

The position paper by the Human Rights Defenders (HRD+)

“Three years after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan.”

The people of Afghanistan have endured three years of challenging conditions involving restrictions on human rights, widespread poverty, and a lack of legitimacy and the rule of law. During this period, the de facto Taliban administration imposed a dictatorial, religious extremist rule on society and banned citizens' freedoms. The Taliban disregarded the right to political participation, a foundational citizen right, and failed to establish any mechanism for national legitimacy. This lack of national legitimacy has led to a void in international legitimacy and isolated Afghanistan from the global community.

Over the past three years, our people have experienced widespread human rights abuses, with women bearing the brunt of the social crisis. Children have faced hardships in the harsh economic and social environment, while poverty and unemployment have increased. Citizens have waited in long lines to obtain passports in order to leave Afghanistan. Reports from global sources indicate that Afghanistan is currently facing a humanitarian crisis, with a significant number of citizens suffering from mental health issues and depression. Due to the restrictions on human rights, the international community has been unable to provide the necessary support to the people of Afghanistan.

Over the past three years, civil society actors, human rights activists, and women's rights defenders have faced threats, torture, and imprisonment. The Taliban have not hesitated to use inhumane treatment against their opponents and critics, leaving society in complete turmoil and distress. A large number of intellectuals and experts have left the country.

The HRD+, considering the inhumane actions of the Taliban in the past three years, raises the following points:

First, the de facto Taliban administration is not representative of the people of Afghanistan and has been imposed on our people by force and coercion. We urge all national and international actors to pressure and impose further restrictions on the Taliban administration to make them accountable for their actions.

Second, we urge the international community to consider ensuring the preconditions of human rights, especially the fundamental rights of Afghan women, in any interaction with the de facto Taliban administration. We demand that all governments around the world seeking to engage with Afghanistan adhere to international conventions, especially Security Council Resolution 1325.

Third, we demand that regional governments do not sacrifice human values for their political and strategic interactions. These governments should not invite Taliban leaders, who are on

the UN Security Council blacklist, to their countries and welcome them as representatives of the Afghan government. This goes against the UN Charter, international conventions, and regional regulations.

Fourth, we urge the UN Human Rights Council to strengthen the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and to make comprehensive efforts to create better and stronger mechanisms for holding the Taliban administration accountable. This process should involve constructive dialogue with civil society organizations and human rights activists.

Fifth, we request that supporters of the Afghan people, especially international donors, prioritize support for human rights organizations in Afghanistan and beyond. The global community should not leave our people alone in these difficult circumstances. Global support will enable civil society organizations, human rights activists, and women's rights defenders inside and outside the country to monitor human rights situations, document violations, seek justice for victims, and disseminate continuous reports on the human rights situation.

Sixth, we sincerely urge civil society organizations and human rights activists to strengthen their solidarity, mutual acceptance, and cooperation in defending the human rights of Afghan citizens more than ever in these difficult circumstances. In these challenging times, we need to support each other for a common goal and must support each other with constructive plans and actions.

Seventh, one of the most vulnerable groups in our society is our valuable artists. The Taliban have banned art and artists in our society. This heinous act has severely damaged the cultural environment of our society. We urge all active civil and political organizations at the national and international levels not to hesitate to support our dear artists and art.

Eighth, the people of Afghanistan hope that the global community, especially the United Nations, will support them and protect their interests worldwide through human rights monitoring mechanisms. We ask all human rights monitoring mechanisms at the United Nations level, derived from global conventions, to enhance their monitoring programs regarding human rights issues. This initiative should be carried out in collaboration with civil society organizations both within and outside the country.

Ninth, the human rights situation of women in Afghanistan has become a tragedy. There are evident instances of gender discrimination at the level of apartheid in Afghanistan on a daily basis. Discrimination in laws, policies, structures, and behaviors has subjected Afghan women to dreadful conditions. We call on international courts to acknowledge and address these inhumane violations and mobilize their investigative teams to document and address gender discrimination in Afghanistan.

Tenth, Afghanistan is home to various ethnic and religious groups, yet their rights have been severely violated. The freedom of religious practices for these groups has been curtailed. The local languages of these groups have been restricted, and their historical and cultural heritage has been disregarded. We urge all national and international organizations to stand with the people of Afghanistan based on the principles of equality and universality of human rights and work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination.

Human Rights Defenders Network HRD+