employee was arrested by the Taliban intelligence on 31 January 2024, on charges of collaborating with anti-Taliban groups and was released after three weeks. The Taliban detain these individuals for long periods and torture them. For instance, in Kandahar province, four of the detained individuals have been in custody for six months without any decisions about their alleged crime and are being held in the intelligence's prison.

On 22 January 2024, the Taliban arrested 4 residents who are originally from North Afghanistan in Nimroz on charges of collaborating with the Islamic State. Local sources have said that the Taliban consistently harass citizens who have come from the north of the country to live in Nimroz province.

Also, in March 2024, the Taliban arrested an individual from Bagram district of Parwan province on charges of collaborating with the National Resistance Fron. This man is still in prison without trial. His family has said that he was not associated with any group and did not collaborate with the Taliban's opponents.

On 5 March 2024, the Taliban intelligence arrested four residents of Khost district in Baghlan province on charges of collaborating with opposition groups and transferred them to prison. Similarly, on 24 March 2024, after an attack by "National Resistance Front" forces on a Taliban outpost in Takhar province, 7 residents of this province were arrested, of whom one was released while the rest are still in prison. In another case, in Ghazni province, the Taliban arrested an individual for posting a picture of himself wearing a pakol hat at Ahmad Shah Massoud's tomb in Panjshir province, and imprisoned him for four nights. The individual said that the Taliban tortured him in detention. Meanwhile, three others from Qadis district and Jawand district of Badghis province were arrested on charges of having connections with anti-Taliban groups, two of them are still in Taliban custody.

ALL OTHER CASES OF ARBITRARY AND ILLEGAL DETENTIONS

The findings of this report indicate that 258 individuals including 6 women (outside of the earlier categories) were illegally and arbitrarily detained and imprisoned in the first six months of 2024. These individuals were charged with carrying weapons, membership in Hizb-ul-Tahrir, violating the regulations of the MPVPV, not attending prayers at mosque, trimming beards, improper hijab, and not having a male companion [Mahram]. These individuals were mainly detained by the MPVPV and the GDI, and are not included in the previous categories (civil society, former government employees, etc). There is a fivefold increase in these arrests since the same reporting period in 2023.



On 20 May 2024, a resident of Khwaja Omari district in Ghazni province was detained by the Taliban. This person was accused of sheltering a soldier from the former government's security forces in the days following the collapse in 2021.

On 11 March 2024, the Taliban arrested four civilians in Firoz Koh city of Ghor province, and released them after forty days. Additionally, the staff of MPVPV in Kandahar arrested a barber for shaving customers' beards on 17 February 2024, and sentenced him to one month imprisonment. In another case, in one of the provinces in north Afghanistan, the head of the Taliban's MPVPV department arrested three residents for not attending morning prayers at the mosque and imprisoned them for one day. The individuals said that the Taliban mistreated and tortured them. On 30 April 2024, the Taliban arrested an individual in Herat city who had draped the Afghan flag over his shoulders to celebrate the victory of the country's football team. Meanwhile, the Taliban's MPVPV department in Ghazni province arrested six barbers on 18 and 25 January 2024, for shaving customers' beards and closed their shops. These individuals were imprisoned for three days in the detention centre of the MPVPV.

Furthermore, on the fourth day of Eid al-Adha, 17 June 2024, the Taliban arrested more than 30 residents of Muqur district in Ghazni province. These individuals had celebrated Eid al-Adha one day before the Taliban's announcement, and they were detained for disobeying the order of the Taliban Amir. Sources from this district said that these individuals were in Taliban custody for more than a week.

VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO HUMAN DIGNITY

Human dignity is an inherent right and the basis for equal human rights. This right emphasizes the dignity of humans, which should not be disregarded under any circumstances. Therefore, respect for human dignity requires the observance of certain other rights, including protection from all forms of torture, humiliation and other forms of cruel treatment¹³. However, Rawadari's findings show that the Taliban have extensively violated people's right to human dignity, disregarding the aforementioned standards. This section of the report addresses two of the most important cases.

1 - Torture and Mistreatment of Prisoners

Freedom from torture is among the absolute and inalienable rights of individuals that cannot be violated under any circumstances or with any justification. The International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibit torture and abuse of individuals¹⁴.

¹³ UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, preamble and Article 1 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights

¹⁴ UNGA, International Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, adopted in 1987, Article 1. UNGA, International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in 1966, Article 7



In this reporting period, there are ongoing allegations of torture and mistreatment by the Taliban. However, since human rights organizations, including Rawadari, do not have access to Taliban-controlled detention facilities, especially women's prisons, and considering that torture victims and all released prisoners are strictly prohibited from sharing information to the media and human rights organizations, because of which Rawadari cannot provide specific statistics on the number of torture cases in the first six months of 2024. The Taliban have threatened released prisoners not to speak to anyone about what they witnessed and experienced in detention facilities. Some interviewees told Rawadari that if they say anything about torture and mistreatment in Taliban prisons, they will be re-arrested and tortured.

Based on conversations with released prisoners and other sources since August 2021, it is evident that the Taliban use torture as the most common way to force individuals to confess and to prove accusations against them¹⁵. The Taliban torture prisoners to the point where they submit to forced confessions. This issue, along with the lack of familiarity and commitment of the de-facto judiciary and police with legal and legitimate methods of proving crimes has resulted the torture and mistreatment of those held under false accusations. For example, on 24 January 2024, the Taliban arrested and severely tortured an individual in the centre of Ghazni city on undisclosed charges. Later, it was revealed that they had arrested and tortured him due to a name similarity with another person.

