

AFGHANISTAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION REPORT 2024

March 2025



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

In 2024, Afghanistan saw a decrease in the number of explosions and suicide attacks and subsequently a reduction in civilian casualties. However, other forms of human rights violations significantly increased compared to 2023. For instance, the number of targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings of individuals accused of collaborating with anti-Taliban groups have doubled. There has been a 70% increase in number of enforced disappearances. Rawadari has recorded more instances of torture leading to death. In 2024, there has also been a spike in arbitrary and unlawful detentions by the Taliban, leading to an increase of 42% compared to 2023. This increase might partly be due to the introduction and full enforcement of the so called "Promotion of Vice and Prevention of Virtue" (PVPV) Law in August 2024 that reinforced existing restrictions and introduced new ones, particularly on the rights and freedoms of women and girls.

Additionally, Rawadari's findings indicate that former government employees and their family members have continued to be subjected to arbitrary detentions, torture, killings, enforced disappearances, and other acts of retaliation. The rate of targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings of former government employees in 2024 has increased by 9%, while their arbitrary and unlawful detentions rose by approximately 20%.

Due to the continuation of the de facto authorities' (DFA) discriminatory and restrictive policies, especially following the publication of the PVPV law, the human rights situation for women has further

deteriorated, with increased restrictions on access to education, work and movement and access to justice. Rawadari's findings indicate that the implementation of this law has impacted all aspects of women's and girls' lives in Afghanistan, leading to their complete deprivation from secondary and higher education, increased discrimination in access to healthcare services, restrictions on their freedom of movement, and denial of access to justice. The systematic and widespread nature of Taliban's crimes against women amount to crime against humanity of gender persecution.

In 2024, the ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan continued facing discrimination and persecution. Rawadari has documented instance of deliberate deprivation of vulnerable communities from equal and fair access to government services, humanitarian aid, and national resources and facilities. The Taliban have also eliminated opportunities for the participation of minorities in decision-making processes that affect their future, and they have made government appointments and dismissals based on ideological, religious, and ethnic considerations. Furthermore, 2024 saw a continued trend of suppression of freedom of religion and belief in Afghanistan particularly for Shia and Ismaili communities.

The worsening human rights situation in Afghanistan in 2024 highlights the Taliban's continued disregard for Afghanistan's international human rights commitments and obligations. Addressing the current human rights crisis in Afghanistan requires the full implementation of accountability mechanisms, along with preventive and protective measures from the international community.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The information included in this report pertains to the period from January 1 to December 31, 2024, which has been collected and recorded monthly by the Rawadari documentation team. To document various human rights violations, Rawadari's human rights monitors used questionnaires and conducted in-person or telephone interviews throughout the year with multiple local sources, including survivors, their family members and eyewitnesses across 30 provinces of Afghanistan¹.

Other sources consulted for data collection and verification included journalists, civil society activists, human rights defenders, lawyers, government employees, staff from educational and healthcare institutions, personnel from relevant national and international organizations and community leaders. Cases that could not be verified with sufficient evidence and multiple sources have been excluded from this report.

Additionally, decrees, orders, audio and video recordings, and written documents issued by the Taliban over the past year and obtained by Rawadari have also been utilized as sources for this report. Furthermore, previous Rawadari reports and findings from other human rights organizations have been referenced in the report.

In each section, a few examples of violations have been included to provide a clear picture of

the human rights situation in Afghanistan. To provide an analysis of the trends, the findings of this report have been compared with those from Rawadari's 2023 annual human rights situation report.²

To ensure the safety and security of interviewees, sources and survivors, specific details, dates, and exact locations of certain examples of human rights violations have been deliberately omitted from the report.

Limitations on Access to Information

Since the Taliban have imposed strict restrictions on access to information, gathering the necessary data for this report, particularly documenting human rights violations and specifically targeted and extrajudicial killings, torture, the killing of prisoners, and enforced disappearances, has been a challenging task. The Taliban employ various tactics to conceal such information, including obtaining written guarantees from victims, forcing them to swear oaths not to speak about their experiences, and resorting to intimidation, and threats against victims and their families.

Evidence indicates that prisoners and torture victims are often released from detention on the condition that they provide written commitments not to share information or speak about their experiences. In many cases, the Taliban have threatened them with re-arrest and further punishment. As a result, those released from prison and survivors of torture refrain from sharing information with the media and human rights organizations, fearing retaliation and security repercussions for their families.

The Taliban prevent human rights organizations and monitors from accessing prisons or detention facilities and they have also warned all government employees that they will be dismissed and punished if they disseminate information without authorization.

The General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) monitors the activities of civil society activists, journalists, media outlets, human rights defenders, lawyers and educational institutions and health centres and aggressively suppresses any criticism or opposition to Taliban policies.

In 2024, the Taliban imposed even stricter restrictions compared to 2023 on the work of journalists and local media. Currently, local media cannot publish information without prior approval from the Directorates of Information and Culture and GDI. They are only permitted to publish reports and information that the Taliban approve and endorse. The dissemination of information related to specific issues, including human rights violations and women's rights, is strictly prohibited, and media outlets are not allowed to report on these matters. For example, in August 2024, in a meeting of journalists called by the Directorate of Information and Culture in Ghazni, the GDI and the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV) introduced a guideline stating that any reporting on human rights is considered contrary to the "values of the Islamic Emirate."

In Southern and Eastern regions of Afghanistan, both state and private TV stations have been forced to suspend their operation following the PVPV law that introduced a ban on publishing imagery

and videos of living beings (humans and animals). As a result, the only source of information from the local DFA authorities and departments in these regions is now the Facebook pages of the local administration. Additionally, in some provinces, the Taliban routinely inspect mobile phones and computers at checkpoints to ensure that no information related to human rights violations is recorded or disseminated. Consequently, these restrictions, along with the recent enforcement of the "PVPV" law, have fostered an environment of fear and mistrust, leading to the concealment of information and evidence related to human rights violations.

Therefore, what is presented in this report represents a portion of the numerous human rights violations that Rawadari has been able to document during 2024 considering the limitations on access to information.



PART ONE

VIOLATIONS OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

This section of the report includes data and examples on the the state of civil and political rights, focusing on major incidents in 2024, as documented by Rawadari. Various forms of violations of the right to life, the right to liberty and personal security, the right to human dignity and peaceful gatherings are among the most significant topics examined in detail in this part of the report.

Violation of the Right to Life

The findings of this report indicate that during 2024, at least 768 people were killed or injured as a result of targeted explosive and suicide attacks, remnants of explosives from past wars, or targeted and extrajudicial attacks³. Of these, 544 were killed, and 224 others were injured. The fatalities include 403 men, 40 women, 101 children. Similarly, the injured include 118 men, 7 women, 60 children, and 39 individuals of unknown identity. Victims include former government employees and their family members, women, children, tribal elders, and opponents and critics of the Taliban.

In 2023, Rawadari documented a total of 772 cases of violations of the right to life, compared to 778 in 2024.

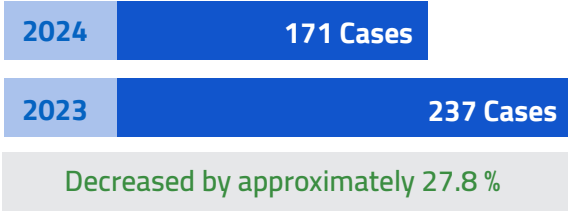


A - Civilian Casualties from Targeted Explosive and Suicide Attacks

The data indicates that during 2024, as a result of targeted suicide and explosive attacks in the provinces of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Takhar, Paktika, and Bamiyan, including attacks by the Islamic State (IS), airstrike by Pakistani military forces and an attack by the Freedom Front, at least 171 casualties were recorded, of these, 92 were killed and 79 others were injured.

In 2023, Rawadari documented 237 cases of casualties resulting from targeted suicide and explosive attacks⁴.

A comparison of the data from both years shows that civilian casualties from targeted suicide and explosive attacks in 2024 decreased by approximately 27.8% compared to 2023.



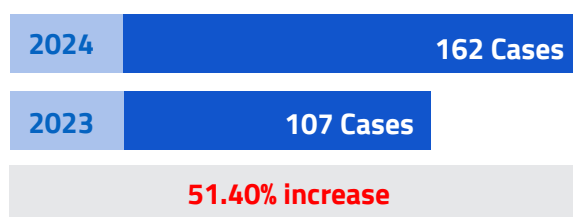
On 7 January 2024, an explosion caused by a planted mine in a passenger bus in Dasht-e Barchi, west of Kabul, resulted in the deaths of at least 2 civilians and injured 14 others. The responsibility for this attack was claimed by the Islamic State (IS). Similarly, on 21 March 2024, a suicide attack near Kabul Bank in Kandahar city killed at least 12 civilians and injured 3 others. This attack was also claimed by the IS.

On 24 December 2024, following an air bombardment by Pakistani military forces on parts of Barmal District in Paktika, at least 51 civilians, including 20 children and 7 women, were killed, and 8 others were injured.

On 9 December 2024, due to an explosion caused by a magnetic bomb attached to a Taliban vehicle in the centre of Herat, at least 4 civilians were injured. The Freedom Front claimed responsibility for this attack.

B - Casualties from Landmine Explosions and Explosive Remnants of War

During 2024, at least 162 people were killed or injured as a result of explosions from landmines, mortar shells, and other explosive remnants of past wars. Among them, 90 were killed, and 72 others were injured. This figure represents a 51.40% increase compared to 2023, when 107 casualties (killed and injured) were recorded⁵.



On 1 April 2024, as a result of mine explosion in Zardran village of Ghazni Province, 9 children were killed. The victims included 5 girls and 4 boys, aged between 4 and 10 years. Similarly, on 30 October 2024, two boys in Nawur District, Ghazni Province, and on 20 August 2024, two boys in Gozarah District of Herat Province, were killed by landmine explosions.

On 6 October 2024, a landmine explosion in the centre of Nimroz Province injured three

children. On 21 November of the same year, two boys were killed by the explosion of remnants of past wars in Garda Serai District, in Paktika Province. Additionally, on 11 October 2024, two children were killed by the explosion of a shell in Sayed Abad District of Maidan Wardak Province.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has stated that during 2024, more than 500 children were killed or severely injured by the explosion of unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan⁶.

C - Targeted, Mysterious, and Extrajudicial Killings

Based on the findings of this report, during 2024, at least 435 people, including 398 men, 30 women, and 6 children, were killed or injured in targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial attacks carried out by the Taliban and unidentified individuals. This figure represents a 1.63% increase compared to 2023, when 428 such cases were recorded⁷.



Photo (C) <https://sam.media/> AP archive

Perpetrators of Targeted, Mysterious and Extrajudicial Killings

Victims of targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial killings include former government employees (both military and civilian), supporters of the previous government, tribal elders, individuals accused of collaborating with or being members of Taliban's opposition groups, and those with past personal conflicts with the Taliban or their family members. These individuals have been killed using firearms and cold weapons such as knives, axes, and hatchets.

Some victims, including former government employees and individuals accused of collaborating with opposition groups, were arrested by the Taliban and later executed. However, in certain cases, the Taliban claim that the perpetrators of these killings are unknown armed groups or individuals. The Taliban do not share any public information on these killings and do not report on any legal prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of targeted, mysterious and extrajudicial killings. Additionally, the Taliban officials also prohibit families and survivors from expressing their opinion about the perpetrators or providing information. This is while the Taliban act quickly on publicizing other forms of killings (i.e criminal incidents) and the identification and arrest of their perpetrators.

