

Refugee Solidarity Statement - Stop the Deportations, Establish a Refugee Policy!

Statement:

What's been happening?

Since October 2023 to 17 Oct 2025, more than 1.6 million Afghans have been forcibly deported from Pakistan, and over 2 million more remain at risk.

We, the undersigned, stand in unwavering solidarity with Afghan refugees in Pakistan and strongly oppose the Government of Pakistan's deportation campaign launched under the Foreigners Act, 1946. Since October 2023, over 1.6 million Afghan nationals have been forcibly deported, and more than 2 million more remain at imminent risk.

On 31 July 2025, Pakistani authorities issued Repatriation and Deportation Orders, invalidating PoR cards that expired on 30 June 2025, leaving more than 1.3 million documented refugees vulnerable and at risk of persecution and serious harm. Pakistan is home to over 3 million Afghans, including PoR and ACC holders, asylum seekers, and the undocumented—all now facing removal without guarantees of safety.

Many of these individuals fled persecution during the Soviet invasion in the 1980s or after the Taliban takeover in 2021. JAC-R activists—comprising scholars, lawyers, journalists, and students—have documented racial profiling, raids, and destruction of legal documents targeting Afghans and Pashtun Pakistanis. Recent police operations in all over Pakistan reflect the government's disregard for international treaties it has ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The state has also disregarded facets of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973, which guarantees the right to a free and fair trial, prevention from torture, and the rights of the child.

Reports from civil society detail police confiscating PoR cards, ACCs, and CNICs; widespread detentions; and the establishment of detention centers in different cities, where detainees—many with valid documents—are held without legal representation or journalistic access.

Lacking a national refugee law, Pakistan remains bound by its 1993 UNHCR Cooperation Agreement, which enshrines the non-refoulement principle forbidding forced returns. Deportations during Taliban rule risk persecution, imprisonment, torture, and death. Civil society affirms that refugee protection must coexist with the rights of host communities.

1. Historical Context of Afghan Migration to Pakistan

1.1. Afghan Migration since 1979

Pakistan has hosted multiple waves of Afghan migration—distinctly during the Soviet invasion (1979–1989) and post-9/11 armed conflict. Many families have lived in Pakistan for decades, contributing to local economies and educational institutions, with children born and educated there.

Following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, tens of thousands of Afghans fled again, seeking safety from the repressive regime—women’s rights activists, journalists, former civil servants, and religious minorities among them. As of 2023, Pakistan hosted approximately 3.7 million Afghan residents, of whom about 1.33 million were registered with UNHCR.

1.2 Deployment of PoR and ACC Documentation

In response to early displacement, the UNHCR and Pakistani authorities issued Proof of Registration (PoR) cards to refugees in legal limbo, and Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) to undocumented individuals (2017–2019). PoR cards were initially set to expire in June 2024 but were extended to 30 June 2025 for roughly 1.4 million holders.

2. Current Deportation Policy and Government Orders

2.1 Phased Deportation Plan

In October 2023, Pakistan unveiled the “Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan”, which was made by an unelected caretaker government in an overreach of its established mandate. This plan was never discussed in Pakistan’s National Assembly.

A three-phase deportation schedule was announced, but no dates were initially announced except for Phase 1:

Phase 1: Undocumented Afghans (~1.7 million) were given a month and told to leave by 1 November 2023, with arrest or deportation pending failure to comply. Approximately 468,000 were forcibly deported between October–December 2023.

Phase 2: Beginning on 1 April 2025, ACC holders were also targeted; around 800,000 ACC card holders were ordered to leave by 31 March 2025. More than 1.2 million returns occurred between September 2023 and July 2025.

Phase 3: Set to impact PoR card holders after 30 June 2025—invalidating their protection status overnight, affecting over 1.3 million individuals.

2.2 Enforced Raids and Crackdowns

Following the announcement of each deportation phase, law enforcement agencies across Pakistan, including in Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, launched coordinated raids, house-to-house searches, and mass detentions of Afghan refugees and migrants. These operations have targeted families regardless of whether they held valid PoR or ACC cards, in direct violation of constitutional protections and court orders.

