

To: The Honorable Representatives of International Institutions, Human Rights Organizations, and Diplomatic Missions

With our highest respect and sincere concern,

We, a collective of vulnerable Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan, together with Afghan civil society organizations, associations, and protest movements, write this letter to express our deep anxiety and humanitarian alarm over the increasing threat of mass deportation of Afghan refugees by the Pakistani authorities, and the potential handover of these individuals to the Taliban regime.

Following the collapse of the Republic of Afghanistan in 2021 and the return of the Taliban to power, hundreds of thousands of Afghan citizens, particularly women, civil society activists, journalists, ethnic and religious minorities, human rights defenders, members of the LGBTQ+ community, former military personnel, and others, were forced to flee their country and seek refuge in Pakistan. Many of them, though lacking formal residence permits, have been living under the observation and identification of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in camps, safe houses, or border areas.

In recent months, rising tensions between the Government of Pakistan and the Taliban have led to widespread arrests, harassment, and the growing threat of forced deportation. Numerous independent and media reports confirm that dozens of undocumented refugees, including women, single mothers, and children have already been detained or returned to Afghanistan. Such actions are not only contrary to humanitarian conscience but also represent a clear violation of fundamental principles of international law.

According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, no state may expel or return individuals to territories where their life or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. The principle of Non-Refoulement constitutes a peremptory norm (jus cogens) of international law, binding even upon states that are not parties to the Convention.

We therefore call upon the international community in particular the UNHCR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and all host and donor governments to:

1. Immediately engage with the Government of Pakistan to halt any ongoing or planned deportations of Afghan refugees;
2. Ensure effective physical, legal, and humanitarian protection for Afghan refugees, especially women and children;
3. Accelerate the identification, resettlement, and relocation of eligible refugees to safe third countries;
4. Prevent the political instrumentalization of refugees amid bilateral or regional disputes.

The international community bears both a moral and legal responsibility to prevent the repetition of human catastrophes. Silence and inaction in the face of forced repatriations amount to complicity in human rights violations and risk perpetuating the cycle of violence in Afghanistan.

We therefore urge all international institutions, donor countries, and human rights organizations to hear our voice and act swiftly to prevent another humanitarian tragedy.

With respect and in the spirit of shared humanity,

On behalf of Afghan Civil Society Institutions, Associations, and Protest Movements