Additionally, the Taliban have strictly prohibited journalists and media outlets from covering targeted and extrajudicial killings, and in some cases, they have threatened media with punishment or imprisonment. Hospitals and healthcare centres are also not allowed to publish information about the identity of

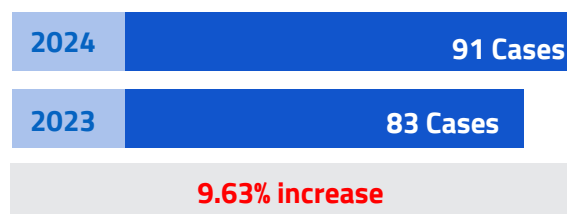
victims (i.e. the injured from these attacks) or provide such information to media outlets and journalists. While the Taliban often attribute some of these cases to personal enmities and problems, the families of victims' claim that the Taliban themselves are responsible.

Evidence suggests that these killings are systematic and widespread. Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, former government employees and, in some cases, their family members across Afghanistan have been targeted and killed as acts of revenge, regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

A - Targeted Killings of Former Government Employees

In 2024, at least 91 former government employees and their family members were killed or injured in targeted, mysterious, and extrajudicial attacks.

In 2023, 83 former government employees were killed or injured as a result of targeted attacks. A comparison of the two figures shows a 9.63% increase in the number of targeted killings of former government employees and their family members during this reporting period.





In October 2024, two former soldiers were killed by unidentified armed individuals in Ismail Khel Manduzi District of Khost Province. One of them was killed near a Taliban security base, and the other was killed in front of his home. In another incident, in November 2024, the Taliban detained a former Afghan National Army soldier in Aryub Zazi District of Paktia Province, and his dead body was found a few days later.

In October 2024, a former soldier was stabbed to death by unidentified armed individuals in Shighnan District of Badakhshan Province, and the Taliban handed over his dead body to his family. After the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, he had been driving a taxi to support his family. Additionally, in August 2024, a former military employee of the previous government was mysteriously killed in Tishkan District of Badakhshan Province. Local sources reported that unidentified armed individuals took him from his home and killed him, but the Taliban claimed he died of natural causes.

In August 2024, a former soldier was killed in Charikar City of Parwan Province, and a former local police commander was killed in Esmidan Village, Balkhab District, of Sar-e Pol Province. In September 2024, a former soldier was killed in Ghor Province. The victim's family stated that the Taliban were responsible for his killing. Similarly, in November 2024, a former soldier was shot dead by the Taliban in his home in Do Laina [Dowlina] District of Ghor Province. In another similar incident, on 16 December 2024, Taliban intelligence arrested a former police officer from his home and shot him on the way to Firoz Koh city.

In July 2024, a former soldier was mysteriously killed in Faryab. His family blames a local Taliban commander for the killing. Additionally, in December 2024, another former soldier was killed by unidentified armed individuals in this province.

A former soldier from Panjshir Province was killed by the Taliban in Kabul city on charges of collaborating with the National Resistance Front. In another case, a former security forces soldier from Khost Province was mysteriously killed in December 2024. He had been detained and tortured multiple times by the Taliban intelligence before his murder.

Furthermore, in August 2024, a former military commander was killed by the Taliban in Sheikhabad District of Paktika Province. This individual had fled to Iran after the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and was detained by the Taliban upon his return to the country. A day later, his dead body was found in front of his home. In March 2024, two former soldiers were brutally killed with axes and hatchets by unidentified individuals in Pasaband District of Ghor Province.

The Taliban often attribute these incidents to unidentified armed individuals. However, Rawadari has not been able to obtain information about any action taken by the Taliban to arrest or punish those responsible for the killings of former government employees.

B -Killing of Civilians accused of Collaborating with Opposition Groups

Rawadari’s findings indicate that the Taliban killed at least 46 civilians in 2024 on charges of collaborating and having ties with their opposition groups. This figure has doubled compared to 2023, with an increase of 25 cases.



The evidence obtained indicates that the Taliban detain individuals accused of membership or collaboration with opposition groups under labels such as “Khawarij” or Baghi, i.e. rebels to a Muslim ruler or on charges of affiliation with the IS. These labels have religious implications and are an effort to portray their murders as permissible. Taliban execute these individuals without any investigation or judicial process. For example, on 4 February and 23 March 2024, two men whose identities remain unknown were detained and killed in Shahrak District and the provincial centre of Ghor Province on charges of collaborating with opposition groups and attacking the Taliban. Local officials in the province stated that “they killed two rebels who intended to attack (the Taliban),” but provided no information about the identities of these individuals.

Similarly, on 28 December 2024, a man from Khyber District of Faryab Province was killed by the Taliban on charges of collaborating with the IS. The Taliban set his room on fire by throwing petrol, resulting in two women being injured in the incident. Additionally, two residents of Kapisa Province were killed by the Taliban in Jabal Saraj District of Parwan Province, on charges of collaborating with the National Resistance Front. These two men were military personnel of the previous government.

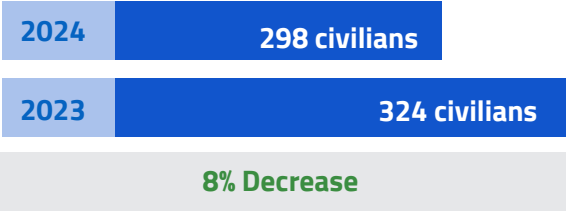
In another similar incident, a former soldier in Parwan Province was killed by Taliban intelligence. The victim’s family stated that he had no ties with any group and was engaged in farming to support his family.

C - Mysterious and Extrajudicial Killings of Other Civilians

During 2024, at least 298 civilians were killed or injured in mysterious and extrajudicial attacks carried out by the Taliban and unidentified armed individuals. Of these, 241 were killed, and 57 others were injured. Supporters and allies of the previous government, tribal elders, religious scholars, and local influential figures are among those killed or injured in this reporting period.

In 2023, 324 civilians were killed or injured in similar incidents.

Therefore, a comparison of the two figures shows 8% decrease in the number of civilians killed in extrajudicial and mysterious attacks during this reporting period.



For example, on 31 July 2024, a prominent ethnic figure who was a member of the Helmand Provincial Social Council during the previous government was killed by unidentified armed individuals. The Taliban have so far taken no action to identify the perpetrators of this incident. Similarly, on 18 September 2024, an ethnic elder in Kandahar province was killed by unidentified armed individuals in a shooting. On 16 September 2024, the dismembered body of another man, whose identity remains unknown, was found inside two sacks. This incident occurred in the Arghandab district of Kandahar province. Local Taliban officials have not yet commented on the matter.

On 27 and 29 July 2024, two ethnic elders in the Qadis district of Badghis province were killed by unidentified armed individuals in shootings. In another incident on 2 August 2024, an ethnic elder in the Punjab district of Bamiyan province was shot and killed by unidentified armed individuals wearing Taliban military uniforms. The victim’s family sought justice from the Taliban, but the Taliban stated that they could do nothing to follow up on the case.

Additionally, on 12 December 2024, the Taliban shot and killed a resident of Faizabad city in Badakhshan province in front of his 5 year old daughter over a verbal argument. He was a baker and the sole provider for his family of nine.

While the majority of these incidents have been attributed to unidentified armed individuals, the Taliban have taken no action to identify perpetrators and have not provided any information to the families of victims regarding their investigations.

Enforced Disappearances

Enforced disappearance refers to the detention, arrest, or abduction of individuals by government agents or other groups with the authorization, support, consent, or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the detention or provide information about the fate or whereabouts of the victims⁸. International human rights instruments, particularly the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court recognizes enforced disappearance as one of the most severe human rights violations and a crime against humanity when committed as part of a systematic and widespread attack against the civilian population⁹. Moreover, enforced disappearance, which often involves torture and ill-treatment of detainees, constitutes a clear violation of Articles 1 and 2 of the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment¹⁰.

The findings of this report indicate that during 2024, at least 51 individuals in 10 provinces of Afghanistan¹¹ disappeared after being detained by the Taliban. This figure represents a 70% increase compared to 2023¹², when there were 30 cases. Victims include former government employees and their family members, human rights activists, and individuals

accused of collaborating with opposition groups or criticizing the Taliban.

The rise in enforced disappearances suggests that the Taliban are systematically using this practice as a tool to retaliate against former government employees, opponents and critics.



On 9 August 2024, the Taliban detained a former military officer in Bamiyan province and transferred him to an undisclosed location. Since then, despite his family's efforts, there has been no information available about the fate of this former officer, and the Taliban have not provided any details regarding his situation or whereabouts.

In October 2024 in Herat, the Taliban detained a man who had recently returned from Iran. His family have not had any information about his whereabouts.

Similarly, on 25 and 27 November 2024, Taliban intelligence detained two men in Badakhshan province and transferred them to an unknown location. The families of the detainees have said they were unaware for a long time about the charges against them and where they were being held.

In another incident, on 22nd August 2024, the Taliban detained a man from Baghlan province. Since then, no information has been available about his situation and whereabouts.



On 11th November 2024, the Taliban intelligence detained a former military officer and his brother in Ghor province. The families of these two individuals have stated that they have no information about their fate and whereabouts, and the Taliban have not declared the reason for their detention and the charges against them.

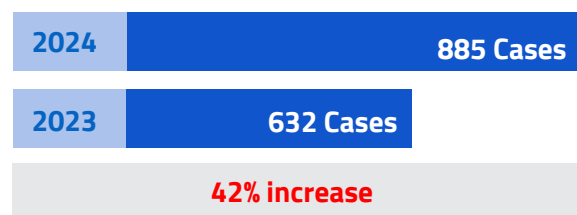
On 5 October 2024, the Taliban intelligence detained two young women in Ghor province and transferred them to an unknown location. Relatives of these two women have stated that they have repeatedly visited the security commander and Taliban intelligence office, but local officials have not provided any information about their situation and whereabouts.

Furthermore, information from Badghis province indicates that in late 2024, at least

seven prisoners detained for political reasons disappeared from the prison in this province, and since then, there has been no information available about their situation.

Arbitrary and Illegal Detention

Based on the findings of this report, during the year 2024, at least 885 individuals, including 42 women, were arbitrarily and illegally detained and imprisoned. In 2023, a total of 623 cases of arbitrary and illegal detention were recorded. A comparison of both figures shows that the number of arbitrary and illegal detentions in 2024 increased by approximately 42% compared to 2023.



While international human rights documents recognize the right to freedom and personal security as one of the most fundamental human rights and emphasize the prohibition of arbitrary and unlawful deprivation of individual freedom¹³, the de facto authorities, without regard to international human rights standards and legal procedures related to detention, have extensively committed arbitrary and illegal detention of citizens.

Former government employees, critics, individuals accused of membership in military and political opposition groups to the Taliban, civil society members, and journalists are among those who have been arbitrarily and unlawfully arrested and imprisoned by the Taliban throughout 2024. The accusations against these individuals include holding peaceful gathering or protests, providing education to women and girls, carrying weapons, collaborating with military and political opposition groups, criticism and "propaganda" against the Taliban, and disobedience to the regulations imposed by the MPVPV regarding gender segregation, dress code and women's movement. Administrative corruption and the Taliban's attempts to extort money from citizens have been additional reasons for arbitrary arrests in 2024.

Taliban use arrests and imprisonment as a tool for repression, retaliation, and enforcing their policies and programs. Moreover, there is currently no law governing the conditions of detention and the duration of custody. As a result, various Taliban government entities arbitrarily deprive citizens of their freedom and personal security. For instance, the Directorate

of Education and the Directorate of Water and Power in Herat province, each have their own private prisons and can detain individuals for as long as they wish.

Other Taliban entities, including police headquarters, also play a role in the illegal detention and imprisonment of individuals.

However, the highest number of arbitrary arrests in 2024 has been carried out by two agencies: Intelligence and the MPPV. These agencies have detention facilities across the country and, in most cases, punish detainees outside the judicial process, without formally filing cases or referring them to the courts.

