

# Update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan:

APRIL - JUNE 2024



**United Nations**  
Assistance Mission in Afghanistan



UNITED NATIONS  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

## About this update

This update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan covering the period from April to June 2024<sup>1</sup> is based on monitoring undertaken by UNAMA's Human Rights Service in accordance with its mandate from the UN Security Council.<sup>2</sup>

## Rights of women and girls

Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan on 15 August 2021, the *de facto* authorities had ordered the majority of female civil servants to stay home with a few exceptions for women working in the health, education and security sectors. On 2 June 2024, the *de facto* Directorate General of Administrative Affairs issued a letter to some *de facto* provincial departments instructing them to "standardise" the salaries of women civil servants hired by the former Republic administration to 5,000 Afghani (approximately \$70 USD) per month, irrespective of grade. In late June, several *de facto* Departments of Education ordered the freezing of payment of salaries of their female employees following a letter by the *de facto* Ministry of Education to the office of the *de facto* authorities' Supreme Leader seeking clarification on how to implement the "standardisation" of women employees' salaries. On 7 July, the *de facto* Ministry of Finance issued a letter clarifying that the directive applies to women civil servants "who do not attend work daily or do not perform their duties according to their job description" and does not apply to women who are reporting to work and performing

their duties in line with their job descriptions.

Other restrictions on women's rights to work and freedom of movement also continue to be implemented:

- On 2 May, *de facto* General Directorate of Intelligence officials forcibly closed the office of a women-led NGO<sup>3</sup> for allowing some of its female employees to physically report to work. The NGO was allowed to reopen days later after signing a commitment letter that it would not allow women employees to come to the office.
- On 20 May, in Zabol province, *de facto* Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice officials instructed transport companies and *de facto* checkpoint commanders that women are prohibited from travelling without a *mahram*<sup>4</sup> in line with the *de facto* Ministry's decree.<sup>5</sup> They warned that those that violated the order would face harsh consequences.

## Civilian harm

Between April and June, a number of incidents claimed by Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP) resulted in civilian casualties. According to the claims issued by ISKP, the incidents targeted Shi'a Muslims and the *de facto* authorities:

- On 20 April in Kabul city, PD3, Gulay-e Dawakhana area, an improvised explosive device targeted a civilian minibus, wounding at least four adult men.<sup>6</sup> The claim of responsibility by ISKP stated that the bomb detonated as a bus transporting Shi'as passed by a checkpoint, causing casualties to both

[1] All dates specified in this update refer to 2024, unless otherwise specified.

[2] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2626 (2022), extended by Resolution 2678 (2023).

[3] Location withheld for protection reasons.

[4] د زابل اطلاعات او فرهنگ ریاست [ @ICzabul ], X (formerly Twitter), 20 May 2024, 10:43PM. Available at: <https://t.co/ZECRqp73te> [last accessed on 29 July 2024].

[5] On 31 December 2021, the *de facto* Ministry of PVPV tweeted that: "A woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day is not permitted to travel alone for more than three days and nights. This [translates to a]... 45 miles or 78 km [journey]." Source: دامريالمعروف، نهی عن المنکر او تشکيليتونواورینلو وزارت [ @MOPVPE1 ], X (formerly Twitter), 31 December 2021, 4:45PM. Available at: <https://twitter.com/MOPVPE1/status/1476889768357150729?s=20&t=7TuX4pPt600EvsPvgZDDFA> [last accessed on 27 June 2024].

[6] TOLONews [ @TOLONews ], X (formerly Twitter), 20 April 2024, 9:13PM. Available at: <https://x.com/TOLONews/status/1781725325962928228> [last accessed on 29 July 2024].

Shi'a passengers and *de facto* security personnel.