A relative of this man said: "The Taliban arrested Ahmad (pseudonym) from his shop, handcuffed him, and put a black bag over his head. We later went to the prison and got permission to visit, but Ahmad was tortured in such a cruel manner that he didn't recognize us. We went again the next day, and a member of the Taliban said that they were supposed to transfer Ahmad to Kabul, but then they realized they had mistaken him for someone with the same name. For this reason, they released him."

Common torture methods in Taliban prisons include tying stones to men's genitals, cutting flesh and nails, starving, exposing prisoners to extreme heat or cold, scaring with gunshots, waterboarding, forcing water into prisoners' mouths through a pipe while tightly wrapping them in blankets, electric shocks, noise pollution, sleep deprivation, punching and kicking, beating with sticks and rifle butts, hanging from the ceiling, suffocation, and threatening to kill prisoners and their family members, and keeping prisoners in hot temperatures and scorching sun and denying them any food.

A defense lawyer from the previous government, who was arrested in Kabul city, told Rawadari: "When I was going to a shop to buy food, several armed individuals who had been positioned in that route beforehand approached me. They tied my hands and threw me into a Corolla car. I was in a dark room for about ten hours, later someone came and asked me harshly why I was speaking against the Taliban and propagating against them between my friends. He told me: You're a spy, who do you work for and who pays you?" The lawyer says, "I was in Taliban detention for 2 months and during this time, I was subject to various forms of torture from electric shocks to hanging and beatings."

¹⁵ Rawadari, the Situation of Access to Justice in Judicial and Justice Institutions of Taliban, June 2023 https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RW_Rule-of-Law-Report-Eng.pdf



Meanwhile, a torture victim from Bamiyan province said that the Taliban torture prisoners in the worst form possible, for example, they tie stones to men's genitals to harm their health. There are also cases where torture victims have been severely injured.

For instance, on 26 March 2024, a former government employee was arrested by the Taliban in the centre of Ghor province on charges of theft. The Taliban tortured him in such a way that he was injured in the leg and back and is now paralyzed. After being released from prison, he was transferred to Iran by his family for treatment and medical care.

On 17 June 2024, the Taliban severely tortured a young man who is a resident of Belcherag in Faryab. One of the relatives of the victim said that a group of Taliban came to the victim's house and detained him. They then took him to the house of one of the Taliban. They then gang-raped the young man and inserted a stick to his anus and filmed the torture. This young man was held, tortured and sexually abused after it was revealed that he is in a phone relationship with the sister of a Taliban commander in the province. Taliban later announced the arrest of 6 men in relation to the torture of this young man.

As mentioned earlier, these cases represent only a fraction of what happens especially in prisons controlled by the Taliban's intelligence agency. This is because torture victims are strictly prohibited from talking to the media and human rights organizations. For example, some interviewees from Herat province said that the Taliban make all prisoners pledge not to tell anyone about what they have seen and experienced in prisons. This creates an environment of fear where the detainees do not speak about their experience.

KILLING OF PRISONERS

At least 12 people were killed in Taliban-controlled prisons after severe torture in the first six months of 2024. For instance, in Ghor province alone, four prisoners have died due to torture in the past six months. Rawadari had registered 10 deaths due to torture in the same reporting period in 2023.

On 3 January 2024, a former military personnel who was arrested on charges of theft in Tulak district of Ghor province died due to severe torture in the district's detention centre. In another incident, a resident of Pasaband district of this province, who was arrested on 18 February 2024, for carrying a weapon, died after being released from prison due to torture and injuries he had sustained during the detention. Also, during the mentioned period, 2 prisoners in Helmand province were killed as a result of torture, and 10 others in this province were transferred to the hospital after severe beatings. According to the information obtained, some of these prisoners who were transferred to the hospital were in critical condition.

A resident of the 8th district of Herat city, who was arrested from his home by the Taliban intelligence agency in May 2024 on charges of collaborating with the Islamic State, was



reported dead to his family three days later. The victim's father, in protest to this incident, wanted to take his son's body to the provincial local administration, but the Taliban arrested him and imprisoned him for four days in the intelligence detention centre.

Eventually, he was released from prison on the condition that he buries his son's body and that he does not protest about this matter.

In another case, a resident of Jabal Siraj district in Parwan province, who had been arrested three times by the Taliban a year ago and severely tortured each time, died on 26 April. A relative of the victim said that he had become paralyzed as a result of the torture and finally passed away. In a similar case, a civilian from Bagram district of Parwan province who had been arrested and tortured by the Taliban died one day after his release. The family of the deceased said that the Taliban had arrested and tortured him on charges of carrying a weapon. He was released from prison in critical condition and died the next day.

Information indicates that in the past six months, most incidents of torture resulting in death have occurred in the detention centres of the GDI.

LACK OF REGULAR, INDEPENDENT DETENTION MONITORING

As mentioned in previous sections of the report, currently no independent organization is allowed to monitor detention centres, holding facilities, and prisons under the Taliban control, especially women's detention facilities. There is also no other specific mechanism to address the human rights situation of prisoners. Therefore, what is presented in this report can describe some of the torture cases and dire conditions in detention facilities in Afghanistan that the Taliban commit in the absence of monitoring bodies, especially in districts and intelligence detention centres.