Additionally, evidence suggests that the Taliban deliberately do not send the case files of certain prisoners, particularly those accused of membership or collaboration with opposition groups, to judicial institutions, thereby delaying their trials. The right to a fair and prompt trial is a legal right of detainees. Despite months passing since the arrest of some of these individuals, they remain in limbo, awaiting court rulings. For instance, in Kandahar province, three prisoners accused of membership in Taliban's opposition groups were illegally detained in the intelligence detention facility for more than six months before being transferred to the province's central prison. The courts have yet to issue any ruling regarding these individuals.

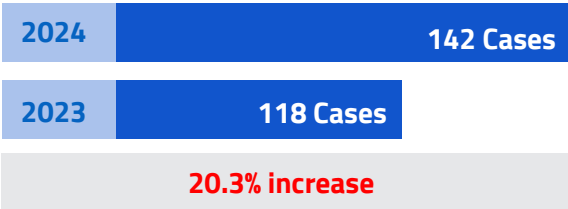
According to their relatives, Taliban intelligence deliberately withholds their case files from the courts because "they want these individuals to remain in prison indefinitely."

In some cases, Taliban intelligence keeps detainees in custody until they express regret and repentance. However, in other cases, the intelligence officials make decisions and issue verdicts in a single session without any investigation or adherence to legal procedures.

Furthermore, some prisoners who have already served their prison sentences remain incarcerated. These prisoners were arrested for propaganda against the Taliban. The delays in trials, uncertainty regarding the fate of detainees, and delays in releasing prisoners after completing their legal sentences are clear examples of unlawful detention and violations of individuals' right to freedom and personal security.

A - Arbitrary Detention of Former Government Employees

In 2024, a total of 142 former government employees, including both civilian and military personnel, were illegally detained and imprisoned, primarily by the Taliban's intelligence agency. A comparison of the data shows that the number of arbitrary arrests and detentions of former government employees increased by 20.3% compared to 2023, when there were 118 cases.



Rawadari's findings indicate that during 2024, the Taliban carried out the highest number of arbitrary and unlawful arrests of former government employees in the provinces

of Ghor and Takhar. In Ghor province, 50 individuals were arrested and imprisoned, while in Takhar province, 22 individuals were detained during this period.

On 28 September 2024, two individuals, a jihadist commander and a former military officer were arrested by the intelligence department in Khost district, Baghlan province. The Taliban have not provided any explanation for their arrest.

Moreover, in November 2024, the Taliban imprisoned a former military officer on charges of having ties and collaborating with the National Resistance Front. The relatives of the detainee have denied any connection to Taliban's opposition groups and claim that the former officer was engaged in personal business and was, in fact, arrested for his employment with the previous government. In a similar incident in this province, the Directorate of Intelligence of Taliban arrested another former military officer in December 2024. He had been deported from Iran to Afghanistan, and according to his family, the Taliban have not provided them with any information regarding his situation.

Similarly, on the 30 December 2024, the GDI summoned and then arrested a former military officer in Nangarhar province. He was released from prison after a few days following the intervention of local elders. This former commander was mistreated and tortured by the Taliban in detention.

On 19 November 2024, the Taliban arrested a former military officer in Bamiyan province. Additionally, three former military officers were arrested in October 2024 in Jabal Saraj district

of Parwan province, on charges of possessing weapons and collaborating with the National Resistance Front. Furthermore, two of these former officers were arrested and imprisoned in Baghlan province on 28 September 2024. Local residents have stated that every time opposition forces show military activity in an area, former military personnel are immediately arrested and imprisoned.

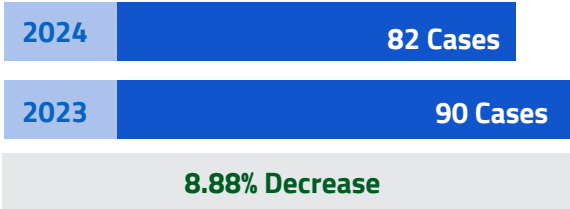
Rawadari’s findings indicate that the Taliban have arrested and tortured several former military officers of the previous government who had been invited back to the country in 2024. For example, in December 2024, a former police commander in Paktia who had returned home at the Taliban’s invitation was arrested in a night raid. He disappeared for 10 days, and after repeated efforts by his family, it eventually became clear that he was being held in a detention facility of the GDI. The Taliban had previously arrested and tortured his brother as well.

Additionally, there have been cases of harassment against lower-ranking employees of the previous government who are currently working in Taliban-controlled state offices. For instance, in Kandahar, Nimruz, Herat, Ghazni, and Ghor provinces, the Taliban have harassed several former government employees under various pretexts, forcing them to leave their jobs. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2024, the Taliban have banned any gatherings of former security and defence personnel, including social night gatherings, in Kandahar province, particularly in Arghandab and Panjwai districts. They have warned that any violations will result in arrest and punishment.

B - Arbitrary Arrest of Civil Society Activists and Human Rights Defenders

Findings from this report indicate that during 2024, the Taliban arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned at least 82 civil activists and human rights defenders, including 18 women. These individuals were accused of providing access to education to women and girls, propaganda against the Taliban and criticizing the repressive policies regarding women and other Taliban policies.

Rawadari had recorded a total of 90 cases of arbitrary and unlawful arrests of civil activists, human rights defenders, and journalists in 2023. A comparison of these figures shows that the rate of arbitrary and unlawful arrests of civil activists, human rights defenders, and journalists in 2024 has decreased by approximately 8.88%



On 28 November 2024, Taliban intelligence imprisoned and tortured a journalist and a civil activist in Badakhshan province for five days for posting critical content on Facebook and expressing sympathy for a victim of torture. He was released after providing a written commitment not to criticize Taliban policies.

October 2024, the Directorate of Intelligence in Kandahar arrested a journalist for posting critical posts on social media. This journalist was detained at the recommendation of the Directorate of Information and Culture.

Additionally, on 3 November 2024, the Taliban arrested two journalists in Badghis province and released them after one month. In August 2024, a media activist in Kandahar was arrested by the PVPV Directorate on charges of “moral corruption” and alleged affiliation with an anti-Taliban group. He told Rawadari that the accusations were false and that he had been arrested for his work in the media.

C - Arbitrary Arrest of Individuals Accused of Collaborating with Anti-Taliban Groups

In this reporting period, the Taliban arrested and imprisoned at least 282 individuals on the charges of collaborating or having ties with military and political opposition groups. This figure has doubled, increased by 158 cases compared to 2023.



In most cases, the Taliban have arrested individuals on charges of collaborating with military and political opposition groups without any valid documents or justifications.

In August 2024, the GDI arrested a man in Kabul on accusations of having ties with the National Resistance Front. His relatives stated that he was a driver and that the allegations were false. In another incident,

in August 2024, the Taliban arrested a resident of Herat province on charges of what they termed “collaboration with the enemy”. This individual was a shepherd,

and his family claimed that he had no connections with any groups.

Similarly, on 2 November 2024, the GDI in Herat province arrested and imprisoned two clerics on charges of opposing the regime, though they were later released following interventions by local elders.

On 28 July 2024, the Taliban arrested a man in Mazar-i-Sharif, of Balkh province, on accusations of collaborating with opposition forces. Likewise, on 16 November 2024, Taliban intelligence arrested a former local police commander in Laghman on charges of having ties with the Freedom Front and participating in military attacks against the Taliban. Additionally, in December 2024, a resident of Herat province was arrested by the GDI for alleged collaboration with the National Resistance Front and later transferred to the province’s central prison. His relatives stated that the Taliban have not provided any evidence or justification for his alleged connections and that his arrest was motivated by personal and ethnic bias. Similarly,

in December 2024, the GDI arrested a former military officer in Panjshir province on charges of collaborating with the National Resistance Front. This individual had fled to Iran after the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and was arrested by the Taliban after being deported back to Afghanistan. His family claimed that he had no links to the National Resistance Front and that the Taliban have refused to provide any information regarding his status since his arrest.

D- Other Cases of Arbitrary and Unlawful Arrests

During 2024, a total of 379 individuals, including 9 women, have been arbitrarily and unlawfully arrested and imprisoned. These individuals were accused of carrying weapons, adhering to Salafist beliefs, being members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and, most notably, violating the regulations of the MPVPV. These violations included failing to attend prayers, trimming beards, not wearing the Taliban prescribed hijab, and not having a male guardian (mahram). The majority of these arrests were carried out by the MPVPV and GDI. Rawadari's findings indicate a 30.2% increase in arbitrary and unlawful arrests in this reporting period and the increase can be mainly attributed to the Taliban's intensified attempt to enforce the PVPV law.

Rawadari has also documented cases where citizens have been arrested and imprisoned on baseless charges due to the corruption within Taliban-controlled institutions.

For instance, the GDI in Kandahar imprisoned a man solely to extort money from him. The accusation against him was that he had undertaken a construction project during the previous government, which had been financially supported by foreign forces. After two months in prison, he was released upon paying USD 20,000 to the Taliban.

In a similar case in Bamiyan province, the Taliban arrested a former military officer and demanded AFN 400,000 (equivalent of 5669 USD in March 2025) for his release. He was ultimately freed after paying AFN 200,000 (2835 USD).

The Impact of the "Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" Law

Rawadari's findings indicate that following the enforcement of the PVPV law in August 2024, the number of arbitrary and unlawful arrests has significantly increased. The Taliban implement this law through aggressive methods, including arresting and imprisoning individuals. For example,

in the southern region of the country, officials from the MPVPV monitor shops, and if a store remains open during prayer times, they arrest or harass the owner.

Similarly, in certain provinces and districts, barbers and public bathhouse workers who cut men's beards or hair in a manner deemed inappropriate by the MPVPV, face imprisonment. A resident of Kandahar told Rawadari that he was detained for 24 hours by the MPVPV for trimming his beard.

In Tarinkot, Uruzgan province, the Taliban use three shipping containers as temporary detention place for individuals whose clothing and appearance do not conform to the PVPV law.

Three men from Kandahar stated that they were repeatedly humiliated, insulted and arrested by officials from the MPVPV due to their clothing style and beard length. They were warned that they must either grow their beards to the required length and wear turbans or leave the province. Eventually, these individuals were forced to leave their home province.

Furthermore, referencing the PVPV law, which bans listening to music, singing, and the use of musical instruments, the Taliban search people's vehicles and cell phones at checkpoints and if they find music on a phone, they destroy the device and, in some cases, arrest the individual.



In November 2024, the MPVPV in Kandahar detained 14 employees of the provincial Education Department for trimming their beards and warned them that if they repeated this action, they would be dismissed from their jobs.

On 30 December 2024, the MPVPV imprisoned two journalists from a state-run media outlet in Ghazni province inside a shipping container for 24 hours for trimming their beards and not covering their heads. Furthermore, referencing the PVPV law, which bans listening to music, singing, and the use of musical instruments, the Taliban search people's vehicles and cell phones at checkpoints and if they find music on a phone, they destroy the device and, in some cases, arrest the individual. Meanwhile, in Logar, Ghazni, and Maidan Wardak province, the MPVPV has ordered all community representatives to report any behaviours that contradict the Taliban leader's decrees and to provide a list of individuals whose clothing and appearance do not comply with the law or face punishment.

Violation of Human Dignity

Human dignity is the basis of equal rights for all humans. This right emphasizes the dignity of individuals, which should not be disregarded under any circumstances¹⁴. Therefore, respect for human dignity requires the observance of certain rights, including immunity from any form of torture, degradation, humiliation, insult, and other forms of cruel behaviour. However, Rawadari's findings indicate that the Taliban extensively violated individuals' right to human dignity during 2024. This section includes statistics and examples on two forms

of violations of right to dignity: A) torture and mistreatment of prisoners and b) cruel and inhumane punishments

A - Torture and mistreatment of prisoners

Immunity from torture is among the absolute and inalienable rights of individuals that cannot be violated under any circumstances or with any justification. International conventions such as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibit the use of torture and abuse of individuals¹⁵.

