

HRD+ Statement on the Dire Situation of Afghan Migrants and Refugees in Iran

Recently, distressing and shocking reports about the situation of Afghan migrants and refugees in Iran has affected the morale of the people of Afghanistan and the global humanitarian community. Documented reports published by the media and refugee support organizations indicate mistreatment of homeless and wandering Afghan migrants in Iran. Statements issued by local Iranian authorities emphasize shelter restrictions and call for the cessation of basic amenities for Afghan migrants. Additionally, people in some provinces of Iran have attacked Afghan migrants, subjecting them to physical abuse and humiliation. Credible reports and research indicate that arrests, torture, and harassment by Iranian police have been imposed on Afghan refugees and migrants, with some disappearing cases. Restrictions on employment, education, and access to health services have made life extremely difficult for Afghan migrants. These reports also state that many refugees and migrants suffer from depression and mental health issues. Afghan migrants detained in Iranian detention centers and prisons lack basic justice and access to information. Employment restrictions have led to high unemployment and uncertainty among Afghan migrants, resulting in widespread poverty among their families. Discrimination against Afghan migrants is widespread in all aspects of life for millions of migrants.

Findings of the Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) shows that a large number of refugees fled to Iran after the fall of the Republic to save their lives. Reports from the United Nations and human rights organizations indicate that many former government soldiers, human rights defenders, government employees, and ethnic-religious minorities have been tortured and harassed by the de facto Taliban administration, with some losing their lives. Therefore, individuals at serious risk have considered seeking asylum as the only option to ensure their safety and that of their families, and have sought refuge in Iran. Based on the 1951 Refugee Convention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other human rights conventions, these individuals are entitled to international protection, and countries are obligated to respect their fundamental rights. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a member of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its additional protocols, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is obligated to uphold the fundamental rights of Afghan refugees according to these international documents. Additionally, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office in Iran is obligated to closely monitor the situation of Afghan refugees and compel the Islamic Republic of Iran to adhere to the Refugee Convention and its other international commitments.

HRD+ closely monitors the situation of migrants and refugees in Iran, calls for urgent international intervention to lift the anti-human restrictions on Afghan migrants in Iran. HRD+ emphasizes that these inhumane treatments of a large group of Afghan migrants, who have left their country due to difficult living conditions, are contrary to international standards, humanitarian values, and good neighborliness. These clumsy actions will have severe consequences for the lives of millions of Afghan migrants living in various cities across Iran. Such violent actions embolden extremist

anti-migrant groups to commit even more heinous acts against Afghan migrants, who are a group deserving of international support and are severely affected. HRD+ findings indicate that some Afghan refugees who sought asylum in Iran after the fall of the Republic were forced to leave and deported from Iran due to mistreatment by some Iranian citizens and excessive restrictions by the Iranian government. Some returnees have been severely tortured by Taliban members and have even lost their lives. The forced return of Afghan refugees is completely contrary to the principle of non-refoulement, which is an accepted international principle. HRD+ calls on the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to adhere to this human rights principle and to prevent the forced expulsion of Afghan refugees who deserve international protection. We are further concerned about the political handling of the Afghan refugee issue, we urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a precise mechanism for assessing the status of Afghan migrants according to accepted international standards. Temporary censuses and the distribution of short-term residence cards have not solved the problems of Afghan migrants and refugees but have added to their concerns.

HRD+ calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to legally address those Iranian citizens who disrespect, torture, and treat Afghan migrants inhumanely, in accordance with domestic laws and human rights standards, and to ensure justice is applied to them.

HRD+ urgently requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to send a specialized delegation to Iran as soon as possible and to take effective measures in this regard. HRD+ expects Mr. Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, to visit Iran at the earliest opportunity and to implement sound programs to resolve this significant issue.

HRD+ calls on the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies entities to monitor human rights documents, and especially the Refugee Convention, to engage in dynamic and constructive human rights diplomacy with the Islamic Republic of Iran through their representatives in New York, Geneva, and Vienna to find ways out of this crisis.

HRD+ requests Mr. Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, to contact Iranian officials to reduce current tensions and improve the situation of Afghan migrants and to coordinate necessary actions.

HRD+ calls on the member states of the 1951 International Refugee Convention to coordinate with the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to adopt legal and political mechanisms using accepted international standards to address this widespread crisis.

HRD+ calls on all human rights organizations in Iran and the region to play their important role in advocating for the situation of Afghan migrants.

HRD+ requests the entire international system, governments, and international organizations to adhere to Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to support Afghan migrants, who are a large vulnerable group in the region, in effective

and constructive ways.

HRD+ calls on the media and influential figures in Iran and Afghanistan to not hesitate in enlightening and promoting human rights values for Afghan refugees and migrants in Iran.

HRD+ is ready to cooperate with all national and international institutions to implement the demands of this statement.

Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: **“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”**