In some provinces, including Herat, some staff (muhtasabeen) of MPVPV and in some Southeastern provinces a committee consisting of representatives from the department of MPVPV, Ministry of Justice, and the Supreme Office for Monitoring and Implementing Orders and Decrees occasionally visit prisons and, according to sources, engage in promoting religious teachings and "providing guidance" to prisoners. In Kandahar, Helmand, and Zabul provinces, the "Supreme Office for Monitoring and Implementing Orders and Decrees" only holds meetings with prison officials and is not allowed to speak with prisoners about their problems beyond that.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) still lacks the ability to conduct unannounced, independent monitoring without prior coordination and permission of the de-facto authorities and in some provinces, it has not yet obtained permission to monitor. For example, despite numerous efforts over the past three years, UNAMA's regional office in Herat has not been able to monitor the intelligence detention centre and the central prison in this province. UNAMA staff in Herat has only met once with the deputy of the GDI in his office and have not yet succeeded in meeting with the Director of GDI. During this period, UNAMA's office in Herat has conducted two



trainings for prison staff but has not been allowed to monitor or interview prisoners. In Bamiyan province, the Taliban do not allow UNAMA to monitor the prison; however, in Parwan, UNAMA has reportedly held one meeting with prison officials over the past six months.

1 - Implementation of cruel and inhumane punishments

In the first six months of 2024, the Taliban have flogged at least 151 people, mainly on charges of fleeing home, extramarital relationships, theft, insult, and fraud, which shows a twofold increase compared to the first six months of the previous year. In addition, the Taliban courts have carried out at least two death sentences for murder suspects and stoning sentences for two women accused of adultery in the past six months.

On 14 February 2024, the Taliban courts flogged 13 people, including 5 women, in Bamiyan province on charges of extramarital relationships and fleeing home. Similarly, the Taliban court in Zaranj city of Nimroz province flogged eight people on charges of theft on 21 May 2024, and on 6 April 2024, flogged five men and one woman in Logar province on charges of moral corruption and extramarital relationships in public. In Faryab province, the Taliban flogged three people, including one woman, on 31 March 2024, and sentenced each of them to two years and six months in prison. Likewise, on 4 and 6 May 2024, Taliban courts in Ahmad Abad and Wazi districts of Paktia province flogged 8 people in public on charges of theft, insult, and moral corruption. In another case, on 29 April 2024, ten more people were flogged in public in Khost province on charges of moral corruption and fraud.

In Kandahar province, the Taliban flogged 5 people in March 2024 on charges of moral corruption and also sentenced each to 2 years in prison. Information obtained from this province indicates that the Taliban flog suspects daily but it is not made public, and that this punishment is applied to almost all types of crimes.

In cases where the courts implement public flogging punishments, they encourage people to watch the delivery of the punishments through Imams in the mosques and Muhtasibs of MPVPV. Moreover, the age of the accused is not important to the Taliban, and they illegally punish children. For example, on 17 May 2024, a 13-year-old child in Nimroz province was physically punished for an unspecified charge and then transferred to the police station.

Furthermore, on 22 February 2024, the Taliban court in Ghazni province carried out the death sentence of two murder suspects. This punishment was implemented publicly in the sports stadium in the presence of hundreds of spectators, where the accused were killed by gunfire. Additionally, on 24 February 2024, a woman in Qadis district and another woman in Muqur district of Badghis province were stoned to death on charges of adultery.



SUPPRESSION OF PEACEFUL GATHERINGS

As previously mentioned, the Taliban resort to the use of force and violent methods against all form of protests and criticism. During the first six months of 2024, they violently suppressed at least 15 out of 19 protests, arrested at least 46 protesters, and killed 2 others. Among the gatherings held during this period, 5 were in support of the Taliban, and the rest were in protest to the Taliban actions or policies, including the ban on women and girls right to education.



PART TWO

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF WOMEN

In the period of January-30 June 2024, the Taliban have continued to pursue their discriminatory policies against Afghan women and girls, thus imposing more restrictions in various areas, especially regarding the right to education, the right to work, the right to free movement, the right to access health services, and access to justice. The situation in Afghanistan is the worst women's rights crisis in the world. Women and girls in Afghanistan have been deprived of their fundamental rights and freedoms due to the systematic discrimination by the Taliban, as well as suffering various forms of violence, mistreatment, and harassment at home with no recourse to justice.





1 - INCREASED ENFORCEMENT OF THE BAN ON EDUCATION

International human rights treaties recognize the right to education as a fundamental human right and emphasize the importance of for equal and inclusive access to educational opportunities for all¹⁶. Therefore, any discrimination in enjoying this right based on gender or other reasons is a violation of human rights. In Afghanistan, more than a thousand days have passed since girls were deprived of their right to education, and during this time, more than 1.4 million girls¹⁷ across the country have been deprived of this fundamental right. Rawadari's monitoring illustrates that that the Taliban have attempted to further restrict access to education beyond primary school for women and girls in this reporting period.

For instance, in this reporting period, the GDI and MPVPV have closed at least 13 educational centres, including secret and online courses that provided educational opportunities for girls above sixth grade in various parts of the country, and have arrested and imprisoned at least 28 managers and students of these centres.