However, evidence indicate that the Taliban use torture as a tool to extract confessions and proof against individuals. These confessions are then used as evidence to justify the suppression and punishment of opponents and critics. Furthermore, the lack of familiarity of judicial and legal officials of the Taliban with legal methods of evidence collection is another cause for committing torture and mistreatment. The Taliban deny allegations of torture and try to hide evidence of mistreatment, torture, and violation of prisoners' rights.

In the absence of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), human rights organizations and independent defence lawyers, there are no measures in place to protect prisoners from mistreatment and torture. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a detention monitoring mandate, but evidence on the ground suggests that there are restrictions on UNAMA's access to certain places of detention.

Women's prisons and places of detention that are run by the GID and MPVP are particularly hard to access and monitor. Additionally, prisoners, especially torture victims, are threatened and intimidated to prevent them from sharing their testimonies with media or human rights organizations. The Taliban threaten them with re-detention, re-punishment, and even murder. Therefore, many torture victims are afraid to speak about their experiences and the situation of prisons.

Common methods of mistreatment and torture

Based on the findings of this report, most instances of torture and mistreatment are alleged to occur in the detention centres of the GDI and MPVPV. The situation of public/central prisons is better compared to other detention facilities and consequently torture and mistreatment are less frequent there.

Methods of torture commonly used in Taliban prisons include tying stones to men's genitals, pulling out teeth, ripping flesh, burning prisoners' bodies with hot metal rods and hot water, starvation, exposure to extreme heat or cold, confinement in wet and dark rooms, intimidation through gunfire, simulated drowning, forcing water into prisoners' mouths after tightly wrapping them in blankets, electric shocks, forcing prisoners to stand for long periods, exposing them to loud noise pollution, sleep deprivation, beating with fists, kicks, wooden sticks, water pipes, chains, and rifle butts, striking the soles of prisoners' feet with sticks, suffocating them by placing plastic bags over their heads, hanging them from the ceiling, stripping them naked, choking them, and threatening to kill them or their family members. Prisoners are also left under

the scorching sun without food as a form of torture.

A released prisoner from Ghazni province said:

"I was imprisoned in the intelligence detention centre for two months. They tortured me every night, trying to force me to confess to a murder I did not commit. They even pulled out my teeth with pliers. But I was innocent, and after two months, I was released. My health is poor now, and I can barely walk."

Additionally, in another case, the Taliban severely tortured a prisoner in Bamiyan province to the extent that his teeth were broken, and once he had to be taken to a hospital due to his deteriorating health condition.

A man from Helmand province shared his experience with the Rawadari:

"I was on my way from home to my shop when a vehicle from intelligence department stopped in front of me. They asked for my name and then forced me into their vehicle. The first thing they did was to take my phone, and one of them asked me to unlock it. They checked my WhatsApp contacts and photo album. When they saw some old pictures of mine from previous years, one of them slapped me hard across the face and said, 'You infidel's son, are you still high on those past days?' Then they took me to a detention centre of the intelligence department. At 9 PM, two men came and accused me of contacting the Resistance Front via WhatsApp. I told them I had no connection with any group, but they

electrocuted me and beat me with sticks so severely that I couldn't sleep all night. They tortured me in various ways. When they found no evidence against me, they released me but warned that if I spoke about this to anyone, I would be imprisoned again."

A former soldier who was arrested and tortured in Ghor recounted his experience: "For two full days and nights, I was locked inside a shipping container without food or water, in freezing cold weather, with my hands tied. Then they took me to a dark room and hung me up with my hands bound. They beat me so badly that I lost consciousness. When I woke up, I realized they had hooked me up to a drip. I was unable to stand or move for several days."

A victim from Kabul stated: "They would immerse me in a boiler filled with cold water until I could no longer breathe and was on the verge of death. They beat me so hard with cables that I would lose consciousness. Then, they kicked and punched me with all their strength, insulted my ethnicity and family, pulled out my hair, and deprived me from sleep at night... When I showed the judge my body covered in bruises, he couldn't bear to look and turned his face away."

Another victim from Parwan province recounted: "I spent two nights in a district police station, where I was brutally beaten and tortured. Then, they transferred me to a public prison, where I was locked in a dark room for a week. They tortured me using electric cables and water pipes and told me that killing me would be permissible. After a month of physical and psychological torture, I was released."

An interviewee from Maidan Wardak province told Rawadari that one of their family members suffered a brain haemorrhage due to severe torture by the Taliban and is currently undergoing medical treatment. The cases highlighted above are just a few examples of the widespread incidents of torture in Taliban-controlled prisons that occurred in 2024 and are documented by Rawadari.

Killing of Prisoners

Rawadari's findings indicate that in 2024, at least 20 prisoners were killed in Taliban-controlled prisons following torture, and at least 13 others were transferred to hospitals due to extreme injuries from torture. In 2023, Rawadari had documented a total of 16 cases of torture resulting in death, thus there has been a clear increase.

Rawadari's findings indicate that in 2024, most of the torture-related deaths occurred in the GDI detention centres.



On 25 August 2024, the GDI arrested and imprisoned a man from Ghor province on charges of collaborating with the IS. Two weeks after his detention, he lost his life to severe torture in the intelligence detention centre. Reports indicate that the Taliban brutally tortured him and even gouged out his eyes.

The victim's family stated that he had recently returned from Iran and had no connection with any group. However, the Taliban insisted that he had direct links to IS.

On 7 August 2024, the Taliban arrested and tortured a former soldier in Khaikot district, Paktika province. He was accused of hiding weapons in a well at his home. However, when the Taliban failed to find any weapons, they threw him into the well and killed him.

In another incident in August, a resident of Helmand province who had been arrested on charges of dealing arms died in the province's public prison due to severe torture.

Similarly, the Helmand PVPV Department arrested a sick amulet writer (traditional/religious healer) and, after subjecting him to extreme torture and beatings, killed him.

On 1 November 2024, the Taliban arrested a man from the centre of Ghor province on charges of collaborating with Salafists. A week later, his body was handed over to his family. The man was 50 years old and lost his life due to severe torture in a Taliban prison. On 7 December 2024, two residents of Murghab district in Ghor province, who had been arrested for allegedly collaborating with the IS, died in a Taliban intelligence prison as a result of extreme torture.

Harassment of Prisoners after Release

Several interviewees told Rawadari that even after their release from prison; they remain under Taliban surveillance and are continually harassed.

For example, a man from Ghazni province who had been arrested in early 2024 in Kabul on charges of document forgery, was released after serving four months in prison and paying a substantial financial fine. However, the Taliban continued to harass him. Intelligence officers repeatedly visited his home, warned him that he must either pay more money or act as an informant for the Taliban. If he refused both options, they threatened to arrest him again. Eventually, he secretly fled Afghanistan.

In another case, a man from Herat province, who had been arrested and imprisoned by the Taliban on charges of theft, was released two months later. However, two prison guards later visited his home, demanding money as a payment for their role in his release. When he refused, arguing that he had been released because the court had ruled him innocent, the two men beat and harassed him before forcibly taking money from him.

Lack of Independent, Regular Detention Monitoring

Currently, no independent monitoring body is allowed unannounced access to oversee detention centres, holding facilities, and prisons under Taliban control, especially female prison centres and prisons and detention centres run by the GDI and MPVPV. Moreover, the Taliban have not put specific mechanisms in place to address the human rights conditions and issues faced by prisoners across the country.

In some provinces, a joint committee including representatives from MPVPV, the Ministry of Justice, the General Directorate for Monitoring



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and Implementing Decrees and Orders and the Office of Prison Administration (OAP) visit male detention facilities, their primary focus is on preaching religious teachings and guiding prisoners. In Kandahar, Helmand and Zabul provinces, the General Directorate for Monitoring and Implementing Decrees and Orders has been assigned the task of overseeing detention facilities. Yet, information obtained by Rawadari indicates that prison officials do not allow this Directorate to conduct inspections and have even expelled its employees from Kandahar's public prison multiple times.

Meanwhile, on 10 October 2024, UNAMA welcomed the OAP commitment to granting UNAMA human rights team the necessary access to prisons nationwide, including women's prisons¹⁶. However, findings in this report indicate that, in 2024, UNAMA had not been granted access to police, intelligence, and PVPV detention centres in any province. Additionally, it cannot conduct unannounced inspections of public prisons without prior coordination and approval from prison officials.

Rawadari's findings indicate that throughout 2024, UNAMA staff were able to inspect public male and female prisons in Badghis, Badakhshan, Daikundi, Khost, Paktia, and

Paktika provinces after coordination and approval from local authorities and they spoke with prisoners. However, in other provinces such as Bamiyan, Balkh, Ghazni, Sar-e-Pol, Parwan, Faryab, Farah, and Nimruz, they have not yet been granted permission to conduct inspections. In Kandahar, Helmand, and Ghor, UNAMA staff is allowed to interview some male and female prisoners only in the prison director's office. In Maidan Wardak and Logar provinces, they are only permitted to meet with the prison directors. In Daikundi province, UNAMA's human rights staff once met with the province's intelligence chief in the governor's office to gather information about the conditions of the intelligence detention centre.

Problems in Women's Prisons

Rawadari's findings indicate that the majority of women's prisons have no female staff present. Only a small number of women, mainly in public prisons, work as guards or for inspecting visitors during the day, and they return to their homes at night.

Among these facilities, the detention centres of the PVPV, which mostly house female prisoners, do not have any female employees

responsible for guarding or providing necessary services to the detainees. Furthermore, in some provinces, the Taliban do not allow the families of female prisoners to visit them, imposing even harsher and stricter restrictions on women's detention centres compared to men's prisons.

Additionally, in several provinces, the Taliban have transferred juvenile rehabilitation centres to public prisons, causing young girls to be detained alongside adult female prisoners. This practice violates human rights standards related to places of deprivation of liberty and can have harmful psychological and educational consequences for children. It also exposes the young girls to the risk of sexual abuse.

Information obtained from the public prison in Ghor province reveals that in 2024, at least two female prisoners, aged between 19 and 30, were forced into marriages with Taliban members before release. Eyewitnesses reported that the two women did not consent to the marriages, but the prison's religious cleric performed the marriage ceremony despite their objections. Furthermore, a released female prisoner from this province stated that some women were imprisoned simply for refusing to comply with the Taliban's sexual demands.

Meanwhile, in Shuhada district of Badakhshan province, the Taliban arrested and imprisoned three young women on charges of having "intimate relationships with young men". The Taliban pressured these girls to marry their soldiers.

B - Implementation of Cruel and Inhumane Punishments

During this reporting period, the Taliban flogged at least 524 people, primarily on charges of eloping [*running away from home*], extramarital relationships, theft, insult, and fraud. This marks a 44.3% decrease compared to 942 cases recorded last year. Additionally, in 2024, Taliban courts carried out the execution of two individuals convicted of murder, as well as the stoning of two women accused of extramarital relations. A stoning sentence was also issued against another woman on the charges of adultery.

Reports indicate that the Taliban systematically use flogging as a supplementary punishment for nearly all types of crimes, with the majority of these floggings carried out away from the public view and media coverage. In cases where courts publicly enforce flogging, particularly for "moral crimes", officials of the PVPV Departments and mosque imams promote the event days in advance.

Employees of MPVPV use loudspeakers to encourage people to attend public floggings. In some instances, a significant portion of the audience consists of young boys, including students from madrassas.

