

STATEMENT

UPR Pre-Session on Afghanistan

Geneva, 15 February 2023

Delivered by: Abdullah Ahmadi on behalf of

ADDO, OMCT, CSHRN, HRD+ and other 5 Afghan partners

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I am Abdullah Ahmadi, the Executive Director of ADDO and I have the privilege to present this statement today on behalf of 9 human rights organisations (the name you can see on the slide), specifically HRD+, CSHRN and OMCT, who have jointly submitted a UPR for Afghanistan.

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Focus of the Statement

Our statement addresses the situation of **enforced disappearances** across different provinces, **extrajudicial killings, torture, ill-treatment** and the conditions of the prisons and **detention centres** in Afghanistan.

Slide 3: General Recommendations from the previous cycle

Acknowledging the break down of the whole government system of Afghanistan in 2021, described by colleague Sayed Anosh, following some points to mentioned in regard previous recommendations made linked to the focus of this statement:

Out of the total of 461 recommendations, 21 recommendations asked to abolish the death penalty by ratifying the Optional Protocol of the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Countries like Poland, France and the Netherlands called to effectively combat impunity relating to acts of all kinds of violence, especially against women, and prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish acts of discrimination perpetrated.

Germany and Norway requested for promptly investigation of all allegations of torture of detainees, enforced disappearances and summary executions, and prosecute those responsible. Sweden and some other countries pointed out the importance of taking effective measures to strictly enforce the national prohibition of torture and to ensure that no person is subjected to unlawful treatment, and that all allegations of such treatment are duly investigated by the proper criminal authorities and perpetrators are held to account.

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Issue 1: Enforced Disappearances

The topic of **enforced disappearances** is a challenging topic, as it is challenging to get accurate facts and figures, based on the complicated and restricted access to information inside Afghanistan.

In our report we share information about **524 cases**, across different provinces. More than 90% of these cases, are linked to former Afghan Security personnel. A particularly disturbing trend is the detention of women activists and their families in Kabul as retribution for participating in protests. Activists like Tamana Zaryab Paryani, Parwana Ibrahimkhel, Zahra Mohammadi, and Mursal Ayar faced detention or disappearance. Moreover, the Taliban's restrictions on accessing information and threats to victims' families make it challenging to document these cases comprehensively. Many families have been coerced into not sharing information with human rights organizations or any other individualsⁱ. As a result, the actual number of enforced disappearances in Afghanistan could be much higher than the figures presented in these reports.

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Recommendations

- Independent, thorough and effective investigations into all reported cases of enforced disappearances.
- Provide protection to families of victims to prevent coercion and intimidation.
- Establish mechanisms for safe reporting and documentation of enforced

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Issue 2: Extrajudicial Killings

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Recommendations

- Independent, thorough and effective investigations into all reported cases of extrajudicial killings.
- Ensure accountability for perpetrators through fair and transparent legal processes.
- Strengthen oversight mechanisms to prevent recurrence of extrajudicial killings and uphold the rule of law.

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Issue 3: Torture and Ill-Treatment

Former detainees have reported various forms of **torture and ill-treatment**, which include physical beatings using pipes and cables, verbal threats, and abuse. Some detainees were subjected to electric shocks, strangulation, hanging from the ceiling, forced ingestion of water, and stress positionsⁱⁱ. Many of these acts were carried out while detainees were restrained, blindfolded, or hoodedⁱⁱⁱ. The de facto authorities have introduced cruel and undignified punishments, such as stoning, flogging, and burying individuals under walls^{iv}. Some of these punishments were based on the Taliban Supreme Leader's guidance and have been carried out publicly.

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Recommendations

- Adopt a zero-tolerance for torture policy by condemning any form of torture at the highest political level
- Implement effective measures to fight impunity, including through investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, based on the international UNCAT standards
- Fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court

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Issue 4: Condition of prisons and detention facilities

Finally, credible reports indicate the harsh and life-threatening **detention conditions**. These conditions are attributed to issues like insufficient food and hygiene supplies and physical abuse^v. We particularly want to highlight concerns about the conditions of **juveniles** deprived of liberty. Reduced donor funding has led to the transfer of juveniles to provincial prisons, sometimes alongside adults, in contravention of international standards. Although some efforts are made to maintain a minimum separation, this situation remains problematic^{vi}.

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Recommendations

- Immediate release of everyone who is arbitrarily detained because of their human rights work or affiliation with the former government.
- Ensure access to sufficient food, clean water, adequate living space and hygiene supplies in detention facilities.
- Enforce strict protocols to prevent abuse and mistreatment of detainees, particularly juveniles.
- Allow independent monitoring of detention facilities to ensure compliance with international standards such as the UN CAT and its optional protocol, that Afghanistan has ratified.

ⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱ News18: “UN: Taliban Committed Over 1600 Cases of Human Rights Violations in Last 19 Months”, 20 September 2023. Available at: [UN: Taliban Committed Over 1600 Cases of Human Rights Violations in Last 19 Months - News18](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ UN: “The treatment of detainees in Afghanistan”, September 2023. Available at: [unama_report - treatment_of_detainees_200923_english.pdf \(unmissions.org\)](#)

^{iv} UN: “Afghanistan: UN human rights experts denounce idea of “reformed” Taliban”, 14 August 2023. Available at: [Afghanistan: UN human rights experts denounce idea of “reformed” Taliban | OHCHR](#)

^v US Department of State: “Afghanistan 2022 Human Rights Report”. Available at: [AFGHANISTAN 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT \(state.gov\)](#)

^{vi} UNAMA: “Human Rights in Afghanistan”, July 2022. Available at: [unama_human_rights_in_afghanistan_report_-_june_2022_english.pdf \(unmissions.org\)](#)