In early 2024, two in-person and online educational courses in Ghor province that taught mathematics and English to girls above sixth grade were identified by Taliban intelligence, and their managers were arrested. After obtaining commitments from these individuals to discontinue their work on educating young women, the Taliban released them from prison and closed their courses. Meanwhile, in January 2024, an Education Department employee in this province was arrested by the Taliban for secretly teaching girls above sixth grade and was released from prison after a month.

In Khost , a local teacher who was secretly teaching young women and girls was identified by the GDI and imprisoned for 15 days. In Helmand , several educational centres were closed due to strict restrictions imposed by the MPVPV. Similarly, in Ghazni province, the activities of two tailoring courses and a German language course for women were suspended, and their managers were arrested.

In Bamiyan, the activities of a medical institute and another educational centre that provided education for young women girls were stopped by the Taliban. In Daikundi, four educational centres teaching English to 12- to 14-year-old girls were closed by the GDI, and their managers were arrested. Two of these individuals were released after paying a fine and providing a written commitment.

Likewise, in February 2024, the Taliban in Chak district of Maidan Wardak province closed a women's teacher training centre supported by UNICEF. In this centre, 60 female students were studying in various fields. Local sources said that this centre was closed following a verbal order from the Taliban leader banning the education of tall girls and those over ten years old.

¹⁶ UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, Article 26. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in 1966, Article 13.

¹⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 21 March 2024.

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=430658415992287&id=100071443954693&mibextid=oFDknk&rdid=6DZqcti2N59vKT5X



In several provinces, including Ghazni, Paktia, Paktika, Daikundi, Bamiyan, Khost, Maidan Wardak, Nangarhar, and Badghis, the Taliban have verbally ordered school principals not to allow tall girls and those over 10 years old to enter schools, even if they are below the sixth grade.

Furthermore, sources from Kandahar and Badghis provinces have told Rawadari that women and girls in these provinces now do not have the right to participate in vocational training programs, public awareness programs about addressing health, psychological, and family problems. The Taliban have strictly prohibited women's presence in these types of programs as well as formal education in secondary school and university.

2 - CONTINUED DEPRIVATION OF THE RIGHT TO WORK

According to international human rights conventions, equal access to the right to work and employment is one of the most important human rights, and any discrimination or exception based on gender, ethnic, religious, or linguistic affiliations in enjoying this right is prohibited and considered a violation of human rights¹⁸. However, based on the findings of this report, during the first six months of 2024, the Taliban have continued to impose strict restrictions on women's right to work and harass them in the workplace.

In May 2024, a local organization in Daikundi province, with financial support from an international organization, had started a carpet weaving project for more than 200 women. Carpet weaving equipment had been distributed to the participants of this project, and raw materials were to be provided to them, and the trainers' salaries were to be determined. However, the Taliban stopped the project, arguing that women are banned from work. In a similar incident in Helmand province, a local organization intended to launch and create 30 turkey-raising farms for women, but this initiative was prevented by the Taliban's agriculture and economy departments. In Balkh province, the Taliban closed a women's market. On 20 February 2024, staff of MPVPV in Haska Mena district of Nangrahar province warned shopkeepers not to sell anything to women without a male companion (Mahram) and not to allow them to enter shops. Sources said that if sellers disobey this order from the MPVPV, they will be beaten and their shops will be closed.

Meanwhile, a businesswoman in Herat told Rawadari that the GDI, the Labor and s+Social Affairs Departmentt, the MPVPV , and the municipality have imposed stricter restrictions on women's right to work. Female sellers must wear the Taliban-approved clothing and should not allow men to enter their shops. Additionally, a woman resident of Ghor province, who is the breadwinner of her family and sells goods in the city centre, said that the Taliban are making working conditions harder for women every day. The Taliban harass her under various pretexts.

¹⁸ UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, Article 23. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in 1966, Article 6 and 7



For example, “One day, I was discussing the price of two packages of snacks] with a customer when an armed member of Taliban came and told me, “you are a woman, why are you speaking openly and why are you talking to man not related to you?” He told me I am not allowed to talk to men who are not related to me. A few days later, another armed member of Taliban warned, insulted and humiliated me, and told me that from now on, I was not allowed to leave the house without a male companion (Mahram).”

Also, on 3 June 2024, the Taliban leader issued an order¹⁹ setting a fixed salary of 5,000 Afghanis (equivalent of 70 USD) for all female employees of the government, regardless of their education, experience or rank. There were protests following this order and some confusion in implementation. Following this order, the female employees in some provinces received this amount, while in some others, including Kandahar, the salaries of female employees’ have been suspended due to the ambiguity in the order and local authorities are waiting new instructions.

There are also allegations of sexual harassment of professional women by the Taliban. For instance, some interviewees from Herat have said that the Taliban have recently been sexually harassing female journalists. There are complaints that the employees of police stations and MPVPV send unsolicited messages and call female journalists on WhatsApp at night, subjecting them to sexual harassment.