- On 29 April in Herat province, Guzara district, Andeesha town, a gunman fired at worshippers inside the Sahib-u-Zaman mosque, a Shi'a place of worship, killing six people (four men, one woman and a boy) and wounding one woman.<sup>7</sup>
- On 17 May in Bamyan city, in the central market area, gunmen opened fire on two vehicles transporting a group of tourists, killing five adults (two Afghan male nationals and three Spanish nationals, one male and two female) and wounding six other adults (two Afghan men and four foreign nationals from Australia, Norway, Spain and Lithuania).<sup>8</sup>
- On 20 May in Kandahar province, Kandahar city, PD10, an improvised explosive device exploded near the Kabul bus terminal, killing one civilian and wounding at least three others.<sup>9</sup>

## Poppy cultivation clearance operations in Badakhshan

In May and June, the *de facto* security forces conducted a series of operations to clear poppy fields in Badakhshan province. On numerous occasions *de facto* security forces fired into crowds of local residents protesting the destruction of their crops, killing and wounding at least 17 people in total:

- On 3 May in Daraiem district, Qarluq village, armed guards of the *de facto* District Governor fired into a crowd of protestors, killing one man and

wounding one other. The *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported to UNAMA that farmers attacked *de facto* police, who fired in the air in order to protect themselves, killing one person. An investigation is ongoing to identify the perpetrator of the killing.

- On 4 May in Argo district, Nawabad village, *de facto* security forces fired into a crowd of protestors, killing one man.
- On 13 May in Argo district, Barlas village, *de facto* security forces fired into a crowd of protestors, killing two men and wounding 10 others (one boy, nine adult men). The *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported to UNAMA that the farmers had attacked *de facto* police, who fired aerial shots in response, killing one protestor and wounding nine others.
- On 26 June in Khash district, Kozir-e-Noshir area, *de facto* security forces clashed with local residents while carrying out poppy eradication efforts in the area. Two men were shot and wounded when security forces opened fire on the villagers. The *de facto* Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported to UNAMA that the farmers had attacked *de facto* police, who fired aerial shots in response, wounding two of the protestors.

On 4 May, spokesperson for the *de facto* authorities, Zabihullah Mujahid, announced via a statement on X<sup>10</sup> that a committee had been formed to investigate the “poppy eradication process, and problems encountered in Badakhshan”. The statement noted: “Regrettably, there have been

[7] M. Abdul Mateen Qani مفتي عبدالمتين قانع [@abdulmateenqani], X (formerly Twitter), 29 April 2024. Source: <https://twitter.com/abdulmateenqani/status/1785042766948606233> [now deleted]; نثاراحمد الياس [@MnisarElias1], X (formerly Twitter), 30 April 2024, 12:31PM. Available at: <https://x.com/MnisarElias1/status/1785217999676252252> [last accessed on 29 July 2024].

[8] M. Abdul Mateen Qani مفتي عبدالمتين قانع [@muftiqani], X (formerly Twitter), 17 May 2024, 8:58PM. Available at: <https://x.com/muftiqani/status/1791506003504099732> [last accessed on 29 July 2024].

[9] د کندهار امنيه قومندانۍ مطبوعاتي دفتر [D Qumandani\_KDR], X (formerly Twitter), 20 May 2024, 10:44AM. Available at: [https://x.com/Qumandani\\_KDR/status/1792438720144044237](https://x.com/Qumandani_KDR/status/1792438720144044237) [last accessed on 29 July 2024].

[10] Zabihullah Mujahid [@Zabehulah\_M33], X (formerly Twitter), 4 May 2024, 11:51PM. Available at: [https://x.com/Zabehulah\\_M33/status/1786838702213280018](https://x.com/Zabehulah_M33/status/1786838702213280018) [last accessed on 22 July 2024].

incidents where offenders attempted to attack the security forces involved in the fight against poppy cultivation, resulting in tragic events” and said that the committee had been tasked with conducting a comprehensive investigation into the incidents and submitting a detailed report to the *de facto* Prime Minister. No further information on the progress of investigations has been publicly shared.

## Cross-border incidents

A series of cross-border incidents in Paktya and Khost provinces in May resulted in civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

- On 17 May in Paktya province, Chamkani and Dand-e-Patan districts, armed clashes between *de facto* security forces and Pakistani military forces resulted in 21 civilian casualties. Two men were killed and two women, one man and a boy were wounded in Andar village of Chamkani district and two women and four men were killed and nine civilians wounded in Kengai and Kimati villages.
- On 29 May in Khost province, Gurbuz district, Zanshora area, armed clashes between *de facto* security forces and Pakistani military forces resulted in four civilian casualties (one girl killed, three girls wounded).

The Embassy of Pakistan in Afghanistan stated that it had no recorded exchanges of fire with *de facto* security forces on either 17 May or 29 May that resulted in civilian casualties.