Police and paramilitary units have been reported confiscating and destroying PoR cards, ACCs, and even Pakistani CNICs, intimidating individuals and coercing them into leaving the country. Refugees have described being harassed in marketplaces, bus stations, workplaces, and schools.

In early 2025, detention centers, most notably the one at Haji Camp, Islamabad—began holding hundreds of Afghans, including women, children, the elderly, and the sick, often without access to legal counsel. Similar temporary holding facilities and undisclosed detention sites have been reported in Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, and other cities. Journalists and human rights monitors have been barred from entering these facilities, further shrouding conditions in secrecy.

Human rights defenders note that the current crackdown is nationwide, with no province left unaffected, representing the largest and most coordinated deportation drive in Pakistan's history.

2.3 Legal and International Reaction

International bodies, including Amnesty International and UNHCR, have repeatedly urged Pakistan to halt deportations, renew PoR cards, and respect the non-refoulement principle.

In reports released between May and June 2025, human rights groups warned that 1.08–1.09 million Afghans had been returned, while 1.4 million PoR holders remained at risk once their protective cards expired on 30 June 2025 .

3. Violation of International and Domestic Legal Obligations

Pakistan's current deportation policy flagrantly breaches its international and domestic obligations. While Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it is a party to multiple international treaties that enshrine protections for refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants. These include:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – guaranteeing the right to life, liberty, fair trial, and protection from arbitrary detention.

UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) – prohibiting the return of individuals to countries where they face torture or ill-treatment.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – mandating protection from gender-based persecution.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – ensuring special protection for minors, including refugee and asylum-seeking children.

Additionally, Pakistan’s Constitution of 1973 guarantees:

Article 4 – Right to be dealt with in accordance with law.

Article 9 – Security of person.

Article 10 – Safeguards as to arrest and detention.

Article 10-A – Right to a fair trial and due process.

By forcibly deporting individuals to Afghanistan under Taliban rule—where persecution, targeted killings, and suppression of dissent are well-documented—Pakistan is violating the non-derogable principle of non-refoulement and undermining its own constitutional commitments.

4. Targeting of Vulnerable Communities

The deportation orders disproportionately harm those who are most at risk:

Women and Girls – facing forced marriage, denial of education, and restrictions on movement under the Taliban.

Religious and Ethnic Minorities – including Hazara Shia, Sikhs, Hindus, and other persecuted groups.

Journalists, Activists, and Human Rights Defenders – many of whom fled Taliban persecution for their work on democracy, free speech, and human rights.

Children – thousands are at risk of being separated from their parents or placed in detention without adequate legal representation.

These populations were specifically targeted by the Taliban’s repressive policies, and deportation would return them to an environment where their safety and survival are in grave jeopardy.

5. Humanitarian Consequences of Deportations

Since October 2023, over 1.2 million Afghans have been deported from Pakistan, often with only hours' notice to leave. The humanitarian toll includes:

- Families forced to abandon homes, businesses, and personal belongings.
- Children dropping out of school mid-term.
- Refugees arriving in Afghanistan without shelter, food, or medical care.
- Increased vulnerability to Taliban reprisals, forced recruitment, and gender-based violence.

These deportations are not only a violation of law but also a humanitarian catastrophe, leaving thousands stranded in conflict zones without any support systems.

Our Calls

We, the undersigned concerned individuals, scholars, policy-makers, activists, and organisations, reject the Government of Pakistan's mass deportation plans and stand in unwavering solidarity with Afghans in Pakistan and across the globe.

We recognise that Afghans are an integral part of Pakistan's social, cultural, and economic fabric. Many have been here for generations, having fled Pakistan's own military involvement during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, and more recently the Taliban's seizure of power in August 2021.

We reaffirm that:

All Afghans in Pakistan must be formally recognised as part of our society, with pathways to permanent residency and/or citizenship, and protection under principles of refuge.