3 - LIMITED ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Effective access to health services and care is a fundamental human right recognized and guaranteed in international treaties. Deliberate deprivation of this right based on gender or other reasons is strictly prohibited, and the UN member states are obligated to adopt and implement necessary measures to facilitate citizens’ access to health services²⁰. However, Rawadari’s findings illustrate that in this reporting period, women’s access to health services has worsened due to the Taliban’s increased enforcement of their strict regulations in Afghanistan. The MPVPV has ordered all health service centres to not treat or provide services to women without a male companion. Additionally,, women healthcare workers have been required by the MPVPV to observe hijab and have a Mahram. They must also work in separate rooms from men and avoid any interaction with their male colleagues. This applies to all female employees in health centres, including vaccinators and nutrition surveyors who travel to districts. The MPVPV officers are assigned to all health centres and hospitals to ensure that female employees and visitors to these centres observe hijab and have Mahrams.

Hospital and other health centres refuse to treat women without a Mahram. For example, a woman from Ghazni province said that on 3 June 2024, she went to the hospital with her aunt for treatment; however, the staff at the hospital refused to treat her and said that a male companion must accompany her for her to receive treatment. Meanwhile, a nurse from Bamiyan province said that women without a Mahram “are not allowed to enter health centres under any circumstances, even if they are dying.”

¹⁹ Islamic Emirate of Taliban, General directorate of Administrative affairs, order No 22999, dated 3 June 2024

²⁰ UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, Article 25. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in 1966, Article 12



In January 2024, the Taliban in Helmand province suspended activities of an organization supporting health centres providing services to women. Initially, the GDI interfered in the activities of this organization, and then the Taliban's Ministry of Economy dissolved it and stopped all its programs. The health centres supported by this organization are now in a semi-active state, which has affected thousands of women's access to health services. In Ghazni province, at least 13 health service centres at the district level have been closed due to budget shortages.

4 - VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO FREE MOVEMENT

In the period of January-30th June 2024, the Taliban have increased their enforcement of restrictions on women's right to free movement. The staff of MPVPV are present in cities, recreational and sports facilities, pilgrimage sites, shops, and other places to prevent women from moving about freely. Additionally, women are not allowed to dine in restaurants or go shopping without a male companion [Mahram] and the Taliban-prescribed attire.

The MPVPV has instructed all shops and restaurants not to allow women to enter without a male companion [Mahram]. Similarly, drivers have been told to refrain from transporting women without a male guardian.

For instance, on 3 March 2024, the MPVPV staff in Ghor province physically assaulted a sick woman who had taken a taxi without a male companion [Mahram] and detained the driver for one night. Additionally, in March 2024, the Taliban detained and imprisoned another woman in Kandahar province on similar charges of riding a taxi without a male companion [Mahram].

In another instance, through a notice published²¹ on 29 June 2023, the MPVPV instructed women and girls in Daikundi province to "wear Arab and Islamic hijab" when they go out. The Ministry also warned that those who do not comply with this directive will face punishment and imprisonment.

Rawadari has monitored that the staff of MPVPV have been deployed in cities and public places to arrest and imprison women who do not have the prescribed attire or are without a male companion [Mahram]. Interviewees from Kandahar province have stated that the Taliban even harass and intimidate shopkeepers who sell items to women. It is noteworthy that the staff of MPVPV label charges against women detained for hijab violations or lack of a male guardian [Mahram] as moral corruption.

In this reporting period, the MPVPV has arrested and imprisoned women in various parts of Afghanistan on charges of moral corruption for not wearing hijab and not having a male guardian [Mahram]. For example, in early 2024, 24 women and girls from Dasht-e Barchi are of Kabul, were arrested and imprisoned for several days. In two other incidents on 5 March and 23 June 2024, Taliban officials

²¹ Public notice issued by the ombudsmen Centre of the Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice of Taliban, 29 June 2024



arrested 10 women and girls in Lal wa Sarjangal district and Firoz Koh city of Ghor province on charges of not wearing “proper hijab”. Additionally, on 17 January 2024, the Taliban arrested 20 women and young girls in Bamiyan province on the same charge. The Taliban took guarantees from the families of these women and girls before releasing them stating that they will wear “proper hijab”. On 12 January 2024, the Taliban arrested and imprisoned two girls from the Naw Abad market of Ghazni province on charges of not wearing proper hijab. Similarly, on 8 January 2024, three women from Jaghori district of Ghazni were arrested by the Taliban while shopping in a store and were released after their families gave assurances. An eyewitness reported that the Taliban insulted and humiliated these two young women and an elderly woman on charges of not wearing proper hijab before arresting them. Furthermore, on 17-18 April 2024, the Taliban in Kandahar province did not allow women to enter a recreational park with their families for Eid al-Adha celebrations. Specific areas were designated for families in the park, but the staff of MPVPV did not allow women to enter the park, even when they had a male guardian [Mahram].

In a similar incident in Ghor province, an interviewee stated that on 24 February 2024, she faced obstruction and mistreatment by the Taliban while going to a recreational park with her husband. They reprimanded her husband, stating that “no woman has the right to go to public and recreational places.” In another case, the staff of MPVPV in Badakhshan did not allow women to leave their homes to celebrate Nawruz. The MPVPV warned families that women and young girls should not attend wedding ceremonies.

An interviewee from this province reported that she and a group of women were prevented from attending her brother’s wedding in another village. She said, “The Taliban insulted and humiliated us, threw the bride’s dress to the ground, and prevented us from attending the wedding ceremony.”