Before administering flogging punishments, the Taliban publicly disclose and announce the full identities of those accused of "moral crimes" and theft. This violates legal protections, damages human dignity, and harms the reputation and personal integrity of the accused.

On 2 July 2024, the Taliban's primary court in Andar district of Ghazni province, flogged a man 39 times in the presence of hundreds of spectators. Officials of the PVPV had previously distributed leaflets inviting people to attend the event.

Similarly, on 25 July 2024, a Taliban court in Obeh district of Herat province, flogged a man and a woman 39 times in public on charges of having extramarital relations. They were also sentenced to six years in prison.

On 11 November 2024, the primary court of Ghazni province flogged eight men 39 times on charges of "illicit phone communication with women". They were subjected to flogging after they had already served six months in prison. The flogging was carried out in the presence of their families but away from media and public view.

Meanwhile, on 12 July 2024, the Taliban in Badakhshan province arrested eight teenage boys for one day and then publicly shaved their heads as punishment. These individuals

had been accused of harassing women. Additionally, there are instances where the Taliban have sentenced prisoners to exile and forced deportation. For example, a man from Ghazni province reported that a Taliban court sentenced his two sons to two and a half years imprisonment and exile on charges of being members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The court ruling stated that after serving their prison sentence, they would be expelled from Afghanistan and prohibited from returning as long as the Taliban remain in power.

Suppression of Peaceful Gatherings

The Taliban violently suppress any protests or criticisms of their policies, using force and brutal tactics. Throughout 2024, they violently dispersed at least 22 out of 27 demonstrations, arresting at least 42 protesters and killing two others. Of the 27 demonstrations held during this period, five were in support of the Taliban, while the rest were protests against their policies or decisions, including the denial of women's and girls' rights to education.

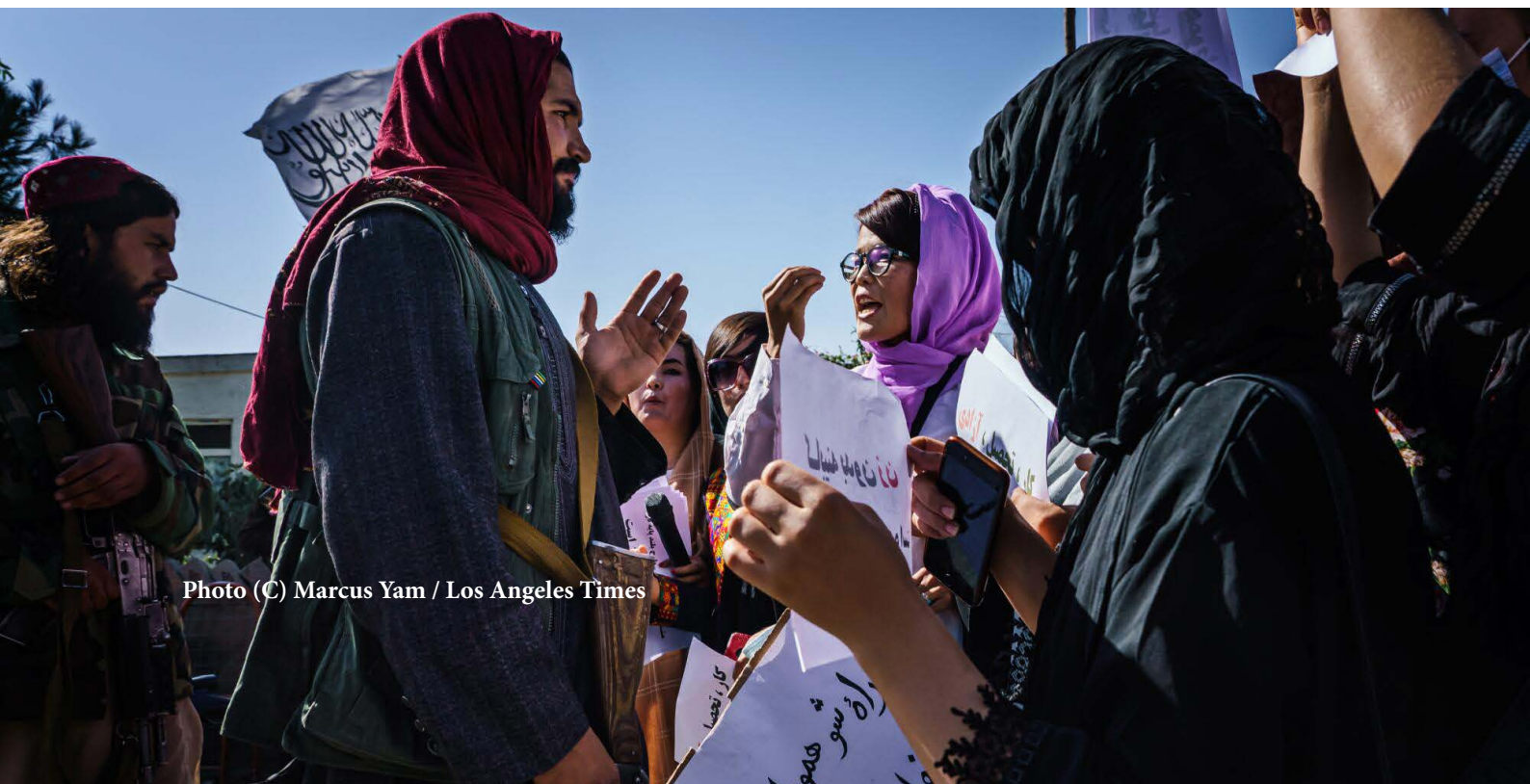


Photo (C) Marcus Yam / Los Angeles Times



PART TWO

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF WOMEN

Throughout 2024, the Taliban continued to enforce their discriminatory policies against women and girls in the country, particularly through the implementation of the PVPV law which imposed further restrictions and challenges on women's access to their rights and freedoms. This law has effectively overshadowed all aspects of women's and girls' lives in the country, leading to intensified discrimination and persecution of women and girls.

This section of the report specifically discusses the state of the right to education, the right to work, the right to freedom of movement, the right to access healthcare, and the right of women to access justice in 2024.

Increased Restrictions on the Right to Education:

The right to education is among the most fundamental human rights, recognized by international human rights instruments, which emphasize the necessity of equal and universal access to educational opportunities for all individuals. Since August 2021, the Taliban have gradually, systematically, and deliberately deprived women and girls in Afghanistan of their right to education through various decrees, orders, and declarations¹⁷.

The findings of this report indicate that the de facto authorities, throughout 2024 and particularly after the issuance of the PVPV law, intensified previous restrictions, thereby blocking all avenues of secondary education for girls and women. On 2 December 2024, the Taliban, in continuation of their deliberate deprivation of women's right to education, issued another discriminatory order to higher and semi-higher medical education institutions to cease the education of women and girls in these institutes and centres. This action is a clear indication of the Taliban's emphasis on the continued targeted suppression of the human rights and freedoms of women and girls in the country¹⁸.

The deliberate and systematic deprivation of women's right to education has had irreparable and devastating consequences on their lives. For example, a female student from

the Kandahar region said:

"I was in my final year when they shut down the medical institutes. A few days later, my father asked me, now that you are not allowed to study, what will you do? I replied that I would continue studying at home and hoped that one day I would be able to resume my education. My father said, "you are wasting your time and that I must decide about your life and future". I refused, but a few days later, he forcibly married me to the son of one of his friends. After that, all the dreams I had of continuing my education were shattered"

Another woman, whose daughter-in-law and daughter were both students at a medical institute, expressed her devastation over the Taliban's latest restrictions:

"..May God destroy them! My daughter-in-law's and daughter's dreams have been turned to dust. They cry every day, they are heartbroken, they eat nothing, and they drink nothing. I do not know what to do and I have no answers for them. We have surrendered ourselves to God. We have no way to escape, and we cannot live here either. These oppressors have turned our country into hell."

A female student from Ghazni shared her sorrow: "

We girls are the unlucky ones. I was in my fourth semester studying Computer Science when the universities were closed. Since I was passionate about learning, my father enrolled me in a medical institute. I studied up to the third

semester, and then they shut down the institutes too. I had so many dreams, I just wish they had let us complete that last semester. My brother is a doctor, and I wanted to become one too so we could work together. Now, every night, I cry remembering the days when we were allowed to study. This country has become a prison for us.”

At the same time, the Taliban have been identifying and shutting down educational centres that secretly provided learning opportunities to girls who were deprived of access to schools and universities. Throughout 2024, at least 31 educational centres, including underground and online schools, have been closed in different parts of the country. Additionally, at least 40 individuals, including administrators and students of these centres, have been arrested and imprisoned. For instance, in September 2024, the PVPV Department in Badghis province shut down an educational centre that taught English language to girls. Similarly, in July 2024, the GDI arrested the head of an educational centre in Ghor province for teaching girls above grade six and imprisoned him for a month. On 7 August 2024, a woman who was secretly teaching English and sewing classes to girls in Ghor province was identified and arrested by the GDI. The Taliban released her after 24 hours but closed her educational centre.

In October 2024, the Taliban shut down a major educational centre in Kandahar province, which had been providing education to orphaned and abandoned children for over ten years. Local officials stated that the building and premises of this centre were reassigned to a religious madrassa and instructed those students

who were not willing to receive religious education to leave immediately. This action triggered protests from teachers and dozens of students, but the Taliban violently suppressed the demonstration and arrested two administrators and teachers from the centre.

Similarly, in October 2024, the Taliban shut down an educational centre in Ghazni province that taught English, computer skills, and sewing to women. In November 2024, the Taliban arrested the head of an educational centre in Herat province for teaching girls above grade six; he was released a few days later after providing guarantees to the authorities.

On 10 November 2024, the Education Department, at the instruction of the PVPV Department, shut down two educational centres in Ghaziabad district, Kunar province, which had been providing modern and religious education to girls above grade six.

Furthermore, on 28 November 2024, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), following the Taliban’s orders, shut down all community-based education classes in remote areas of Bamiyan province, where hundreds of girls who had been denied formal education were studying. Similarly, an NGO in Parwan province, which had previously provided educational services to out of school girls up to grade six, has now been forced to restrict its programmes to girls below grade four due to Taliban pressure.

In Kandahar and Badghis provinces, the Taliban have even banned women and girls from participating in vocational training

programmes and public awareness initiatives on healthcare, mental well-being, and family-related issues.

Continued Deprivation of the Right to Work

Equal access to the right to work and fair employment conditions is a fundamental human right enshrined in numerous international human rights instruments. As such, any form of discrimination or exception based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or language in accessing this right is legally prohibited and constitutes a violation of human rights¹⁹.

However, since returning to power, the Taliban have imposed and enforced restrictions and discriminatory conditions on women's right to work. Currently, women are only allowed to work in the education and healthcare sectors and in a few limited security roles, provided they adhere to the strict regulations of the MPVPV. These restrictions continued and intensified in 2024. On 24 December 2024, the de facto Ministry of Economy sent a letter to local and international non-governmental organizations, once again instructing them to refrain from employing women or allowing them to come in to workplaces. The letter warned these organisations that failure to comply would result in the revocation of their licenses and the suspension of their activities.

Rawadari's findings indicate that with each passing day, especially following the enactment of the new PVPV law, working conditions for women in the education and healthcare sectors have become increasingly difficult and inhumane.

According to this law, women employed in hospitals and healthcare centres must be accompanied by a mahram, otherwise, they are deemed ineligible to work. This requirement, now enforced in most provinces, has further restricted women's access to employment and caused serious problems for families. Male guardians are not paid salaries and the requirement to accompany women means they need to be free and can't have other employment. This creates further financial hardship. Additionally, in families where there is a single male 'guardian' and multiple women are eligible to work, the women are unable to do so due to the mahram restrictions.

