

HRD+ Statement on Killing of Civilians in Herat, Afghanistan

15 April 2026

With deep sorrow and grave concern, Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) has received confirmed reports of a deadly incident in Injil District of Herat Province-an incident that once again targeted defenceless civilians and plunged the community into shock and mourning.

According to information from local sources and supplementary reports, the incident occurred in the “Deh Mehri” area of Injil District, near “Razshak and Hashemi Bridge,” adjacent to a shrine. Armed unidentified individuals, in broad daylight, opened fire on civilians who had gathered at the shrine area to spend leisure time with their families and children, subjecting them to indiscriminate gunfire.

Based on updated figures, 11 people have been killed and 11 others injured as a result of this attack. This crime stands as one of the most devastating attacks against civilians in recent years and has sparked widespread grief and outrage among the public.

Following the incident, today thousands of citizens in Herat Province staged large-scale protests, demanding the immediate provision of security, an end to the spread of extremist ideologies, the protection of religious freedoms, and serious reforms in security structures. Protesters also accused responsible authorities of negligence in ensuring security, delays in emergency response, and the absence of effective preventive measures at the time of the incident, calling for independent investigations and accountability for the perpetrators.

HRD+ warns that such incidents may have dangerous and long-term consequences, including the deepening of social and religious divisions, increased public distrust, and the weakening of peaceful coexistence within society.

Based on preliminary information and available eyewitness evidence, there are multiple indications suggesting that this attack was organised and of a terrorist nature, including:

- Reports of insults and abusive language directed at the religious beliefs of the Shia community during the commission of this crime;
- The use of “finishing shots” against some victims with the intent to increase casualties;
- Unusual behaviour by the perpetrators, including the absence of urgency in fleeing and their calm departure from the scene, while eyewitnesses observed their exit for several minutes;
- No signs of emergency conditions in the vehicles used by the perpetrators and no indication of immediate escape;
- Reports of suspicious movements around the site of the incident in the days before and after the attack.

HRD+ emphasizes that the totality of this evidence further highlights the urgent need for prompt, independent, transparent, and impartial investigations. Thus **we demand:**

- Strong condemnation of this violent and inhumane act;
- Immediate, independent, and comprehensive investigations to identify and prosecute the perpetrators and planners of this crime;
- Immediate provision of security for citizens, particularly religious minorities and civilian and religious sites;
- Accountability of responsible authorities for any potential shortcomings in prevention and incident management;
- A call on international human rights bodies for serious monitoring and practical support to victims.

Finally we express our deep condolences to the families of the victims and emphasise the urgent need for justice, accountability, and an end to the cycle of violence.

Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+)