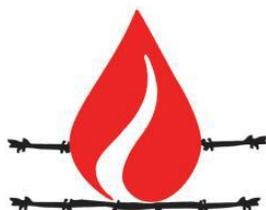


Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

UPR Submission

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Afghanistan



سازمان دفاع از قربانیان خشونت
Organization for Defending Victims
of Violence

www.odvv.org

About ODVV

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC. ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a member of the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centers in the Middle East and North Africa and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). ODVV has cooperated with international organizations in a variety of issues and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. ODVV is focused on promoting human rights, supporting victims of violence, empowering Iranian civil society, and offering human rights consultations to the Iranian institutions and organizations. ODVV is actively involved in running various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Other activities include:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva;
- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Unilateral Coercive Measures (Economic Sanctions), Racism, Racial Discrimination, Islamophobia and Xenophobia;
- Publishing *Defenders Quarterly* (in English), human rights news and developments *Weekly* (in Farsi), updating ODVV websites in English, Farsi and Arabic;
- Internship for Iranian and international students.

4. ODVV is submitting the following report on the human rights situation of Afghanistan, in order to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation.

Migrants and refugees

5. One of the most important problems which is less dealt with is the issue of returnees, the refugees who return to their country, Afghanistan, after many years in exile in other countries (such as Iran and Pakistan). Unfortunately the Afghan government has still not managed to facilitate necessary mechanisms for the sustainable reintegration of these returnees, and as a result some of these people enter Iran or Pakistan illegally after losing hope in reintegration in their country. Since these individuals, mostly move with their families, they are faced with various threats, and create problems for themselves and their families. Majority of these individuals go to Europe after living illegally in another country, and at times they lose their lives on these perilous journeys. Overlooking the situation of returnees and lack of necessary infrastructures to integrate them into Afghanistan society, has resulted in their secondary move, in a flood, to Europe which we saw its peak in 2015 and 2016.

6. Recommendation: with the support of the international community, particularly donor countries, the Afghan government can meet the basic housing and employment needs of the returnees, and facilitate their sustainable reintegration, so as to prevent their mass migration to other countries and endangering their lives, while protecting these people's dignity.

Violence against Women

7. One of the most important human rights violations in Afghanistan is violence against women, particularly girls. In 2017 there were 4340 cases of violence against 2286 women. This is while in the previous year there were approximately 2046 reported cases of violence against women.¹ These figures indicate that not only violence against women in Afghanistan has not dropped, but the abuses have increased by 11.7 percent. There have also been report of 277 women being murdered. This is while only 40 of the murderers have ended up being prosecuted. This shows a weakness in practicing the law, the problems facing the victims, victims' families' reluctance to lodge a complaint against perpetrators of crimes.

¹ http://www.dailyafghanistan.com/national_detail.php?post_id=142919

8. Another area where women's human rights are violated in Afghanistan is the forced marriage of girls and or legally underage marriages, which the Afghan government has still not managed to take any practical action against. According to the head of the Herat Human Rights Commission, 30 percent of children in western Afghanistan get married underage. For example last year a 12 year old girl called Roya in Ghour province married a man who was almost her father's age.² According to existing reports, this girl has been abused and beaten by her husband and his relatives, to an extent that there were more than 150 signs of torture found on her body. Unfortunately similar cases are seen across all corners of the country, which demands immediate action by the government.

9. Recommendation: Education and culture teachings, monitoring the application of existing laws and adopting tough laws to punish perpetrators, are some of the important duties of the Afghan government which can reduce the rising trend of violation of women and girls' rights.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

10. Over successive decades the Shia in Afghanistan have been attacked in various ways and these attacks increased in 2017, to an extent that in the beginning of last year 1700 people lost their lives in extremist terror groups attacks alone, most of the victims being Afghan Shia minorities.

11. Meanwhile, according to Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan, terror attacks against the Hazara minorities in the county in 2016 had a sharp rise compared to the previous years. The targeted armed attacks against the Hazara began in 2014 and in 2016 the attacks reached their highest peak. "The main target of these attacks have been a specific ethnic or religious group, the Shia Hazaras."³ Also Shia religious ceremonies and their mosques have been target of terror attacks for example, the attacks in the Shia mourning ceremonies in Ziarat Sakhi and Shia religious ceremonies in Kabul's Bagher al-Oloum mosque.

12. Recommendation: One of the characteristics of the Afghan society is its ethnic and religious tapestry structure. Multi-ethnicity, multi-lingual and multi-religious sects are the main components

² <https://da.azadiradio.com/a/29193029.html>

³ <http://khabarnama.net/blog/2017/05/30/war-crimes-against-hazaras/>

of the national identity in Afghanistan. Understanding these characteristic and adopting suitable measures in this regard can help the nation building and government building process in Afghanistan and create a collective identity, while a failure to do so, will undermine the political community in the country. Therefore we call upon the Afghan government to while creating conditions for further participation of ethnic and religious minorities in the power structure of the country, to make further efforts to protect the rights of these groups.

Right to Education

13. One of the outcomes of the spread of war and conflict is the restriction of the right to education of Afghan children. As a result of increased insecurity, hundreds of schools have closed and many children that include two-thirds of girls have been deprived of education in Afghanistan.⁴ In spite of improvement in access to education, in some areas, security concerns and social traditions are still major obstacles in the way of girls' access to education. In Nangerha Province alone, more than 20 thousand children have been deprived from going to school due to insecurity. This has resulted in children aged 11 to 14 to join the Taliban.

14. In parts of the country where children can attend school, there are not enough available facilities for them to fully enjoy the right education. Altogether 41 percent of schools in Afghanistan do not have a building.⁵ And the distance between where many of these children live from school is so long that they are not able to attend classes in schools. The lack of standard schools and the long distance alongside cultural issues and insecurity have great impacts on the deprivation of girls from education.

15. Recommendation: Education as a natural and inherent human right, while individually is deemed the best moral experience of Mankind, has a great role and effect in various social, cultural and political aspects of life. Constitution of Afghanistan and the international documents ratified by the country, stress on implementation and respect of the right to education. Therefore, based on international and national commitments, the Afghan government is obliged to guarantee the right

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/17/afghanistan-girls-struggle-education>

⁵ Ibid

and allocate an inclusive budget for education for all its citizens, equally and without discrimination based on gender, religion, race and ethnicity.