Additionally, women working in education and health sectors are not allowed to participate in decision-making.

For instance, interviewees from Badghis province reported that female employees' signatures in healthcare and educational institutions are not recognised, they are not permitted to attend work meetings, and they are not allowed to have bank accounts.

Furthermore, women without a male guardian even if they are the sole breadwinners of their families—are not permitted to leave their homes for work. For example, a 40-year-old woman from Kandahar, who is the sole provider for her children, stated in an interview with Rawadari that she used to sell women's cosmetics door-to-door to support her family. However, officials from PVPV Department banned her from continuing her work because she did not have a male guardian accompanying her.

Similarly, on 12 and 15 August 2024, GDI employees in Daikundi identified and arrested two young women who ran tailoring shops. The enforcement of PVPV law is part of the Taliban's systematic and deliberate efforts to completely remove women from public life and violate their human rights and freedoms. Currently, these restrictions are being widely implemented, with officials from the PVPV constantly monitoring women's workplaces in hospitals and educational centres to ensure compliance. These severe restrictions openly violate women's dignity and human rights in Afghanistan, which the Taliban justify under religious pretexts, enforcing them through intimidation and threats.

Limited Access to Healthcare Services

Various international treaties and agreements recognise and guarantee effective access to healthcare services as a fundamental human right for all individuals. Deliberate denial of this right based on gender or other factors is legally prohibited and constitutes a violation of human rights. Therefore, signatory states are obligated to take and implement necessary measures to facilitate citizens' access to healthcare services²⁰.


However, findings from this report indicate that in 2024, women's access to healthcare services across the country, especially in rural and remote areas, have worsened due to the discriminatory and restrictive conditions imposed by the Taliban. The number of female healthcare workers has decreased due to limitations imposed on female health workers and additionally the Taliban have imposed severe restrictions on the female patients' access to healthcare. According to the PVPV

law, women are not allowed to visit hospitals or other medical centres without a mahram. Additionally, in some provinces, women must wear gloves, masks, and the specific hijab mandated by the PVPV Department in order to be permitted entry into these facilities. Officials from this Department regularly monitor all healthcare centres to ensure compliance with these regulations.

For example, on 3 December 2024, officials from the PVPV Department visited a private medical centre in Ghazni and expelled women who did not have a male guardian or were not wearing the "appropriate hijab". They also warned the centre's staff not to provide medical treatment or healthcare services to women without a male guardian or those who fail to wear the required hijab.

Furthermore, the Taliban have banned gender mixing in hospitals and healthcare centres, enforcing complete segregation between male and female sections. As a result, women must seek medical treatment in female only sections of these facilities. In cases where they require treatment from male doctors, they must be accompanied by a male guardian and wear the mandatory hijab prescribed by the PVPV Department. Women patients are not allowed to speak directly with male doctors, all communication must be facilitated through the male guardian accompanying them.

Additionally, all women healthcare workers working in government healthcare facilities are also required to adhere to the restrictions around Hijab and must be accompanied by a male guardian [mahram]. Any violation

A woman wearing a dark blue burqa is holding a newborn baby. The baby is wrapped in a light blue blanket with a polka-dot pattern and is crying. The woman is looking down at the baby with a concerned expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a hospital or clinic setting.

It is worth noting that the enforcement of the regulations by the MPVPV, including the requirement for women to have *mahram* to access healthcare services, varies from one province to another. For example, in some provinces, women can visit the women's sections of healthcare facilities without a *mahram*, provided they adhere to the type of Hijab mandated by the Taliban. In other parts of the country, women without a *mahram* can visit these facilities accompanied by a child or an elderly woman. Similarly, the requirement for a *mahram* for women healthcare workers is not enforced in some private facilities, including in the city of Kabul.

of these rules carries consequences such as dismissal from work and other forms of punishment.

In addition to the restrictions described above, Rawadari's findings indicate that in at least some provinces, in July 2024, the Taliban reduced the salaries of healthcare workers, including nurses, from 18,000 Afghanis (225 USD) per month to 6,000 Afghanis (85 USD). This decision has led to the departure of experienced and professional staff, both men and women, from these facilities. Furthermore, after the revocation of the operating license of the Organization for Health Promotion and Management (OHPM) in the southern region of the country, the activities of healthcare centres previously focused on maternal and child health have either been halted or face significant challenges.

There are also reports of local Taliban commanders misusing the resources and medicines available in healthcare facilities in the Kandahar region.

For example, one interviewee stated that medicines and nutritional supplies intended for malnourished children are being misappropriated by the Taliban. Local Taliban commanders take these medicines for their own families and, in some cases, even consume them themselves, "as they believe that using these medicines (for curing malnutrition) enhances their sexual performance".

Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, the Taliban have collected condoms and contraceptives from pharmacies and banned their use. Interviewees reported that the Taliban justified this action by stating that

"Muslim men and women should have many children to increase the Ummah and followers of the Prophet Muhammad." Additionally, in Herat province, the PVPV Department has ordered both public and private hospitals and healthcare facilities to halt kidney transplant and hair transplant procedures, deeming them as haram (forbidden).

Violation of the right to free movement

The right to free movement is one of the most important aspects of human rights, guaranteeing individuals the freedom to travel and choose their place of residence inside and outside the country without any unjustifiable restrictions or discrimination²¹. State parties are obligated to ensure equal rights for women in terms of free movement, in addition to refraining from discriminatory actions²². However, since August 2021, women's right to free movement has been significantly restricted due to discriminatory policies and actions by the de facto authorities.

Currently, women do not have the right to freely access recreational places, sports facilities, religious sites (i.e. shrines), shops, and other public places. They cannot dine in restaurants without a *mahram*, use public transportation, or travel within or outside the country. These restrictions have recently intensified due to the enforcement of the PVPV law.

Consequently, women are unable to leave home without the required Taliban Hijab and a mahram, even for buying clothes and groceries. Women are not allowed to speak or recite poetry in the presence of unrelated men.

Additionally, in some provinces, women can no longer call into live media programs, including religious broadcasts, and media outlets are not allowed to broadcast women's voices in commercial advertisements and other programs, as the Taliban considers women's voices "private" [*awrah*].

Additionally, shops and stores are forbidden from selling clothes and groceries to women without a male companion, and failure to comply with this directive from the MPVPV could result in detention or punishment of shopkeepers. In this regard, a shopkeeper in Kandahar province reported being detained and imprisoned for a day by the officials of PVPV Department for selling groceries to a woman without a male companion. Therefore, currently, women in Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, and several other provinces must always be accompanied by a male relative and fully covered if they travel to the city to buy clothes or groceries. They are not allowed to directly converse with shopkeepers; instead, all communication and transactions must be conducted through the accompanying men.

A woman from Ghor province said: "My husband was away, and I went to the market to buy groceries while fully veiled. However, I faced violent behaviour, humiliation, and insults from the employees of MPVPV. They told me that I had left the house due to moral corruption and deserved punishment. Despite my tears and pleas, explaining that my husband was not home and I needed to buy groceries, they forcibly sent me back home without allowing me to make any purchases."

On 1 December 2024, the employees of MPVPV arrested a woman inside a shop in Herat province and transferred her to prison. They claimed that the reason for her arrest was "illicit relations." She was released after one and a half months following efforts by local elders. She stated, "I was wrongfully arrested by the Taliban, and now I am facing family problems because my husband says, 'You were in a Taliban prison for some time, and you are no longer my wife.'"

Another woman from this province also recounted: "In December 2024, when I was going to a shrine with my children, I was stopped by two Taliban members. I pleaded with them to allow me to enter the shrine, but they said, 'You are an abandoned, shameless woman; you have not come here to pray, but for prostitution and illicit relationships.' When I responded by asking whether they had seen me with anyone, they struck my shoulder with the butt of their gun and whipped me, and then expelled me from the shrine. I gave them my husband's phone number, and they called him, asking, 'What relation do you have with this woman?' My husband replied that I was his wife. Then they cursed him, saying, 'May God's curse be upon you for leaving your wife alone to visit a shrine.' When my husband questioned whether visiting a shrine was a crime, they beat him and took him to the PVPV department, where he was detained for 24 hours."

In another similar incident, on 2 December 2024, Taliban's officials from the PVPV Department prevented women from entering a shrine in Jaghatu district of Ghazni province, claiming that "the presence of women in shrines is an apostasy and it promotes immorality."

Additionally, another woman from Daikundi province reported that she went to the city to buy groceries but was arrested by officials of MPVPV due to the absence of a male guardian and was taken to their office. She was later released upon her husband's interference.

The PVPV Department has also ordered drivers to refrain from transporting women without a mahram or without wearing the prescribed Hijab, warning that those who disobey will be punished. In the second half of 2024, at least 20 rickshaw drivers in Ghazni province were arrested and temporarily imprisoned for transporting women without a mahram. In a report, UNAMA also confirmed that the employees of MPVPV have instructed healthcare centres, shops, markets, and restaurants to deny services to unaccompanied women²³.

Lack of Access to Justice

International human rights instruments uphold the right of all individuals, both women and men, to access independent and impartial courts²⁴. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) obliges member states to adopt legal and administrative measures to ensure women's equal access to justice, legal protection, courts, and judicial institutions for addressing grievances and defending their rights²⁵.

However, under the de facto judicial and legal system, there are no mechanisms in place to protect women who are victims of violence and human rights abuse. Given the strict conditions imposed, affected women, particularly those in districts and remote

Furthermore, on 7 October 2024, the PVPV Department in Lal wa Sarjangan district of Ghor province announced that following their announcement, widows and women from households without adult men (bi-sarparast) would not be allowed to move freely or work outside their homes. If any such women were seen in workplaces or markets, they would be arrested. This directive was later extended to other districts of the same province.



areas, are unable to seek justice or file complaints. The PVPV law prohibits women from leaving their homes without a mahram. Additionally, the discriminatory approach of Taliban judicial institutions prevents women who have suffered violence and human rights abuses from receiving legal protection. As a result, the majority of atrocities and violence committed against women in Afghanistan go unaddressed, forcing victims to endure their suffering in silence.

A - Mistreatment of Female Victims of Violence in Judicial Institutions

A Taliban judge has stated that “violence and mistreatment of women are the rights of husbands, and women should not complain about it.” Another judge believes that “protecting women from violence and addressing their complaints in courts is a legacy of the republican era and a factor in the breakdown of families.” Considering this mentality about women’s right to justice, the women who approach Taliban courts to demand divorce or file domestic violence complaints often face discrimination, mistreatment, humiliation, and verbal abuse.

For instance, a female interviewee from Herat province reported that when she visited the court to seek divorce from her husband, the judge insulted and humiliated her. She stated, “...the judge told me to go back and live with my husband. He said, ‘I am not here to waste my time on a Hazara Shia woman like you’”.

Similarly, another woman from Bamiyan province recounted, “due to my husband’s violence and mistreatment, I went to a Taliban court. They would not allow me to speak

or pay attention to my complaint. When I protested, they expelled me from the court. The judge called me a ‘whore and impure’ and said, ‘Women like you are corrupting Islamic society. Now a woman dares to challenge Sharia?’”

A defence lawyer from Kandahar province reported that a woman from the province had filed a complaint and demanded divorce due to her husband’s drug addiction and continuous domestic violence. However, the court showed no interest in her case, forcing her to withdraw her complaint.

Additionally, the Taliban courts in several provinces, including Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Zabul, have deliberately complicated the legal process for women seeking divorce or inheritance claims to discourage them from filing such cases. For example, in these cases, women are required to present witnesses, which is nearly impossible under current conditions. Even if women manage to introduce and bring witnesses to court despite the obstacles, judges often use their appearance and attire as an excuse to reject their testimonies, arguing that the witnesses’ outfit is “against tradition and Sharia,” thereby disqualifying them from providing testimony.

