

HRD+ Statement Regarding the Travel Ban

of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan

21 August 2024

Recently, the de facto administration has announced a travel ban on Mr. Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, preventing him from continuing his visits to the country. This irresponsible action has caused deep concern among all human rights defenders and civil society activists in Afghanistan. Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) strongly condemns this decision by the de facto administration and declares:

- Mr. Bennett's mission is based on the principles and accepted norms of international law, particularly international human rights law, and has been approved by the UN Human Rights Council. The primary goal of this mission is to monitor the human rights situation, document human rights violations, and provide detailed reports on human rights in Afghanistan. Therefore, no agenda outside the scope of human rights is included in this mission, making it a valuable process.
- Mr. Bennett's mission in Afghanistan is expertise-driven. This mission consists of a team of human rights specialists who are not committed to any government or political entity but are directly accountable to the human rights structures of the United Nations and report accordingly.
- The outlook of the UN Special Rapporteur's mission on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan is to improve the human rights situation by providing constructive recommendations to both the national and international communities. States and international organizations use the Special Rapporteur's recommendations to coordinate their programs aimed at supporting human rights and defending victims.
- Given the challenging situation in Afghanistan, the Special Rapporteur is considered the most important mission for monitoring the human rights situation in the country. Governments are obligated to provide constructive cooperation with UN Special Rapporteurs. Therefore, the travel ban on the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan is considered contrary to the accepted principles of international law.
- The Special Rapporteur's mission plays an important role in the human rights advocacy efforts of all human rights institutions in Afghanistan. This mission highlights the key demands of the Afghan people for the improvement of human rights and plays a crucial role in providing strategic insights for the Afghan human rights community.

- The reports provided so far by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan have been based on the painful realities of human rights in the country, and there has been no exaggeration or misinformation in them. These reports have served as credible sources for national and international media.
- The UN Special Rapporteur's reports on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan are prepared based on globally accepted methodologies that are rich in structure and content and have been verified by credible sources. Therefore, the principles of legitimacy, accuracy, commitment, and trust have been upheld in these reports.
- The recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur to the national and international community have sparked deep discussions in national and international media and have garnered the full attention of the Afghan communities.

Considering the above points, HRD+ expresses its support for the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and his team and is ready to offer any kind of cooperation.

HRD+ calls on the UN Human Rights Council to allocate more time and resources to expand the Special Rapporteur's mission so that he can continue his work with greater effectiveness.

HRD+ views the presence of Mr. Bennett and his team as strong support for all human rights structures and activists in Afghanistan and wishes them continued success.

Human Rights Defenders Plus

(HRD+)