5 - LACK OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The only cases that the Taliban courts address regarding women’s complaints are those related to inheritance. Other cases brought by women, such as demands for separation, complaints of domestic violence and abuse, forced marriages, and other human rights violations, are not addressed by the Taliban judiciary. The Taliban force women to comply with the wishes and decisions of their male family members. Additionally, there are currently no legal mechanisms in place to support women who are victims of violence and human rights abuses. The Taliban courts do not address women’s complaints, particularly regarding domestic violence and abuse. Additionally, the restrictions imposed by the Taliban on women’s right to free movement, which prohibits them from leaving the house without a male guardian [Mahram], facilitate the continuation of various forms of violence, abuse, and human rights violations. Women who are victims of domestic violence cannot approach Taliban judicial and legal institutions without a male guardian [Mahram]. As a result, they are exposed to additional violence and abuse.

A source from the Kandahar provincial courts told Rawadari that women come to the Taliban courts daily to bring their complaints; however, most of them are humiliated, insulted, and expelled from the courts for not having male guardians [Mahram]. Taliban judges require



married women to come with their husbands, even in the cases where the complaint is about violence and abuse inflicted by the husbands.

Rawadari has documented cases showing that if individuals associated with the Taliban commit human rights violations against women, these cases are not addressed at all. For example, a victim of violence from the city centre of Herat reported that her husband, who is a drug user, encourages her to have sexual relations with his friends. Fed up with this situation, she complained to the Taliban's judicial and legal institutions. However, the officials of these institutions dismissed her complaint as slander, stating, "Your husband has fought alongside other Taliban forces against the Republic for years, and you cannot complain or request separation from him."

Another victim from Kabul said, "My husband works with the Taliban and treats me violently. He has beaten me several times, he once shaved my head, and pulled out my nails. I went to a Taliban police station to file a complaint, but they did not allow me to register my complaint and they sent me off."

Moreover, there are claims of sexual harassment from the women who approach the Taliban's judicial and legal institutions. For example, in early 2024, a Taliban judge in Kandahar province was sentenced to three years of imprisonment for having a sexual relationship with a woman. Rawadari has obtained information that the judge abused his position to coerce a female petitioner into a sexual relationship. The court misrepresented this case as "adultery," and the perpetrator accepted the primary court's verdict without any objection. It is important to note that the Taliban courts typically carry out public flogging for such cases; however, in this specific instance, to conceal corruption within their judicial and legal institutions, they only sentenced the accused to imprisonment.

Additionally, since March 2024, the MPVPV in Kandahar province has detained at least seven women on charges of moral corruption or for complaining about domestic violence and abuse. As all the staff in the detention centre where the women are kept are male and there are allegations of sexual harassment of the detained women.

PART THREE

THE SITUATION OF VULNERABLE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The findings of this report indicate that the Taliban exhibit discriminatory behavior against marginalized ethnic and religious groups in providing government services, distributing resources, and enabling access to national facilities. They hire and dismiss government employees based on ideological, ethnic, linguistic, and religious characteristics. Furthermore, the report's findings indicate that the Taliban suppress diverse religious thought and belief and impose strict limitations on religious ceremonies, practices and rituals.





1 - DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Freedom from discrimination is among the most fundamental human rights. The United Nations Charter and other international human rights documents commit member states to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination based on race, gender, language, or religion²². These documents emphasize the necessity of eliminating discrimination and creating equal opportunities for all. However, after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, they abolished the previous constitution that guaranteed equal rights and freedoms for all citizens. Since their return to power, they also showed no commitment or adherence to international human rights treaties to which Afghanistan is a party. As a result, various ethnic and religious groups, lacking legal protection and facing the de-facto authorities' discriminatory approach, have been marginalized in different political, economic, social, and cultural arenas. They have been deprived of equal access to public services, resources, opportunities, and national facilities based on their ethnic or religious identity.

Rawadari's findings in this reporting period indicate that the Taliban act in a discriminatory manner in providing public services, access to job opportunities, implementing development projects and in distribution of humanitarian aid. Consequently, vulnerable ethnic and religious groups are unable to access these opportunities and resources equally and fairly. For instance, in Ghor province, the Taliban have prevented the implementation of development projects and the distribution of aid in areas where Hazara and Shia communities live. Specifically, the areas of "Reza Ha'" in the centre of Ghor province, the southern villages of Dawlatyar district where members of the Tajik community live, the Lal wa Sarjangal district, and other areas where the Hazara and Shia communities reside have been deliberately excluded from development projects and other national resources over the past three years. In Badakhshan, the Taliban have not implemented any development projects in areas where followers of the Ismailia sect live, thereby discriminating against them in terms of access to government services. In Farah province, the Taliban exhibit discriminatory behavior in distributing resources and implementing development projects and they intentionally obstruct the activities of organizations in areas where the Shia community lives.

In Nimroz province, the Taliban discriminate in the distribution of resources and implementation of national projects in areas where the Baloch and Shia minorities live. Interviewees have stated that, for this reason, over the past three years, many individuals from ethnic and religious minorities have migrated out of this province to other countries, with some even selling their homes and property.