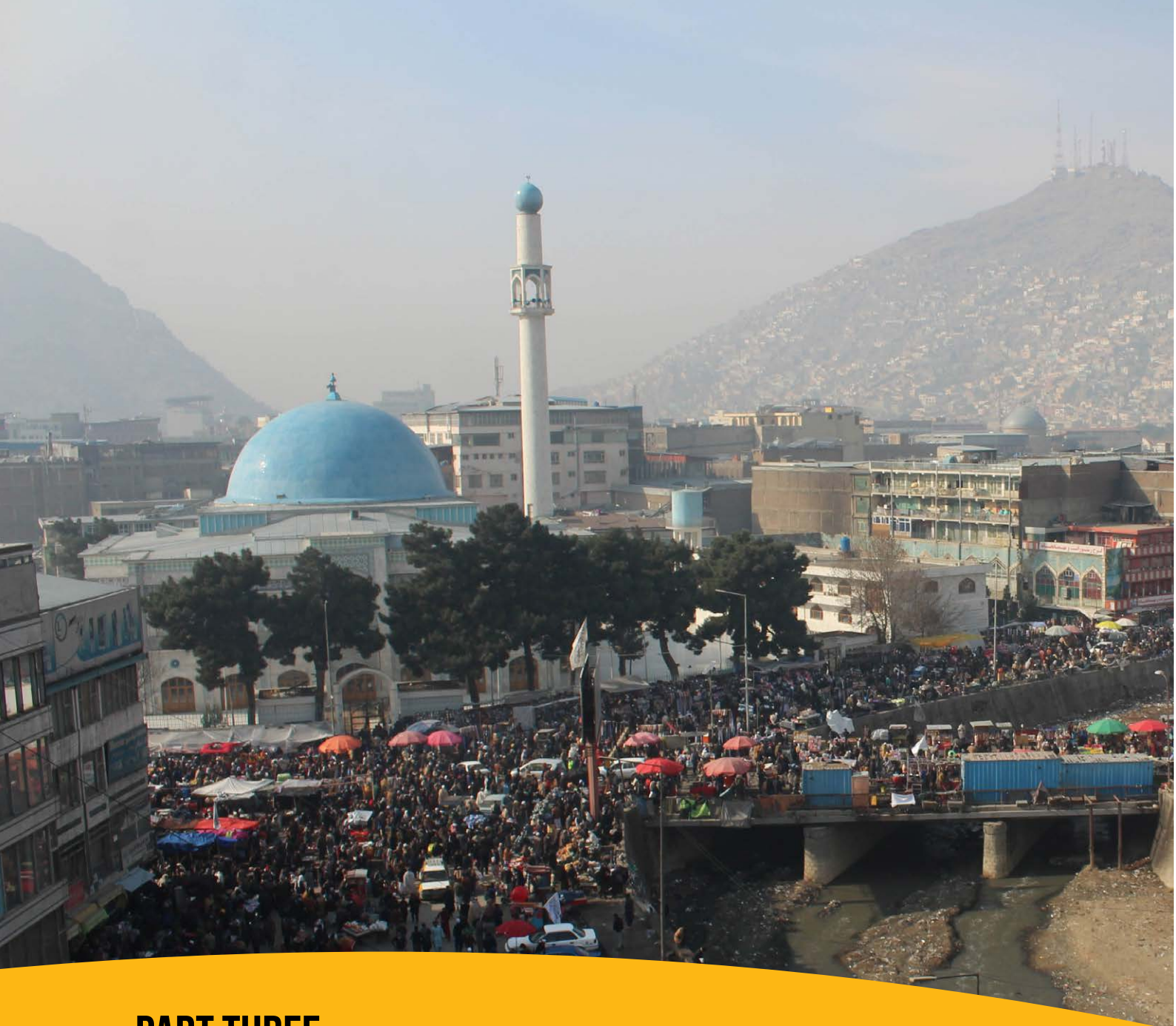
B - Lack of a Uniform Procedure for Addressing Women’s Inheritance Rights

The only cases that the de facto judicial institutions address are women’s claims for inheritance rights. However, obstacles such as the requirement for women to have a mahram have effectively restricted their access to judicial institutions to claim this right. Furthermore, the Taliban lack a uniform approach to handling such cases. For instance, in some provinces, Taliban courts handle these

matters, while in others; they are dealt with by the MPVPV, tribal councils [jirgas], or other non-judicial entities.

In the provinces of Ghazni, Khost, Paktia, and Paktika, the MPVPV oversees both domestic violence cases and women's inheritance claims. In contrast, in the provinces of Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand, and Bamiyan, the courts are responsible for handling women's inheritance disputes. A female interviewee from Bamiyan province reported that the Taliban courts allocate one day a week for such cases. Women, provided they are accompanied by a mahram and have their faces fully covered, are permitted to attend court. However, they are not allowed to speak directly to the all-male judicial panel. Instead, they must whisper their statements to the men accompanying them, who then relays the information to the judges. Considering that

most inheritance claims involve the brothers and other male family members of women, the requirement to have a mahram hinders a woman's ability to challenge male family members' disregard for her inheritance rights. Additionally, in several provinces, cases of domestic violence and inheritance disputes, even when officially registered with Taliban institutions, are referred to mosque clerics, jirgas, and other non-judicial bodies for resolution. Recently, the MPVPV announced a dedicated hotline for women to file complaints regarding non-payment of financial support [nafaqah], domestic violence, and inheritance disputes. Women are encouraged to call this number to voice their concerns and complaints. However, we are yet to fully document the impact of this latest announcement on women's access to justice.



PART THREE

THE SITUATION OF VULNERABLE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Findings of this report indicate that ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan are subjected to targeted attacks and face widespread discrimination and restrictions in accessing government services, humanitarian aid, and national resources.

The Taliban have hired and dismissed government employees based on ethnic, religious, linguistic, and ideological criteria. In 2024, they also intensified efforts to suppress differing religious beliefs, imposing strict regulations on religious ceremonies, practices, and rituals.

Targeted Attacks on Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Although the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021 led to a reduction in armed conflicts and, consequently, civilian casualties across the country, targeted violence against ethnic and religious minorities has persisted. For example, on 12 September 2024, armed men killed 14 Hazara men and wounded six others at the border between Daikundi and Ghor provinces due to their ethnic and religious identity. The IS later claimed responsibility for the attack²⁶.

On 12 July 2024, the Taliban shot and killed a Shia man in the Jebrael town of Herat province for carrying a mourning flag for Ashura. On 28 September 2024, a young Hazara man was killed by unknown individuals on the Ghor-Herat highway. Similarly, on 3 November 2024, an attack on a Shia religious ceremony in Sar-e-Pol province resulted in at least two deaths and 20 injuries. The Taliban later announced that they had arrested six IS members suspected of involvement in the attack²⁷. Furthermore, on 21 November 2024, armed individuals killed 11 Sufi worshippers during prayers in the Nahrin district of Baghlan province. The IS-K claimed responsibility for this attack²⁸.

Discrimination against Ethnic and Religious Groups in the Provision of Public Services

International human rights documents emphasize the protection of individuals from discrimination based on race, gender, language, and religion, particularly ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities in all material and spiritual fields²⁹. However, findings from this report indicate that the Taliban have deliberately and discriminatorily deprived vulnerable ethnic and religious groups of equal access to government services, development projects, humanitarian aid, and national resources.

For instance, in Badakhshan, the Taliban have not implemented any development projects in areas where Ismaili communities reside, effectively excluding them from public services. Interviewees reported that most development projects over the past four years have been implemented in Warduj district, the hometown of two Taliban officials. Similarly, in Farah and Nimruz provinces, the Taliban have allocated fewer resources and development projects to areas inhabited by the Baloch and Shia communities, displaying clear discrimination. In Daikundi province, the Taliban have ordered all organizations to implement their projects only in Gizab district, which was previously a Taliban stronghold and a centre for their military operations.

Likewise, in Bamiyan province, no significant development projects have been implemented over the past four years. Recently, the Taliban announced that revenue from the province's lead and zinc mines would be used to build dams, roads, and hospitals in other parts of Afghanistan, rather than benefiting the local community. Interviewees from Bamiyan stated that humanitarian aid is primarily distributed in Kohmard, Saighan, and Shibar districts, while other, primarily Hazara-populated districts are largely ignored.

In Parwan province, the Taliban have concentrated most development projects and humanitarian aid in Shinwari and Siah Gird districts, areas that were under their influence during the war against the former Afghan Republic. Similarly, in Ghor, the Taliban have blocked development projects and deliberately excluded communities from humanitarian aid in Lal wa Sarjangal district, where Hazaras and Shias live, the Rezaha area in the provincial capital, and Dawlatyar district province that is predominately Tajik-dominated.

The residents of Ghazni province have complained about the unfair distribution of humanitarian aid. One interviewee stated: "In October 2024, the Taliban sent food packages from the provincial centre for distribution in Waghez district. We went to the district centre on behalf of Bulbul village, a Hazara-inhabited area, to collect our share of aid. However, the Taliban officials told us, 'You took all the aid during the 20 years of the Republic government, now wait a few years so that others can benefit'".

In other parts of the country, the Taliban have also used government resources

and humanitarian aid to support their own members. A humanitarian organization in Kandahar province stated that when they planned to distribute emergency aid to the families and individuals deported from the neighbouring countries, and the local Taliban authorities provided them with a list of 150 Taliban members to receive the assistance.

Discrimination in Employment

Ensuring the right to work for all individuals and providing fair working conditions, job security, and preventing the hiring or dismissal of government employees based on ethnic, linguistic, or religious characteristics are fundamental principles outlined in international human rights documents³⁰. However, individuals from various ethnic and religious groups who do not align with the ideology and beliefs of the Taliban, especially members of marginalized ethnic and religious communities, cannot find employment in government offices under Taliban control, particularly in decision-making positions. Over the past four years, the de-facto authorities have collectively dismissed employees belonging to these minorities from government offices and appointed individuals to various departments of government without observing legal requirements.

Taliban authorities prioritize hiring individuals who have a history of membership in their group and align with their ideology and beliefs. For this reason, applicants must be approved by the GDI prior to employment. Evidence shows that the Intelligence Department in Kandahar does not approve individuals who have worked in the previous government, and

in some cases, they have prevented the employment of these individuals even in non-governmental organizations.

In Takhar, government employees are hired based on Hanafi sect affiliation and membership in the Taliban. In Herat, Taliban have dismissed government employees belonging to ethnic minorities who were employed in government offices during the Republic t. In six districts of Badakhshan province, where the majority are followers of the Ismaili sect, no one from this community is employed in the government, and in four other districts where a significant population of this religious minority resides, there is no representative of them in any local office.

In Nimruz province, the Taliban have purged government offices of government employees belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and forced them to resign. Currently, there are no individuals from ethnic and religious minorities in decision-making positions in local Taliban government offices in this province. Previously, officials in some government offices were of the Shia background, but none remain in these positions.

In Daikundi, Bamiyan, and Ghazni provinces, the Taliban have collectively dismissed Hazara employees from local government offices and appointed individuals from their own ranks instead. In Ghazni province, there are currently no Hazara individuals in positions of leadership and authority in government offices. Consequently, individuals from this ethnic group in Daikundi province also cannot be employed in leadership positions in government offices.

Additionally, information indicates that in Faryab province, the Taliban have not allowed graduates of Uzbek language and literature to participate in national civil service exams to compete for government positions.