Our struggles are interconnected – the oppression of Afghans in Pakistan is bound up with the oppression of ethnic and religious minorities, political dissidents, displaced Pakistanis, women, and marginalised groups everywhere.

We pledge to contribute in everyday life – on the streets, in classrooms, in institutions, on social media, and in political spaces – to the intentional de-criminalisation of Afghans and all marginalised communities in Pakistan.

Call #1 -To People and Civil Society :

We call on concerned individuals, communities, activists, and organisations to:

1. Stand in solidarity with Afghans in Pakistan – not as charity or humanitarianism, but as a matter of legal and moral obligation.
2. Reject all attempts to divide ethnic and religious minorities and nations within Pakistan.
3. Document and report harassment of Afghans by law enforcement, landlords, employers, or other actors.
4. Challenge anti-Afghan rhetoric in everyday conversations, educational spaces, and community forums.
5. Hold journalists, media houses, and content creators accountable when they spread false, unverified, or xenophobic narratives about Afghans.

Call #2 – To Global Civil Society and Afghan Solidarity Movements

We call on communities, movements, and organisations working with Afghans globally –to :

1. Defend Afghan refugees from racist violence and state repression in their own countries.
2. Mobilise political pressure on the Government of Pakistan to halt deportations.
3. Amplify the stories of Afghans in Pakistan through global media, advocacy, and legal channels.

Call #3 – To States Responsible for Conflict in Afghanistan

We call on states whose political and military actions have fuelled instability in Afghanistan to:

1. Acknowledge responsibility for displacement and suffering – not in the language of charity, but as a legal and moral obligation.
2. Publicly condemn Pakistan's deportations and push for immediate cessation.
3. Fund protection programmes for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and in neighbouring countries.

Call #4 – To States That Have Committed to Resettle Afghans

We call on the governments of the US, UK, Germany, Canada, Australia, and others to:

1. Accelerate relocation processes for Afghans stuck in Pakistan, especially those with approved visas or in final processing stages.
2. Open safe, legal asylum pathways for Afghans who are currently undocumented but at risk of persecution if returned.
3. Remove bureaucratic bottlenecks and cut processing delays that are leaving Afghans in legal limbo.

Call #5 – To the International Migration Regime in Pakistan (UNHCR, IOM, INGOs)

We call on the UNHCR, IOM, and international humanitarian actors to:

1. Stop endorsing or supporting “voluntary repatriation” programmes in the current conditions under Taliban rule.
2. Prioritise advocacy for long-term legal rights and protection for Afghans in Pakistan.
3. Ensure direct engagement with refugee-led organisations in decision-making processes.

Call #6 – To the Government of Pakistan

We demand that the Government of Pakistan:

1. Immediately halt the nationwide deportation drive and withdraw the 31 July 2025 repatriation orders.
2. ease arbitrary detentions, harassment, and demolition of Afghan homes in all provinces.
3. Reinstate and extend PoR cards for all holders, and issue new cards to those awaiting UNHCR interviews from 2021.
4. Withdraw deportation orders for ACC holders and ensure they have access to legal protection.
5. Hold law enforcement agencies accountable for violations of court orders and constitutional protections.
6. Open legal pathways for undocumented Afghans to regularise their status through residency or citizenship schemes.
7. Develop and enact a national refugee protection law, in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.
8. Ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention to align Pakistan's laws with global refugee protection standards.

How to sign

You can sign your name by adding a comment below.

Your name may not appear on the list immediately, but it should be visible within a few hours.

If you experience any difficulties, please email us at jacrefugees@gmail.com, and we will add your name.

Some phones may not support commenting on this document.

