



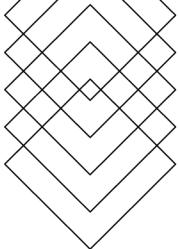
« From Marginalization to Erasure »

Annual Report on Violations of Fundamental Women's Rights in Afghanistan

Year (2025)

**Afghanistan Women's Rights Watch
(AWRW)**





Introduction

Since 2021, thousands of girls have been deprived of their fundamental right to education, and a significant segment of Afghanistan society, particularly women and girls, has been excluded from productive and social participation and confined to their homes. These restrictions and systemic forms of discrimination have not only jeopardized the future of coming generations but have also undermined the country's economic and social structures.

The Afghanistan Women's Rights Watch, with the mission of documenting, recording, and analyzing violations of women's rights, has consistently worked to convey the documented realities of Afghanistan women and girls to the international community and to draw global attention to the ongoing crisis affecting their rights. The organization's activities extend beyond reporting and include advocacy, education, and the empowerment of women and girls to protect and advance their rights under challenging circumstances.

This annual report provides a comprehensive and evidence based overview of the challenges, consequences, and resistance of Afghanistan women, demonstrating how their courage and resilience can help contribute to meaningful change and improvements in the country's legal and social conditions.

The Afghanistan Women's Rights Watch reaffirms its commitment to continuing its efforts in support of the rights of women and girls and emphasizes that their situation requires urgent and concrete action by the international community and governments to advance justice and equality in Afghanistan.

Dr. Zakira Hekmat

Director

Afghanistan Women's Rights Watch(AWRW)

January 2026

Türkiye





Acknowledgements

I've carefully reviewed your text. Overall, the grammar, clarity, and style are strong—very professional and fluent. I only suggest minor edits for smoother flow and slightly improved readability:

Revised version:

This report is the result of a collective effort to document one of the most challenging periods of violations of women's rights in Afghanistan. At a time when widespread restrictions, censorship, and security challenges have made the collection of independent data both high-risk and complex, the preparation of this report would not have been possible without cooperation, commitment, and shared responsibility.

We express our sincere appreciation to all individuals who contributed to data collection, incident documentation, and the monitoring of violations of the rights of women and girls across various provinces. Their efforts were particularly critical to the preparation of this report, especially given the severely limited access to information.

This report is dedicated to the women who, despite deprivation, threats, and violence, continue to stand firm in defense of their inherent human dignity, and to all those who, adhering to ethical and humanitarian principles, have contributed to the preservation and documentation of the truth.

Author: Tahera Jafari

Editor: Dr. Zakira Hekmat

Members of the Research Team: Abas Rezaei, Muzhda Hussaini, Qudsia Ayni, Tahera Jafari, and other members of the research team.



Table of Contents

Introduction

Objectives and Significance of the Report (From Marginalization to Physical Elimination and Erasure of Identity)

1. Methodology and Data Sources

- 1.1. Primary Data Collection: Research Team Verification Protocol
- 1.2. Corroboration Process: Linking Policies to 411 Independently Documented Cases
- 1.3. Source Diversity: Verifying Evidence Across Seven Distinct Types
- 1.4. Documentation Limitations: Remote Monitoring and the Surveillance Context
- 1.5. Ethical Considerations and Data Protection

2. Political and Legal Context

- 2.1. Legal Codification of Apartheid: The PVPV 2024 Law and Bureaucratic Controls
- 2.2. Key Taliban Decrees: From Dress Code Restrictions to Biological Enforcement
- 2.3. Transition to Informal and Oral Decrees: Evading International Accountability
- 2.4. Institutionalization of Repression: Expansion of the Muhtasib System
- 2.5. Annexing the Household: Coercing Male Family Members as Enforcers of Domestic Repression

3. Identification of Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

- 3.1. Direct Physical Violence
- 3.2. Lethal Violence: Killings of Women and Documentation of 76 Intentional Homicides
- 3.3. Psychological Violence: Suicidal Ideation as a Final Act of Protest
- 3.4. Sexual Violence: Reports of Rape in Taliban Detention
- 3.5. Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearance: The Role of the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI)
- 3.6. Institutionalized Violence: The Disciplinary System as Centralized State Policy

4. Analysis of Violence Across Three Age Groups

- 4.1. Vulnerability of Children and Adolescent Girls (0–17 Years): Risk of Child Labor and Early Marriage
- 4.2. Young Women (Ages 18–34): Systematic Targeting of an Educated and Aware Generation
- 4.3. Older Women (35 Years and Above): Asset Confiscation and the Collapse of Retirement Support