In the provinces of Bamiyan, Daikundi, and Ghazni, the Taliban exhibit discriminatory behavior in distributing humanitarian aid, implementing development projects, and allocating national resources and opportunities. Sources from Ghazni province have reported that over the past three years, no development projects have been implemented in the Hazara-populated districts of this province. In Daikundi, the Taliban have ordered all NGOs to implement their projects in Gizab district which was previously an important centre for their recruitment and military activities

²² UN Charter, adopted in 1945, Article 1, Paragraph 3; Article 55, Paragraph C; and Article 4, Paragraph 9. UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted in 1966, Article 2, Paragraph 1 and 2



The Taliban claim that there is no discrimination in their policies. They recently announced (footnote) that the leader of this group issued an order to reclaim lands seized from the Sikh and Hindu communities in the country, and a commission has been formed to address this issue. However, there is no information available yet on the outcomes of this commission's work.

2 - DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT

The right to work for all and consequently the creation of fair working conditions, ensuring job security, and refraining from employment and workplace discrimination based on ethnicity and religion are explicitly stated in international human rights treaties²³. However, in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, individuals from any ethnic group who are not ideologically aligned with the Taliban, especially those belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, face discrimination in employment to government offices, particularly at the decision-making levels. The Taliban have collectively dismissed employees belonging to minority ethnic or religious groups from government offices and, over the past three years, have placed individuals loyal to them in various sectors of government without regard to legal conditions and requirements for employment. For example, in provinces and districts where ethnic and religious minorities live, the Taliban do not provide them with the opportunity to participate in government institutions and offices. Interviewees from Ghor province have said that this group recently collectively dismissed the staff of the electronic ID card distribution centre who was Tajik and Hazara.

In Nimroz province, the Taliban have purged government offices of employees belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and harass and dismiss them under various pretexts. Currently, no one from ethnic and religious minorities is present at decision-making levels in the Taliban's local administration in this province. Sources from this province have said that previously, officials of several government offices were Shia, but now not even one of them remains in their jobs anymore.

In Takhar province, there is no opportunity for participation of all ethnic and religious groups, and the Taliban's criteria for recruiting public employees, according to interviewees, is belonging Hanafi sect and membership in the Taliban group. In Herat and Ghazni provinces, the Taliban have harassed and dismissed employees belonging to ethnic and religious minorities who had continued to work in government offices since the era of the republic.

In Badakhshan, in the 6 districts where the vast majority of residents are followers of the Ismailia sect, not even one Ismaili individual is employed in the government offices. Similarly, in four other districts where Ismailia has a significant population, they are not recruited in government offices.

²³ UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on 10 December 1948, Article 23. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted on 16 December 1966. Articles 6, 7, and 8



In Daikundi, Ghazni, and Bamiyan provinces, the Taliban have also carried out group purges and employed officials of government offices from groups loyal to them. Likewise, in Kandahar, individuals belonging to ethnic and religious minorities cannot be employed in positions higher than grade two.

3 - IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS

According to international human rights treaties, religious freedom encompasses freedom of belief and freedom to practice religious teachings and rituals.²⁴ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights emphasizes the freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, and freedom to practice worship, observe, and pursue religious education²⁵. Similarly, the document states that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language, in private or in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.²⁶ However, after returning to power, the Taliban have consistently suppressed different religious thoughts and beliefs and restricted religious freedoms. They have removed the teaching of Ja'afari/Shia jurisprudence from university curricula, and on 6 June 2024, the Taliban's Education Department in Bamiyan province ordered all schools in the province to collect Ja'afari jurisprudence textbooks until new books are printed.²⁷ Additionally, in the first months after coming to power, the Taliban abolished the Personal Status Law for Shias and dismissed all Shia judges from their courts.²⁸ Currently, all cases related to Shia personal status are resolved based on Hanafi jurisprudence. This issue has caused concerns among followers of the Ja'afari sect. In this regard, a number of Shias in Kandahar province have expressed their concerns to Rawadari that there are no Shia judges in Taliban courts, and their cases related to personal status are resolved based on Hanafi jurisprudence. For this reason, they are forced to resort to informal mechanisms and to avoid the formal legal processes.

Additionally, the de-facto authorities have imposed restrictions on the performance of Shia religious rituals and ceremonies. Sources from Herat province have said that Shias must consult with the Taliban and get their permission before holding any kind of religious program. The Taliban would then make the final decision on whether to allow them to proceed or not.

Regarding this, a preacher from the Shia Grand Mosque in Badghis province said, "Since the Taliban's return to power, we cannot freely convene our religious ceremonies."

Additionally, the Taliban have imposed restrictions on the observance of "Muharram" and "Aashura" ceremonies throughout the country, and have not allowed mourners to leave mosques to gather on streets or use loudspeakers. In Ghazni province, the Taliban's deputy governor told Shia scholars in a meeting that mourning in Muharram and Aashura is Bid'ah and sinful and there should be no

24 UNGA, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, Article 7

25 UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in 1966, Article 18

26 The very, Article 1, P paragraph 27

27 Education Department of Bamiyan Province, Teacher Training and General Education Directorate, General Directorate of Science Centre, Letter No. 1535, dated 6 June 2024

28 Rawadari, "The Situation of Access to Justice, June 2023" https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RW_Rule-of-Law-Report-Eng.pdf



mourning in public places. For this reason, from the seventh day of Muharram, the Taliban turned off the loudspeakers in Shia mosques in several parts of the provincial centre and did not allow people to go out. Similarly, on 20 March 2024, the Taliban did not allow Shias in the provincial centre and Deh Nahal village of Khwaja Omari district of Ghazni province to hold their religious ceremonies.