In a BBC interview on 2 July, Pakistan’s Defence Minister Khwaja Asif stated: “It’s

correct that we have been carrying out operations in Afghanistan, and we will continue to do so...If attacked, we’ll attack back”.<sup>11</sup>

## Freedom of the media

Following an announcement by the *de facto* Ministry of Justice on 31 March prohibiting political parties,<sup>12</sup> numerous media outlets with alleged political affiliations faced suspension.

- On 16 April, the *de facto* Ministry of Information and Culture and the Media Violations Commission decided to suspend the activities of Barya and Noor TV Channels for allegedly violating national and Islamic values. Both stations were affiliated with political parties.
- On 7 June, the *de facto* Ministry of Justice announced that Tamadon TV would be suspended due to its affiliation with a political party and its premises located on land belonging to the *de facto* authorities.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the station remains in operation at the time of publication.

The *de facto* authorities also continued to limit the activities of “diaspora media” outlets which relocated their operations outside of Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover and continued to produce media content for an Afghan audience.

- On 4 May, in Parwan province, a journalist was arbitrarily detained on allegations of sharing information with a diaspora media outlet. He was released after three days.

[11] BBC Urdu, “Pakistan will continue attacks in Afghanistan – minister”, 2 July 2024. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c7289yvl84po> [last accessed on 22 July 2024].

[12] During a press conference, the *de facto* Minister of Justice stated that the Directorate of political parties was abolished from the *de facto* Ministry of Justice the year prior and political parties are illegal. Source: TOLONews [@TOLONews], X (formerly Twitter), 30 March 2024, 3:15PM. Available at: <https://twitter.com/TOLONews/status/1774034330727096571> [last accessed on 22 June 2024].

[13] RTA Dari [@rtadari1], X (formerly Twitter), 7 June 2024, 9:36AM. Available at: <https://x.com/rtadari1/status/1798944626210140360?s=12> [last accessed on 22 June 2024].

- On 8 May, the Media Violations Commission led by the *de facto* Ministry of Information and Culture accused “diaspora media” Afghanistan International Radio and Television of violating professional conducts and urged journalists to refrain from co-operating with them.

Journalists also continue to face restrictions concerning morality as defined by the *de facto* authorities. On 22 April, in Khost province, three employees of three different radio stations were interrogated and detained by the *de facto* Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice for playing music and receiving phone calls from women during live radio programs. They were released after six days.

## Former government officials and Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF)<sup>14</sup> members

Between 1 April and 30 June, UNAMA Human Rights documented at least 60 instances of arbitrary arrest and detention, at least 10 instances of torture and ill-treatment, verbal threats and at least five killings of former government officials and former ANDSF members (four by unknown perpetrators, one by the *de facto* authorities).

UNAMA Human Rights has received reports of such violations occurring against individuals after they were forcibly returned to Afghanistan, highlighting the continued

risk of torture, ill-treatment and other irreparable harm they face after their return.

## Corporal punishment

The *de facto* authorities continue to implement judicial corporal punishment in public on a regular basis, at times in large groups. For example, on 4 June in Sar-e-Pul city, 63 people were publicly flogged by the *de facto* authorities,<sup>15</sup> (48 men and 15 women) having been convicted of a range of crimes, including armed robbery, adultery, running away from home and pederasty. Each person was lashed between 15 and 39 times.

Between 1 April and 30 June, UNAMA Human Rights documented judicial corporal punishment against at least 179 individuals (147 men, 28 women and four boys).

## Administration of justice

Between April and June, various *de facto* ministries made announcements regarding the administration of justice:

- On 12 April, the head of legislation of the *de facto* Ministry of Justice stated that the *de facto* Ministry is committed to implementing Sharia and that the laws of the previous government have been annulled in the country.<sup>16</sup> On 27 April, in a public video, the *de facto* Minister of Justice, reiterated that Sharia is a complete system, rejecting all claims that there is a legal vacuum in Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup>
- On 12 June, Kabul Times, a state-run publication, published an article that

[14] Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) is an umbrella term used to refer to the security forces of the former government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and includes: Afghan Border Force, Afghan Local Police, Afghan National Army, Afghan Air Force, Afghan National Police, Afghan National Civil Order Force, Afghan Special Forces, Afghan Territorial Army (also referred to as the Afghan National Army – Territorial Force), and the National Directorate of Security.