5. Geographic Distribution of Violence Against Women and Girls

- 5.1. Kabul Province: High Concentration of Arbitrary Detentions
- 5.2. Nangarhar Province: Lethal Enforcement and High Rates of Documented Killings
- 5.3. Kandahar Province: Command Center of the Mahram Card System and Medical Restrictions
- 5.4. Herat and Bamyan Provinces: Suppression of Regional Civil Activities and Education

6. Engineering Silence: From Digital Isolation to the Erasure of Survival

- 6.1. Enforced Silence: From Internet Blackouts to Digital Surveillance
- 6.2. Impunity System : Closure of Women's Safe Houses and Shelters

- 6.3. Barriers to Survival: Gendered Impact of Restrictions on Independent Access to Health Services
- 6.4. Restrictions on Freedom of Movement: Strict Mahram Requirements and Harassment at Checkpoints
- 5.6. Gendered Intellectual Erasure: Long-Term Consequences of the Systematic Elimination of Women's Professional Identity

7. Crisis Conditions and Complex Vulnerability of Women

- 7.1. Natural Disasters and Administrative Apartheid: The 2025 Eastern Afghanistan Earthquake
- 7.2. Returnee Shock: Protection Risks for 1.8 Million Women Returned from Iran and Pakistan
- 7.3. Precarious Return: Vulnerability of Returnees to Forced Marriage and Exploitation

8. Collapse of Protection and Access to Justice

- 8.1. From the Constitution to Threats: Deprivation of Women's Access to Justice
- 8.2. Institutional Silence: 258 Unaddressed Cases of Violence

9. Institutional Silence and the Framework of Impunity

- 9.1. From the Erosion of Protection to the Systematic Denial of Support for Women
- 9.2. Institutional Silence as the Pillar of Impunity
- 9.3. Structural Obstruction of Justice and the Elimination of Independent Voices
- 9.4. Incorporation of the Private Sphere into the Apparatus of Impunity
- 9.5. Summary: The Complete Collapse of Domestic Accountability Pathways

10. The Imperative for International Intervention and Pathways to Accountability

- 10.1. From Domestic Collapse to International Obligation
- 10.2. Persistent Violations of International Obligations
- 10.3. The Responsibility of the International Community under Conditions of Institutional Impunity
- 10.4. International Mechanisms for Accountability and Monitoring
- 10.5. Final Conclusion

11. References

List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Full Name |
|---------------------|--|
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| GDI | General Directorate of Intelligence |
| ICCPR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| MPVPV | Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice |
| OHCHR | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| PVPV | Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice |
| UNAMA | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| HRC | Human Rights Council |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |

Objectives and Significance of the Report

(From Marginalization to Physical Elimination and Erasure of Identity)

The year 2025 represents a dark chapter in the history of human rights violations against women and girls in Afghanistan. While the period from 2021 to 2024 was characterized by decrees imposing restrictions on education and employment, 2025 marks the institutionalization of the physical and auditory erasure of women from the public sphere. According to the findings of this report, based on systematic monitoring of official decrees and extensive field data, the ruling regime has surpassed conventional limits and now seeks absolute control over private spaces, as well as the very resonance of women's voices within society. This situation has moved beyond customary forms of discrimination and has reached a stage described by international legal experts as structural gender apartheid, in which female identity itself is criminalized.

Statistical evidence from this study shows that in 2025, violence against women is no longer an isolated act by individuals acting outside the law, but has become an official and systematic policy. The recording of 411 human rights violations against women and girls in this database, including 296 cases of direct violence carried out by de facto authorities, together with the complete absence of legal accountability, indicates that institutions of power have themselves become the primary source of insecurity. This systematic repression has been accompanied by a new pattern of governance known as "oral and unsigned decrees." This practice, which intensified during the July 2025 appointments and restrictive orders in Kandahar, eliminates formal documentation, dismantles mechanisms for legal accountability, and undermines the rule of law. For example, the transformation of the religious concept of Mahram into an administrative, paper-based authorization (Mahram card) in Kandahar and other provinces illustrates the ongoing exclusion of women from access to health and administrative services.

