



**Press Statement: Afghanistan Human Rights Defenders Committee Regarding Forced, Mass, and Concerning Deportations of Afghan Refugees from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan**

2 July 2025

The Human Rights Defenders Committee is deeply concerned by the increasing trends of forced, mass, and sometimes violent deportations of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan. In recent weeks and months, thousands of Afghan citizens, including women, children, the elderly, the ill, and those who have lived for years in Iran and Pakistan, have been forcibly returned to Afghanistan without access to due legal process or adequate international protection.

While recognizing states' concerns about immigration management, we emphasize that any treatment of refugees and migrants must comply with international human rights standards, respect human dignity, and adhere to obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol.

**Dangerous Situation for Deportees**

Many of those currently deported from Iran and Pakistan are not economic migrants but vulnerable individuals facing serious violations of their human rights once returned to Afghanistan. Credible information indicates that a significant number of those expelled include:

- Political opponents of the Taliban,
- Civil society activists, journalists, and human rights defenders,

- Former government employees, police forces, national army, and intelligence staff,
- Individuals targeted due to their family background or religious affiliation.

Upon forced return, the Taliban have reportedly arrested many at border crossings. We have received credible reports of enforced disappearances, torture, and even killings in border regions. This clearly amounts to “non-refoulement” violations, i.e., forced returns to areas where individuals face threats to their lives or freedom, which is prohibited under international law.

### **Emphasizing Historical and Cultural Ties**

The peoples of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan share deep cultural, linguistic, religious, and civilizational bonds. Millions of Afghan refugees have considered Iran and Pakistan their second home during years of war and crisis. They have contributed significantly to reconstruction, services, industry, and societal growth in host countries. Inhumane, discriminatory, and degrading treatment of Afghan refugees not only violates their rights but also damages these longstanding relationships.

### **Urgent Requests and Recommendations**

#### **1. To the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan:**

- Immediately halt forced mass deportations and ensure international bodies like UNHCR can access border crossings to monitor and document the situation of vulnerable returnees.

#### **2. To UNHCR:**

- Immediately deploy monitoring teams at Iran–Afghanistan and Pakistan–Afghanistan borders.
- Ensure transparent access to refugee status determination.
- Suspend deportation of individuals at risk of torture, disappearance, or death.
- Register and accelerate resettlement cases of vulnerable individuals in safe third countries.

#### **3. To resettlement countries (e.g., Canada, Australia, Western Europe, Germany, France, Scandinavia):**

- Create and expedite humanitarian and legal pathways for at-risk Afghans.
- Implement emergency relocation programs for Afghan migrants in Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey.

- Provide additional financial and legal support to UNHCR and partner organizations.

#### **4. To international and regional human rights bodies:**

- Document and raise global awareness of these egregious human rights violations.
- Urgently investigate enforced disappearances and torture of returnees in Afghanistan.
- Present substantiated reports to relevant bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council and the European Parliament.
- Afghan migrants crossing through Islam Qala and Torkham report violent police behavior and confiscation/looting of personal belongings by host states. This alarming situation demands immediate intervention and investigation by national and international authorities.
- Credible reports describe arbitrary arrests, inhumane detention conditions, and unimaginable torture of Afghan migrants in host countries. This grave situation requires urgent human rights, judicial, and international action to end this injustice.

#### **A Call for Humanitarian Solidarity**

In times like these, the international community must amplify the voices of voiceless refugees. We call upon human rights defenders, journalists, civil society, and the respectful people of Iran and Pakistan to stand in solidarity with Afghan refugees and uphold the values of justice, humanity, and unity.

We believe that humanitarian solidarity, global responsibility, and defense of dignity must not be sacrificed on the altar of political or border agendas. Millions of Afghans who have lived for years in neighboring countries deserve humane, legal, and equitable treatment. Neglecting their fate—this is not only a violation of human rights but a stain on the conscience of the global community and neighboring states.

#### **Afghanistan Human Rights Defenders Committee**