Signatories

1. Farhatullah Babar -Senator (R), Islamabad Pakistan
2. Afrasiab Khattak - Senator (retd) NDM
3. Saba Gul Khattak -Former Member Planning Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad Pakistan
4. Ziauddin Yousafzai Education and Human Rights Activist, UK
5. Moniza Kakar - Lawyer
6. Munizae Jahangir, Journalist & Co-Chair Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)
7. Kausar S Khan- Community Health
8. Pastor Ghazala Shafique - The New hope Trust Church
9. Samar Abbas - Lawyer
10. Bushra Gohar, NDM, Pakhtunkhwa
11. Refugee Rights Watch Global
12. Dr.Pieter de Vente, activist, Amsterdam The Netherlands
13. Muhammad Mudassar Javed - Humanitarian Leader
14. Dr. Gopal Krishna Siwakoti, President, INHURED International
15. Sharmin Rahman Advocate high court, Quetta, balochistan.
16. Fatima Khilji - Human Rights Activist.
17. Maheen Pracha, human rights practitioner
18. Salman Zaidi, Jinnah Institute
19. Saeed Husain - Folio Books
20. Fareed ullah khan kakar, Advocate and General Secretary of Pashtoonkhawa Student Organization Islamabad.
21. Xari Jalil, Editor/Journalist, Voicepk.net
22. Dr.Sijal Shafique- Human Rights Activist
23. Usama Khilji - Rights activist and columnist
24. Saif Shahid, Lawyer
25. Jamaima Afridi- Freelance Journalist
26. Ibrahim Khan- NDM
27. Shmyla Khan, activist and researcher
28. Luke Victor, Lawyer and Activist
29. Areeba Fatima, Activist and Journalist
30. Haya Fatima Iqbal, Professor, Habib University
31. Rana Refahi, lawyer
32. Nighat Said Khan - WAF - Lahore Pakistan
33. Jamila
34. Wakeel Ahmed
35. Sadya Siddiqui, policy researcher
36. Noorulain Naseem, Researcher on Afghan Refugees
37. Muhammad Aman, Educationist, Quetta
38. Khawar Mumtaz. Member, WAF. Lahore. Pakistan.

39. Anqa Gharshin, Lecturer, BUITEMS, Quetta.
40. Saadia Toor, Professor, New York
41. Kamran Khan Afridi - Student
42. Khushal Khan - NDM
43. Tooba Syed, Political organiser-writer (WDF, AWP), Islamabad
44. Dr. Niaz Murtaza, Political Economist, Islamabad
45. Engr. Ihsan Ullah khan ANP
46. Soha Tanwir Khan, activist, therapist
47. Yousuf Sajjad, Journalist
48. Sara Malkani, Lawyer
49. Prabodh Jamwal, Journalist, Kashmir
50. Zoya Rehman, Researcher/Writer + Organiser on Hiatus
51. Samantha Leaning - Human Rights Advocate, Cambridge UK
52. Habib Kareem, Lawyer & Vice Chairperson Immigrants and Refugees Rights Committee of Islamabad High Court Bar Association.
53. Qazi Hakeem -General Secretary AWP Pakhtoonkhwa
54. Niamat Ullah Bashir from Loralai, Balochistan
55. Engr Aimal Khan , Secretary General NDM
56. Zohra Kareem - MBA-Student , Karachi
57. Amna Mawaz - Artist, political worker - Germany
58. Elaine Alam - International Development & Human Rights Practitioner
59. Fazal kakar , Study circle head of PTM Lahore , Qila Saifullah Balochistan, Pakistan
60. Nida Kirmani, Associate Professor, LUMS
61. Muhammad Zakaria Lawyer & Refugee Rights defender
62. Sadia Khatri, writer
63. Naazish Attaullah, Artist Educator, WAF member, Lahore, Pakistan
64. Rashida Dohad, WAF member, Islamabad, Pakistan
65. Samina Bano Rehman, WAF Member, Lahore, Pakistan
66. Rukhshanda Naz, Women's Regional Network & WAF Member, Peshawar, Pakistan
67. Naheed Aziz, WAF Member, Islamabad, Pakistan
68. Salima Hashmi, Artist Educator, WAF Member, Lahore, Pakistan
69. Uzma Noorani, Member HRCF, Karachi, Pakistan
70. Nasrene Shah, WAF Member, Pakistan
71. Sultanat Bukhari, WAF Member, Pakistan
72. Sadiqa Sultan, WAF Member, Pakistan
73. Maria Rasheed, Activist, Academic,London, UK
74. Niloufar Pourzand, Academic, Toronto Canada
75. Nuscie Jamil, Activist & WAF Member, Lahore, Pakistan
76. Sumaira Ishfaq, WAF Member, Pakistan
77. Khurshid Bano, WAF Member, Pakistan
78. Hunzla Baloch HRW Political worker DGK
79. Nishat Maryam, Aurat March Islamabad
80. Saaduddin Legal Assistant MORR
81. Muhammad Anwar - HR activist