The Taliban harass Shia followers under various pretexts. For instance, on 21 April 2024, the GDI and the Pilgrimage [Hajj] and Religious Affairs Department in Zaranj city of Nimroz province arrested the officials of the central Shia Grand Mosque on charges of performing Eid prayers without Taliban permission and financial corruption. They were released from prison after 48 hours. Similarly, interviewees from Ghor province told Rawadari that the Taliban discriminatorily excluded Hazara Shias from the Hajj process.

In Nimroz province, the Taliban have announced that the marriage of a Sunni woman to a Shia man is not permissible, but if a Sunni man marries a Shia woman, there is no obstacle.

4 - FORCING ISMAILIA SHIAS TO CHANGE THEIR RELIGION AND LEARN HANAFI JURISPRUDENCE

Rawadari's findings in this reporting period reveal that in Badakhshan, the Taliban have forced Ismailia Shias to change their religion and learn Hanafi jurisprudence. The Ismailia community is currently not allowed to perform their religious rituals and practices. Sources from this province have told us that the MPVPV has activated religious schools in the districts of Zebak, Ishkashim, Sheghnan, Wakhan, Jurm, Yamgan, and parts of Nusay Darwaz for followers of the Ismailia sect, where they forcibly teach Hanafi jurisprudence to Ismailia Shias. The Taliban have forced Ismailia's to send their children to these religious schools/madrasas. In each religious school, 100 to 200 male and female students from Ismailia Shia families are forcibly educated. Sources have also told us that the Taliban opened these madrasas after reports of forcing Ismailia followers to change their religion, and in this regard, last year the Taliban police commander for Sheghnan district told one of his colleagues in a phone call that "Ismailia followers have completely left the circle of Islam and madrasas of Hanafi jurisprudence should be established to save them." Similarly, there are numerous cases of forcing Ismailia Shias to change their religion, and according to our sources, these forced conversions are rarely made public. The MPVPV has summoned a number of Ismailia elders from Sheghnan and Ishkashim districts and warned them to refrain from constructing Jamat-Khana (Ismaili place of worship) and religious places for followers of this sect.

PART FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS





CONCLUSION

During this reporting period, the Taliban have continued to commit widespread human rights violations in various areas. Former government employees and their family members, civil society activists, journalists, and human rights defenders have been systematically killed, arrested, tortured, and disappeared. Similarly, women are currently deprived of their most basic human rights and freedoms, including the right to education, the right to work, freedom of movement, access to healthcare and access to justice. In the past six months, the Taliban have shown no flexibility in their discriminatory and repressive policies against women and have continued to implement more strict restrictions on the rights of women and girls.

In Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, vulnerable ethnic and religious groups have been deliberately kept away from equal access to government services, national resources and facilities. The Taliban have hired or dismissed government employees based on ideological, religious, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics. Among these, forcing Ismailia Shias to change their religion and their forcible religious education is one of the most severe and horrific cases of human rights violations that the Taliban have committed in the first six months of 2024.

The human rights situation in Afghanistan has continued to deteriorate in the first six months of 2024. Addressing the current human rights crisis requires active and effective involvement of the international community, especially taking practical measures to guarantee human rights and protect vulnerable groups such as women and ethnic and religious minorities, former government employees, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and other marginalized communities facing Taliban discrimination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rawadari proposes the following recommendations to the international community and de-facto authorities to address the dire human rights situation in Afghanistan:

To the de-facto authorities:

- Rawadari urges the de-facto authorities to refrain from further violating the fundamental rights of Afghan citizens and reminds them of their legal obligations under Afghanistan's international commitments.
- Rawadari calls on the de-facto authorities to end discriminatory policies against women by respecting and upholding the full spectrum of women's human rights.
- The de-facto authorities must take practical measures to eliminate existing threats against Afghan children. This includes protecting children's lives by clearing areas contaminated with remnants of explosives from previous wars and cooperating with international organisations in this regard.
- Rawadari calls on the de-facto authorities to stop extrajudicial killings of former government employees, human rights defenders, opponents, and critics. They must announce and implement



measures to ensure their safety and security. Additionally, Rawadari calls on the DFA to provide reports and information on their actions to address suspicious and extrajudicial killings.

- Illegal detention, torture, enforced disappearances and killing of prisoners are grave violations of human rights and must end now. Additionally, the DFA must provide opportunities for independent, regular detention monitoring by UNAMA and human rights organizations.
- Rawadari calls on the de-facto authorities to end discriminatory policies against vulnerable ethnic and religious groups and to respect the rights of all Afghan citizens.

To the International Community

- Rawadari urges the international community to adapt an “all-tools” approach and actively support all avenues to accountability including but not limited to codification of gender apartheid, strengthening accountability mechanisms through the UN Human Rights Council and utilizing the International Court of Justice to hold the Taliban accountable.
- Rawadari urges the international community to engage with the de-facto authorities to ensure the safety and security of former government employees and their families, who are subjected to various retaliatory and violent attacks
- Rawadari calls on UNAMA to thoroughly investigate the situation in prisons under Taliban control, with particular focus on the conditions in women’s detention facilities, cases of torture, and the killing of prisoners. Rawadari calls for the findings be shared with the Afghan population, the media, and human rights organisations.



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