



Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
First UA: 74/25 Index: MDE 13/0158/2025 Iran of July 30, 2025

IRAN STOP THE MASS DEPORTATIONS OF AFGHANS

Since early 2025, Iran has forcibly returned more than one million Afghans to Afghanistan — including people who were born in Iran or have lived there for decades. This is part of a mass expulsion campaign that violates international law.

The deportations sharply increased after fighting escalated between Iran and Israel. Since June 1, 2025, over 500,000 Afghans have been expelled, among them, thousands of unaccompanied children.

Now, millions more are at risk. This includes many women and girls who would face serious harm if returned. Under international refugee law, they should be recognized as refugees without needing to prove their case individually. Returning them to Afghanistan, where the Taliban are carrying out gender-based persecution, puts their lives and rights in danger.

Write to the Iranian Minister of Interior urging the authorities to:

- Immediately stop the mass expulsion of Afghans and ensure all Afghans in Iran are protected from forced return (refoulement).
- Provide Afghans in Iran with regular migration status that guarantees their safety and legal rights.
- Protect Afghans from harm and discrimination, including arbitrary arrest, torture, and unfair treatment in access to housing, healthcare, and education.
- Recognize all Afghan women and girls as refugees and immediately release anyone detained solely because of their Afghan identity or nationality.

Write to:

Minister of interior, Eskandar Momeni
c/o Embassy of Iran to the United Nations in Geneva
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209
Geneva, Switzerland

Salutation: Dear Mr. Eskandar Momeni,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Iran has hosted one of the world's largest populations of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers for more than 40 years. By 2022, the [UN Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\)](#) estimated that over 4.5 million Afghans were living in Iran. After the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 2021, [at least one million](#) more Afghans fled to Iran. Many of them were human rights defenders, women activists, journalists, protestors, and others at risk.

Afghans in Iran face [widespread discrimination](#), whether they arrived recently, have lived there for decades, or were born in Iran. They face serious barriers to accessing basic needs like education, jobs,

housing, healthcare, and banking. Movement within the country is also restricted. This discrimination is made worse by racism and xenophobia. Iranian authorities have used hate speech to stir up hostility against Afghans, which has led to violence by both government forces and civilians. In most cases, those responsible are not held accountable.

Iran's laws do not offer most Afghans a clear path to permanent residency or citizenship. Exceptions are rare, such as marrying an Iranian citizen. Even children born in Iran to Afghan parents are usually denied citizenship. Until recently, millions of Afghans were allowed to stay temporarily with a "headcount" document (called bargeh-e sarshomari). This allowed them limited access to services like healthcare, public education, work permits, banking, and rental agreements.

However, on March 12, 2025, Iran's Ministry of Interior announced that all "headcount" documents would automatically expire on March 20, 2025. Once expired, Afghans would lose access to all these basic services. The government then declared its plan to deport Afghans whose documents had expired. Between June 1 and July 10, 2025, Iranian authorities expelled at least 546,000 Afghans—including 5,000 unaccompanied or separated children.

Amnesty International collected testimony from Afghans affected by these policies. One Afghan man still in Iran as of early July 2025 said his expired "headcount" documents meant his children were banned from school. He was afraid to leave his house during the day, fearing arrest and deportation. He told Amnesty:

"I feel I am under house arrest. I only go out for a walk during nights. I sleep during the days so that time passes."

He also said his SIM card had been cut off and, if deported to Afghanistan, he could face serious abuse from the Taliban due to his past work in media. Others said they were forced to leave Iran after their documents expired. Iranian authorities charged them high fees for transportation back to Afghanistan. They also had to pay municipal taxes for each family member. If they didn't, they risked being jailed.

After conflict escalated between Israel and Iran on June 13, 2025, Iranian officials increased their use of racist and dehumanizing language against Afghans. They referred to them as "unauthorized nationals" or "foreigners" and blamed them for problems like job shortages, overwhelmed schools, and strain on healthcare.

Authorities called for a rapid "clean-up" of the Afghan population, ordering mass expulsions. They also made baseless claims that Afghans were spying for Israel. Since June 14, at least five Afghans have been arrested under these accusations. State media has broadcast forced confessions from four of them.

Afghans deported back to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan face severe human rights abuses. Amnesty International has documented cases of torture, [arbitrary arrest](#), [enforced disappearance](#), and even [extrajudicial killings](#) under Taliban rule.

Women and girls are especially at risk. They are banned from attending school beyond primary level and are shut out of most jobs. Many have been imprisoned or disappeared simply for speaking out. These abuses amount to crimes against humanity, including gender persecution.

Afghanistan is currently the only country in the world where girls are banned from education beyond primary school. The Taliban have also targeted ethnic and religious minorities with harsh restrictions and violence.

Please take action as soon as possible until December 31, 2025. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.