

## **HRD+ Statement in Support of Freedom of Expression of Civil Activists Advocating for the Fundamental Right to Education**

29.03.2026

Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) states that Mr. Qadoos Khatibi and Mr. Fayyaz Ghori, civil activists from Herat, have, solely as responsible citizens, expressed their peaceful views in support of reopening schools for girls and have advocated for their right to education. This action represents a clear manifestation of the connection between “freedom of expression” and the “right to education,” both of which are explicitly emphasized in Articles 19 and 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

By referring to Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights we recall that education serves as a tool for empowering individuals to participate in a free society. Therefore, imposing restrictions on those who advocate for this right constitutes a chain violation of fundamental human rights. No individual should be subjected to pressure or threats for exercising their right to freedom of expression, as stipulated in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

HRD+ calls on the relevant authorities to adhere to their international obligations, to end the harassment, particularly the arrest of activists, and to ensure the immediate reopening of schools and universities for women and girls.

Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+)