With the intensification of these pressures, society has reached a complete deadlock in the pursuit of justice. The most concerning finding of this report is the documentation of 258 incidents of "unaddressed" violence, a situation in which no judicial, medical, or social institution has the capacity or willingness to respond to the pleas of victims. In 2025, women find themselves in circumstances where they are insecure not only in public spaces but also in healthcare facilities and even within the privacy of mosques and homes, as recent directives mandating the handover of "disobedient" women to the Muhtasib have effectively transformed the private household into an instrument of repression.

This report has been prepared to meticulously document these systematic violations, with the aim of serving as an evidentiary record for international bodies and criminal courts. Drawing on age-disaggregated statistical data, which highlight a particular focus of repression on the young and educated generation (ages 25 to 34), the report seeks to critically examine the dimensions of this human catastrophe and to give voice to a generation that, despite rising rates of suicide as a final form of protest, continues to resist gradual erasure.



1. Methodology and Data Sources

1.1. Primary Data Collection: Research Team Verification Protocol

This report is based on primary data collected and verified by the research team to document the situation of women's and girls' rights in Afghanistan in 2025. Due to severe security risks and restricted direct field access, no in-person interviews were conducted. To mitigate these limitations and minimize statistical errors, a cross-referencing methodology was employed. Each data point was incorporated into the final dataset only after verification by at least two independent sources or corroboration with officially declared policies of the regime.

In accordance with international research ethics and to ensure the protection of sources, all identifying information has been anonymized. Given the highly repressive environment and pervasive climate of fear, these data represent a minimal level of documentation, and the likelihood of underreporting remains extremely high.

1.2. Corroboration Process: Linking Policies to 411 Independently Documented Cases

A key step in the research methodology was the corroboration of each violation with specific Taliban actions. The research team identified and verified 411 unique cases of human rights violations against women and girls, the majority of which were directly linked to Taliban decrees or policies.

1.3. Source Diversity: Verifying Evidence Across Seven Distinct Types

To further reduce underreporting under conditions of intense surveillance, the research team employed a multi-source evidence approach, maximizing the credibility and reliability of the findings. This approach included:

- Media reports on incidents of violence, verified by the research team
- Available documentary records related to each incident
- Testimonies from local witnesses and eyewitnesses, which predominantly provided detailed accounts of corporal punishment and arbitrary detentions
- Photographic and video evidence, confirming the scale of public floggings and the presence of Muhtasibs
- Medical reports, documenting the effects of severe physical abuse and the rise in fatal suicides

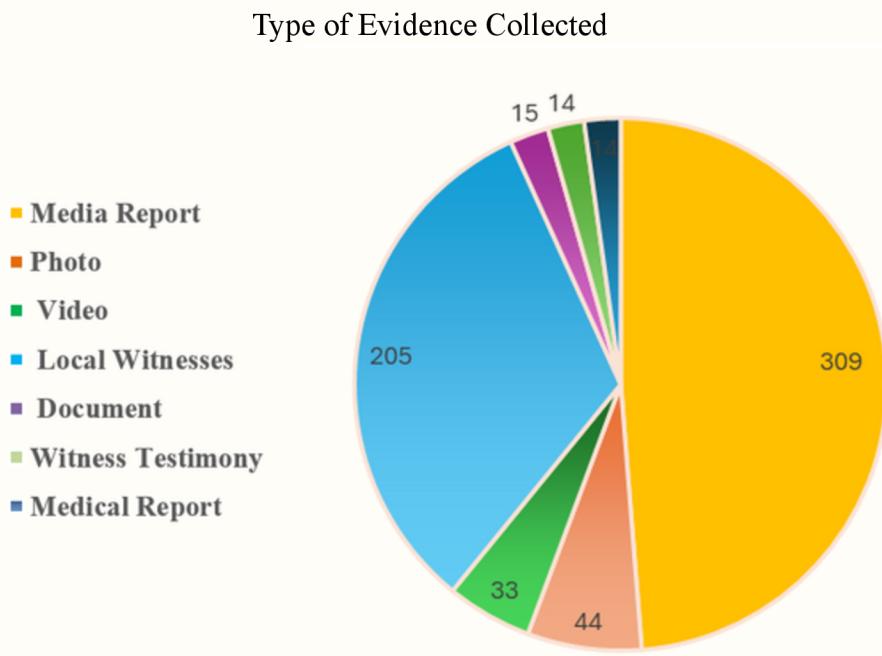


Figure 1: Types of Evidence Collected Across Seven Distinct Categories

All primary data were collected by the research team, and the analyses presented in this report are based on a comprehensive review and synthesis of credible international and local sources, including:

- Reports by United Nations entities, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Reputable international news agencies, such as The Guardian and the Associated Press (AP)
- Statistical data from UNICEF and the World Bank
- Local and domestic reports

1.4. Documentation Limitations: Remote Monitoring and the Surveillance Context

The principal limitations included the following:

- Digital disruption: The systematic reduction of internet traffic to approximately 1 percent during periods of mass detentions in Kabul and several provinces, aimed at preventing the real-time uploading of evidence.
- Surveillance of communications: The use of informants and phone inspections fostered widespread self-censorship among victims, leaving many without the ability or willingness to report violations.
- Geographic suppression: Reporting from the majority of provinces was disproportionately low, indicating extensive information suppression across large parts of the country.