82. Shaikh Muhammad Adeel Advocate High Court, Lawyer, SHARP/ALAC DI Khan, Pakistan
83. Ismat Raza Shahjana, Women Democratic Front/PTM
84. Gul Bukhari, activist and columnist, London.
85. Aiman Gul Imran, Student, Islamabad
86. Adnan Wazir, Activist, Islamabad
87. Khalisa, Social Cohesion Officer, AgaF, Afghanistan
88. Lars Stenger - consultant on forced migration
89. Qiyas Khan, AWP/PTM
90. Bilal Ahmed Afridi - Advocate/ Protection Counselor (SHARP-Pak) Karachi Office
91. Majid Khan, Pakhtun Students Federation.
92. Muhammad Mohsin - Software Engineer
93. Zameer Ullah - Student
94. Shireen Sardar, Director Pen of Mercy, USA
95. Tahera Hasan - Lawyer - Karachi /Pakistan
96. Maidha Mateen - Lawyer - Karachi, Pakistan
97. Zac Colah, journalist, Boston
98. Almas Bano, lawyer karachi /Pakistan
99. Yusra Sohail, Lawyer - Karachi, Pakistan
100. Women Democratic Front - Karachi
101. Thaterra Achakzai, Lecturer, University of Balochistan, Social Right Activist
102. Arooj Sajjad -Psychologist, BRSP Quetta
103. Nasreen Azhar, Member WAF & HRCF, Islamabad
104. Shahnaz Rouse, WAF Member, New York City
105. Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir, Lawyer,, Islamabad
106. Tahira Abdullah, Activist, Islamabad
107. Areej Yasin, Human Rights
108. Huzaifa Wazir
109. Advocate Quratulain Lodhi /Lawyer/Protection Counselor SHARP Karachi
110. Atif Rashid central spokesperson of Nsm
111. Afaan Naqvi, London UK
112. Sobia Kapadia, Migration & Gender Equality researcher, Activist, London, UK
113. Aliza Danish, Paralegal, Pakistan
114. Tanya Mirza, School Leader, Pakistan
115. Bernadette McGrath, CEO, Overseas Services to Survivors of Torture and Trauma, Australia
116. Wakeel Adil -Provincial President of National Students Movement
117. Sonia Qadir - Postdoctoral Fellow, Australia; Feminist Collective
118. Ambreen Fatima, Advocate, Human Rights Defender, Member WAF, Pakistan
119. Hasina Khairi, Student, Pakistan
120. Tehmina A. Majeed
121. Qindeel Azeem, Activist USA
122. Seemak Abdi Khan, Lawyer, Turbat Balochistan.
123. Rafia Asim
124. Sulaiman Khan, Social Activist
125. SUAKA (Indonesian Civil Society Association for Refugee Rights Protection)