[15] *De facto* Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan [@SupremeCourt\_af], X (formerly Twitter), 4 June 2024, 5:18PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1797973638513308036](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1797973638513308036) [last accessed on 22 July 2024].

[16] Tolo News, “Islamic Emirate Leader Ratifies Seven New Laws”, 12 April 2024. Available at: <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-188271> [last accessed on 22 July 2024].

[17] *De facto* Ministry of Justice of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan [@MojAfghanistan], X (formerly Twitter), 27 April 2024, 9:02AM. Available at: (1) <https://x.com/MojAfghanistan/status/1784078062528729210>; (2) <https://x.com/MojAfghanistan/status/1784078054047797585>; (3) <https://x.com/MojAfghanistan/status/1784078036565897504> [last accessed on 5 May 2024].

highlighted the importance of the judiciary in ensuring justice for the population, and noted that the appointment of unqualified persons as judges and the fact that some judges are not “resolving cases transparently and per the rule of law” is causing discredit to the court system and violating people’s rights.<sup>18</sup>

regularly visiting provincial prisons to discuss with detainees and liaise with *de facto* prison authorities. Visits were reported to prisons in Nimroz, Kunar, Maidan Wardak, Herat, Kunduz, Daikundi, Takhar and Ghazni.<sup>22</sup>

- On 15 June, the *de facto* Supreme Court announced that on the occasion of Eid-al-Adha 349 prisoners were released from prisons, and 270 others received a reduction in their punishment.<sup>19</sup>
- On 22 June, Ariana News aired an interview where the *de facto* Office of the Prison Administration announced that the prison population had reached nearly 20,000 prisoners, of which 1,500 women, and 60 foreign citizens.<sup>20</sup> On 20 April, *de facto* OPA’s Deputy Director for Military Affairs had reported that the prison population also included around 200 to 250 members of the *de facto* authorities, and around 300 to 600 prisoners sentenced by *de facto* courts to death.<sup>21</sup>
- The *de facto* Supreme Court continued publicly highlighting its efforts to ensure oversight of detainees, with *de facto* Appeal Court delegations

[18] The Kabul Times, “Justice, judicial organs should be quick, transparent in resolving cases”, 12 June 2024. Available at: <https://thekabultimes.com/justice-judicial-organs-should-be-quick-transparent-in-resolving-cases/> [last accessed on 22 July 2024].

[19] *De facto* Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan [@SupremeCourt\_af], X (formerly Twitter), 15 June 2024, 3:21PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1801930618176991487](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1801930618176991487) [last accessed on 16 June 2024].

[20] Ariana News, “IEA holds 60 foreigners in prisons”, 21 June 2024. Available at: <https://www.ariananews.af/iea-holds-60-foreigners-in-prisons/> [last accessed on 22 July 2024].

[21] Shamshad News [@ShamshadNews], YouTube, 19 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpNt6SgdEKs> [last accessed on 25 April 2024]; ShamshadNews [@Shamshadnetwork], X (formerly Twitter), 20 April 2024, 10:10AM. Available at: <https://x.com/Shamshadnetwork/status/1781558663649333712> [last accessed on 25 April 2024].

[22] *De facto* Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan [@SupremeCourt\_af], X (formerly Twitter).

(1) 9 May 2024, 12:44PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1788482742788804844](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1788482742788804844);  
(2) 27 May 2024, 11:53AM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1794992844144533880](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1794992844144533880);  
(3) 27 May 2024, 2:50PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1795037286054101234](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1795037286054101234);  
(4) 28 May 2024, 2:56PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/179540135353227153](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/179540135353227153);  
(5) 2 June 2024, 2:26PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1797205712541503625](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1797205712541503625);  
(6) 3 June 2024, 2:58PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1797576036248686658](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1797576036248686658);  
(7) 5 June 2024, 12:03PM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1798256762308710415](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1798256762308710415);  
(8) 6 June 2024, 10:46AM. Available at: [https://x.com/SupremeCourt\\_af/status/1798599937057497340](https://x.com/SupremeCourt_af/status/1798599937057497340)  
[All Tweets here referenced last accessed on 22 July 2024].