Restrictions on Religious Freedoms

According to international human rights documents and treaties, religious freedom encompasses the right to belief and the freedom to practice religious teachings and rituals³¹. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) recognizes the freedom to express one's religion or beliefs, whether individually or collectively, publicly or privately, and the right to perform religious worship, rituals, practices, and teachings³². Additionally, the covenant states that individuals belonging to racial, ethnic, and religious minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, practice their religion, and use their language freely and without interference or discrimination³³.

However, the Taliban have systematically suppressed diverse religious beliefs and significantly restricted religious freedoms. They have banned the teaching of Jafari (Shia) jurisprudence in universities and schools, replacing it with Hanafi jurisprudence for students belonging to this religious group. In the provinces of Bamiyan, Daikundi, Ghazni, and Ghor, the Taliban have removed all books related to Jafari jurisprudence from libraries, universities, and schools³⁴.

Furthermore, in 2024, the Taliban banned the import of Shia religious books and prayer

books into Afghanistan in a verbal order. On 5 September 2024, during the opening of a library in Jaghatu District, Ghazni Province, the Taliban confiscated at least 20 books related to Jafari jurisprudence from the library.

At the same time, the "Committee for the Review and Collection of Banned Books", composed of representatives from the GDI, the Information and Culture Department, the Ulama Council, Ghazni University, and the Office for Implementing Decrees and Orders, seized at least 110 books on Jafari jurisprudence, political subjects, the history of religions, philosophy, and terrorism from the library of a private university. These books were transferred to the Department of Information and Culture, and the committee warned university officials against keeping or distributing such books to students. Additionally, this committee closed a public library in Jaghori District, Ghazni Province, and distributed three volumes of Hanafi jurisprudence books to Shia mosques. The MPVPV ordered imams to teach the content of these books to public and conduct an exam after two and a half months.

On 4 November 2024, the PVPV Department in Ghazni held a meeting with media officials and journalists, stating that broadcasting educational or awareness programs about the Shia sect through media outlets is "against the principles of the Islamic Emirate." They also instructed local media to refrain from airing speeches and sermons by Shia and Salafi clerics.

In 2024, the Taliban imposed restrictions on the observance of Shia religious rituals, including the commemoration of Muharram.

They prohibited mourners from leaving mosques during the ceremonies. The Deputy Governor of Ghazni described the commemoration of this Shia religious occasion as a "heresy" and stated that it should not be held in public spaces. Additionally, the Taliban closed several Shia shrines in the province, claiming that such practices are "innovation and contrary to Islamic Sharia."

In Paktia Province, the Taliban labelled Jafari (Shia) jurisprudence as "illegitimate and un-Islamic." As a result, they do not consider the intermarriage between Sunni and Shia permissible. Similarly, in Nimruz Province, the Taliban declared that a Sunni woman cannot marry a Shia man, while allowing Sunni men to marry Shia women.

Moreover, the Taliban have also imposed severe restrictions on the religious practices of Ismaili and Salafi minorities, frequently harassing and persecuting them under various pretexts.

Forcing Ismaili Shias to Convert and Learn Hanafi Jurisprudence

Evidence and obtained information indicate that in 2024, the Taliban carried out organized efforts in Badakhshan province to force Ismaili Shia Muslims to change their faith and learn Hanafi jurisprudence. Reports show that at least 100 Ismailis in the province were coerced into converting during the year.

The MPVPV has established madrasas in several districts, including Zebak, Ishkashim, Shughnan, Wakhan, Jurm, Yamgan, and parts of Nasi Darwaz, specifically for Ismaili followers. In these schools, Ismailis are forcibly taught Hanafi jurisprudence. According to

available information, each madrasa has between 100 and 200 male and female students from Ismaili Shia families.

Additionally, the Taliban have banned the construction of Jamaat Khanas (Ismaili mosques) and other religious sites for Ismaili followers in Shughnan and Ishkashim districts.





PART FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The human rights situation in Afghanistan in 2024 has worsened in multiple areas, as outlined in this report. The Taliban have used violent tactics to seek revenge against former government employees and individuals accused of collaborating with opposition groups. These individuals have been subjected to widespread arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances. Additionally, journalists, civil activists, and human rights defenders have faced increasing pressure and repression.

Moreover, the living conditions for women and girls have deteriorated due to the Taliban's discriminatory policies and actions. The enforcement of the PVPV law has further intensified injustice and discrimination, restricting access to education, healthcare, employment, freedom of movement, and legal protection for women and girls.

Ethnic and religious minorities have also been deliberately and unfairly deprived of access to government services, national resources, and opportunities for public participation. Furthermore, in an effort to impose their ideology on the Afghan people, the Taliban have severely restricted religious freedoms and cultural diversity. One of the most extreme examples of human rights violations in Afghanistan in 2024 is the forced conversion of Ismaili Shia Muslims to Hanafi jurisprudence. These conditions have placed ethnic and religious groups under serious threats, stripping them of their basic rights and freedoms.

Given the severity of these issues, addressing the current crisis, preventing further violations, reversing the bans and restrictions on the rights of women and girls requires unified and cohesive response by the international community and an "all tools" approach to accountability.

Recommendations

Rawadari proposes the following recommendations to the international community and the de facto authorities to address the human rights and women's rights crisis in Afghanistan.

To the de facto authorities:

- Rawadari calls on the de-facto authorities to refrain from further violating the fundamental rights of Afghan citizens, reminding them of their legal obligations in line with Afghanistan's international commitments
- Women constitute half of Afghanistan's society, depriving them of their fundamental rights and freedoms inflicts permanent and irreparable damage on the country's political, economic, social, and cultural wellbeing and progress. Rawadari urges the de-facto authorities to end their discriminatory policies against women by reversing all bans and restrictions and respecting and upholding the full range of women's human rights.
- The de-facto authorities must take practical measures in eliminating existing threats against Afghan children, particularly by protecting lives of children by clearing areas contaminated with explosive remnants of war, and to cooperate with international organizations in this regard.
- Rawadari calls on de-facto authorities to end all extrajudicial killings of former government employees, human rights defenders and Taliban opponents and critics, and to announce and implement measures to ensure their safety and security. Additionally, we call on the DFA to provide reports and information on their actions to address targeted killings by unknown individuals.
- Rawadari calls on the de-facto authorities to end all arbitrary and illegal arrests and put clear measures in place to end all forms of mistreatment and torture in places of detention. The DFA should further facilitate monitoring of all places of detention by UNAMA and human rights organizations.
- Rawadari calls on the de-facto authorities to end their discriminatory policies against vulnerable ethnic and religious groups and respect the rights of all people of Afghanistan.
- Rawadari calls on the DFA to end all forms of degrading and cruel punishments including floggings. These punishments cause injuries and physical harm, violates the dignity of victims and damages their social standing and reputation.

To the International Community:

- Rawadari calls on the international community to sustain and expand humanitarian aid to Afghanistan to prevent further hardship and suffering of Afghans. We call on the UN and aid delivery NGOs and the donors to improve measures to monitor of the delivery of assistance to prevent Taliban interference and aid diversion.
- Rawadari calls for unified and cohesive messaging and principled engagement of all international and regional actors with the DFA to reverse all bans on the rights of women and girls, initiate an inclusive political process and improve the human rights situation.
- Rawadari calls on the UN state members to initiate, support and join accountability mechanisms to stand in solidarity with women of Afghanistan and prevent the normalization of Taliban's oppressive policies. This can include supporting the establishment of an independent accountability mechanism through the UN Human Rights Council, support to the International Criminal Court investigation on Afghanistan and joining the initiative to hold Afghanistan accountable for violations of the Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These accountability initiatives counter the long-standing culture of impunity and signal to the people of Afghanistan that their rights and lives hold value in the international system.
- Rawadari calls on the international community to apply pressure on the DFA to ensure the security and safety of former government employees and their families who are subjected to retaliatory attacks and harassment.
- Rawadari calls on the United Nations entities including UNAMA to have human rights and women's rights in the heart of its engagement with the DFA, ensuring the inclusion of these issues in all interactions with the DFA. Any opportunity must be utilized to demand the full and unconditional removal of all restrictions on women's rights by the DFA.
- Rawadari calls on the UNAMA to thoroughly investigate the situation in prisons, especially the conditions in women's detention facilities, cases of torture, and the killing of prisoners, and to share their findings with the Afghan people, media, and human rights organizations.
- Rawadari calls on continued, flexible and discrete funding to Afghan civil society organizations, community groups and other civic actors struggling to keep light on inside Afghanistan.
- Rawadari reiterates the calls of the Afghan human rights community for continued pathways and resources for safe resettlement of activists, journalists, former security force members and other at-risk groups in Afghanistan and in the region. The at-risk individuals and groups currently living in legal limbo in Iran and Pakistan face threats of deportation and risks of harm upon forced return to Afghanistan.
- Rawadari calls on human rights organizations and national and international media to dedicate resources to reporting and documenting the current situation in Afghanistan and to continue to monitor, collect, and preserve evidence related to human rights violations in the country. We additionally call on international organizations and media to amplify the voices of women and girls of Afghanistan and to stand in solidarity with them.

Endnotes

- 1 Kabul, Parwan, Kapisa, Baghlan, Panjshir, Balkh, Sar-e-Pol, Faryab, Jawzjan, Takhar, Kunduz, Samangan, Badakhshan, Herat, Badghis, Farah, Nimruz, Ghor, Ghazni, Daikundi, Bamiyan, Maidan Wardak, Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand and Uruzgan
- 2 Rawadari, March 2024. Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023 <https://rawadari.org/020320241765.htm/>
- 3 Statistics on violations of the right to life pertain to the provinces of Herat, Nimruz, Badghis, Daikundi, Ghor, Farah, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Kabul, Parwan, Maidan Wardak, Kapisa, Sar-e-Pul, Samangan, Ghazni, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Helmand, Bamiyan, Logar, Balkh and Jawzjan.
- 4 Rawadari, March 2024. Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023 <https://rawadari.org/020320241765.htm/>
- 5 Rawadari, March 2024. Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023 <https://rawadari.org/020320241765.htm/>
- 6 UNICEF (5 January 2025) <https://x.com/unicef afg/status/1875794061669671056?s=12>
- 7 Rawadari, March 2024. Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023 <https://rawadari.org/020320241765.htm/>
- 8 United Nations General Assembly (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 very same Article 7, (1), (ii)
- 10 UNGA, International Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 9 December 1997
- 11 Ghor, Heart, Bamyan, Kandahar, Farah, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Badghis and Ghazni
- 12 Rawadari, March 2024. Afghanistan Human Rights Situation Report 2023 <https://rawadari.org/020320241765.htm/>
- 13 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.
- 14 UNGA, Universal Declaration of HR, Preamble and Article 1, 10 December 1948
- 15 UNGA, International Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment adopted in 1987, Article 1. UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in 1966, Article 7.
- 16 UNAMA, 10 October 2024: <https://unama.unmissions.org/unama-welcomes-de-facto-prison-authority-commitment-improve-conditions-detainees-and-ensuring>
- 17 Rawadari, Excluded and Deprived: The Educational Crisis for Women and Girls in Afghanistan, Page 7 (November 2024) <https://rawadari.org/211120241929.htm/>
- 18 Rawadari, Press release (Dari) on the ban on continuing Education for Women and Girls in Medical Science Institutions in Afghanistan (3 December 2024): <https://Rawadari.org/031220241936.htm/>
- 19 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
- 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
- 21 UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12 (16 December 1966)
- 22 UNGA, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women, Article 15 (18

December 1979)

23 UNAMA Afghanistan, Update on the Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan, October-December 2024 Update Page 3 (October – December 2024)

https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/human_rights_situation_in_afghanistan_october_-_december_2024_-_english_0.pdf

24 UNGA, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14 (16 December 1966)

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26 Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan's Hazara Community Need protection (13 September 2024)

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