126. Neelam Hussain, Women's Action Forum (WAF), Lahore, Pakistan
127. Zohal Moradi, Lawyer & Social Activist
128. Misbah Shafiq, Aurat Marachi Islamabad
129. Fatima Bakhtiary, President the Migrant Women's Support Association, Pakistan, Attock
130. Abha bhैया OBR campaign India
131. Nikita, Climate and Social Justice activist and social worker, Hyderabad, India
132. Nagin Ansari, Creative Agency Founder & Instructor, Karachi
133. Dr Abdullah Nashnas from Quetta
134. Rita Manchanda, Author and Human Rights Activist, Delhi, India
135. Sagari R Ramdas , Food Sovereignty Alliance , Hyderabad, India
136. Prasad Chacko ,Social Worker Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India
137. Kaneez Fatima, Social Activist, Peshawar, Pakistan
138. Thandeka Chauke - Lawyer (South Africa)
139. Refugee Council of Australia
140. Ambar Darr, Islamabad Pakistan
141. Shaameen Jawad, Islamabad Pakistan
142. Maham Fateh, Lahore, Pakistan
143. Sabeen Malik, Media Practitioner, Quetta Balochistan.
144. Rajni Palriwala, Delhi, India
145. MUMTAZ KHAN SALARZAI - Volunteer community social worker
146. Nizam ul haq Law student
147. Ali Palh, RightsNow Foundation
148. Lars Stenger, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, Thailand
149. Zahra Aamer, illustrator/ animator
150. Laiba Yousafzai - Journalist
151. Naimat Khan- Journalist/Former Gen Sec KUJ, Former Joint Secretary KPC
152. Prof. Ijaz Khan, retired from Department of IR, University of Peshawar
153. Safa Aman, Islamabad,
154. Javeiria Ali, Islamabad, Pakistan
155. Zan Sohail Aslam, Student, Vancouver BC, Canada
156. Khadija Asfandiyar, Islamabad, Pakistan
157. Kiran Nazir Ahmed, (Rtd.) Assistant Professor Quaid-e-Azam University, Pakistan
158. Monazza Asif Farooqi, Journalist, London, England
159. Ibraheem Nazir Aslam, Toronto, Canada
160. Timothy Zhang Wang, Toronto, Canada
161. Fauzia Habibullah, St. Croix, USVI
162. Sarah Suhail, Community advocate
163. Jawziya Zaman, Writer & Teacher
164. Shareen Elnaschie, Director at Office of Displaced Designers, Athens, Greece
165. Syed Irfan Ashraf, Assistant professor Department of Journalism, University of Peshawar, Pakistan
166. Ms Naazlee Sardar, Lawyer and Activist, Islamabad, Pakistan
167. Joanna M. Sherman, Director, Bond Street Theatre, New York, USA
168. Dr Farzana Bari, Human Rights Activist & Aurat March, Islamabad

169. Aimal Ihsas, Peshawar, Pakistan.
170. Samina Mumtaz, Lecturer, Punjab, Pakistan
171. Subin Mulmi, Executive Director, Nationality For All (NFA)
172. Huma - Student - Peshawar
173. Frieda Afary, Iranian American Librarian, Writer, Translator, USA
174. Jaffer Ahmed - Student - Karachi - Pakistan
175. Azmat Khan, CSO, Representative- Pakistan
176. Vibhuti Patel, Retired Teacher, India
177. Tilmann Röder, JustPeace (NGO), Germany
178. Munizae Jahangir, Journalist & Co-Chair Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCPP)
179. Zaid Hydari, Refugee Solidarity Network (RSN), USA
180. Timothy Wang, Student- Ontario- Canada
181. Prof Amena Mohsin, Dept of International Relations, Univ of Dhaka, Bangladesh
182. Dr Lucy Fiske, Academic, Sydney, Australia
183. Karishma, Political worker - Women Democratic Front
184. Zahid Hussain, Journalist/Columnist, Islamabad, Pakistan
185. Dr Ambreen Ahmed, Rozan, & WAF Member, Islamabad, Pakistan
186. Bahar Abbassy, Paralegal Assistant - Boston, USA
187. APRRN (Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network)
188. Abu Murshed Chowdhury ,PHALS ,Bangladesh
189. Jennifer Siu, Grants Manager, Asylum Access
190. Avant-Garde Lawyers
191. Asma Malik- Lahore, Pakistan
192. Wazma Khan Nasar, medical student, human right/girls education activist.
193. Abolfazl Hussaini
194. Sarah Ahmed, Development Practitioner, Karachi, Pakistan
195. Ananda Kumar Biswas, Post Graduate Student in Human Rights and Democratization at Mahidol University
196. Sara Mehdi, Manager - Ebook Department, Volunteer for Aurat March, Karachi, Pakistan
197. Maham Tariq - Feminist Activist