

Paris, September 3, 2021

Safeguarding Human Rights of Afghans Must be a Priority

UIA and UIA-IROL are appalled by the ongoing and rapidly deteriorating human rights and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

In recent days, numerous voices within the international legal community, including [UIA-IROL](#) and the [UIA Italian Committee](#), have expressed their grave concern with regard to the safety of Afghan citizens, in particular women, children, minorities, and others in vulnerable situations.

While we welcome the actions undertaken by some States in recent days to evacuate a certain number of individuals, it is undeniable that numerous Afghan citizens remain in hiding in a now Taliban-controlled country, in fear of imminent and dangerous risks of reprisal against them and their families. Particularly disturbing for the legal community is the fate of individuals working in the legal and judiciary professions, as well as those who have been and still are committed to the protection and defense of human rights and the rule of law in Afghanistan.

UIA and UIA-IROL share these concerns and express their unconditional support for and solidarity with our Afghan colleagues.

The international community must not abandon the Afghan population.

The future of all Afghan citizens, including in particular women and girls and those whose survival depends on humanitarian assistance, is now more uncertain than ever.

The Taliban has issued a number of statements pledging notably to uphold the rights of women to work and of girls to go to school, within the “Taliban’s religious framework”. However, [reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses](#)¹ in areas under Taliban control, including targeted attacks against women and girls, gravely undermine the credibility of such commitments.

We support and reiterate [the calls of the international community](#) demanding that the Taliban put these promises into action and respect State obligations and duties as enshrined in the international instruments to which Afghanistan is party.

We believe that the international community should reinforce and extend its coordinated efforts to monitor the human rights situation in Afghanistan, including by actively supporting the establishment of an independent United Nations accountability and monitoring mechanism.

¹ See also Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council on Afghanistan [as delivered], August 26, 2021 available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/secretary-generals-remarks-the-security-councilafghanistan-delivered>.

In addition, the Taliban must be held accountable for keeping their commitment to allow foreign nationals and Afghan citizens with travel authorization from another country to leave Afghanistan.

To make this possible, we call on other nations to facilitate access to safe and legal pathways, including by easing and expediting the processing and issuing of visas for those whose life, security and freedoms may be threatened.

We urge other nations to provide unequivocal human rights-based solutions -- for Afghans fleeing the current situation in Afghanistan and for Afghans who already are present in these respective territories -- by implementing [the non-return advisory for Afghanistan issued by the UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency](#).

A human rights focus is critical as the international community seeks sustainable solutions for the inevitable surge in refugees from Afghanistan. In this regard, we recall the principles set forth in the [Basic Principles on the Status of Refugees](#) adopted by UIA in 2016, intended to contribute actively to the dialogue and actions undertaken in relation to the “migration crisis”.

Finally, UIA and UIA-IROL encourage the international legal community and, in particular, its UIA members who have continuously and vigorously mobilized in support of our Afghan colleagues, to remain actively engaged in the rapidly-changing Afghan situation and to continue to undertake concrete support actions, including urging the relevant national, regional and international bodies to take meaningful steps to protect human rights, both in Afghanistan and abroad.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation.

More about UIA

UIA is the global and multi-cultural organisation for the legal profession, established in 1927 and now with members in 110 countries, which provides professional development, learning, promotes the rule of law, defends the independence and freedom of lawyers worldwide, and emphasizes friendship, collegiality and networking among members.

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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