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AFGHANISTAN

TWO EDUCATION ACTIVISTS RELEASED FROM ARBITRARY DETENTION

Education activists Ahmad Fahim Azimi and Seddiqullah Afghan have been released after enduring months of unjust imprisonment. Seddiqullah Afghan regained freedom on April 9, 2024, as part of a prisoner pardon for Eid. Ahmad Fahim Azimi was released on September 26, 2024, after a Taliban court dropped the charges against him due to lack of evidence.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Both activists were members of Fekre Behtar, an education organization in Kabul. They were arrested on October 17, 2023, by the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) in District 40. Accused of working against Taliban authorities, they were interrogated for 72 days before standing trial on December 27, 2023. After the trial, both were transferred to Pul-e-Charkhi prison, where they faced severe mistreatment and limited access to legal and medical support.

Amnesty International launched a campaign in February 2024 to secure the activists' release. Through letters, social media outreach, and pressure on Taliban authorities, Amnesty challenged the activists' arbitrary arrests and exposed the violation of their basic rights. Family members, communicating from abroad, shared updates and underscored the importance of sustained pressure. They believe these coordinated efforts played a decisive role in achieving the activists' release.

While Seddiqullah Afghan benefited from the Eid pardon in April 2024, Ahmad Fahim Azimi spent 11 months in prison, enduring torture and unfair trials. After rejecting an unjust court ruling in April, his case was reexamined but delayed without cause. Finally, lacking any evidence against him, Azimi was freed on September 26, 2024.

This case highlights the harsh reality in Afghanistan, where civil society is being crushed under Taliban repression. Journalists, activists, and protesters are routinely targeted, with many forced into hiding or exile. Those who flee to neighboring countries like Iran, Pakistan, or Turkey face legal and financial hurdles, and risk deportation back to Afghanistan.

The release of these two activists shows that international pressure works. But much remains to be done. Afghan human rights defenders still need the world's attention and support. This victory is a reminder that solidarity matters—and that, together, we can help protect those who risk everything to defend freedom and education.

Thank you to everyone who supported this campaign. Let's continue to stand with Afghan human rights defenders and ensure they are not forgotten.