1.5. Ethical Considerations and Data Protection

The core protocols applied in this research included the following:

- Anonymization: All identifying information relating to the 411 victims and their family members, both within the text of this report and across data collection systems, has been fully removed and replaced with secure coded identifiers.
- Offshore data storage: Primary databases have been stored in encrypted repositories located outside the country to prevent any access by Taliban affiliated institutions, including the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), as well as by any unauthorized third parties.

2. Political and Legal Context

2.1. Legal Codification of Apartheid: The PVPV 2024 Law and Bureaucratic Controls

By 2025, the human rights crisis in Afghanistan had evolved from a series of reactive and fragmented measures into an institutionalized and legally codified system of gender-based repression. The central axis of this transformation was the adoption of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) Law on 21 August 2024. This law provides a formal legal framework for a system that international legal scholars, United Nations experts, and Afghanistan women's rights defenders have described as gender apartheid (HRC, 58th, p. 3).

The PVPV Law does not merely regulate conduct; it functions as an instrument of comprehensive domination, deliberately depriving women and girls of their fundamental rights to dignity, security, and autonomy. This legal framework has, in effect, excluded women from public life and established an institutionalized system of discrimination and domination that may amount to crimes against humanity, particularly the crime of gender-based persecution.

2.2. Key Taliban Decrees: From Dress Code Restrictions to Biological Enforcement

In 2025, Taliban governance operates through a series of interlinked decrees whose shared objective is the gradual and systematic exclusion of women from multiple spheres of social life. These decrees should not be interpreted as isolated measures, but as components of a coherent architecture of repression, beginning with the regulation of outward appearance and culminating in the biological and institutional restriction of women.

This architecture of repression can be analytically disaggregated into three principal layers:

1. Physical and Symbolic Control of the Body

Articles 3 and 13 of the PVPV Law mandate that women cover their bodies fully with thick and loose clothing. These regulations render the female body a subject of constant state surveillance and make women's presence in public spaces conditional, burdensome, and inherently unsafe.

2. Erasure of Social Presence and Agency

At the next stage, women's voices are classified as awrah, and any singing, recitation, or even speaking in public by women is prohibited. This policy deprives women not only of social participation but also of the most basic forms of self expression in public, resulting in their structural silencing.

3. Transition to Gender Based and Institutional Persecution

Beyond the continued ban on girls' access to secondary schools and universities, which by March 2025 affected approximately 2.2 million girls, the Taliban issued a decree in December 2024 prohibiting women's access to private medical education institutions. This measure, which encompasses fields such as nursing and midwifery, carries direct and long-term consequences for women's health, increasing the risk of maternal mortality by approximately 50 percent. As a result, future cohorts of women health professionals, essential for providing gender-segregated health care for women under existing legal frameworks are being systematically eliminated (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p. 10).

Alongside this analytical framework, the most significant decrees and enforcement-related developments of 2025 examined in this report are outlined chronologically below:

- **19 July 2025:** Consolidation of the pattern of “oral and unsigned decrees” by the leadership in Kandahar, aimed at managing power transitions and appointments without legal accountability.
- **22 July 2025:** Mandatory implementation of the “Mahram card” for women employed in public and private offices in Kandahar, conditioning employment on the full-time presence of a male guardian (Mahram).
- **25 September 2025:** Absolute prohibition on the treatment of women by male doctors in dental clinics in Kandahar, coupled with the imposition of direct oversight by Muhtasibs over medical procedures.
- **6 October 2025:** Systematic closure of literacy centers and vocational training courses (including tailoring and computer skills) in the provinces of Bamyan, Panjshir, and Nangarhar.
- **23 November 2025:** Public calls issued in mosques in Kandahar urging the surrender and reporting of “disobedient” women (for failure to comply with dress codes or for leaving the home without permission) to offices of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice for “correction.”

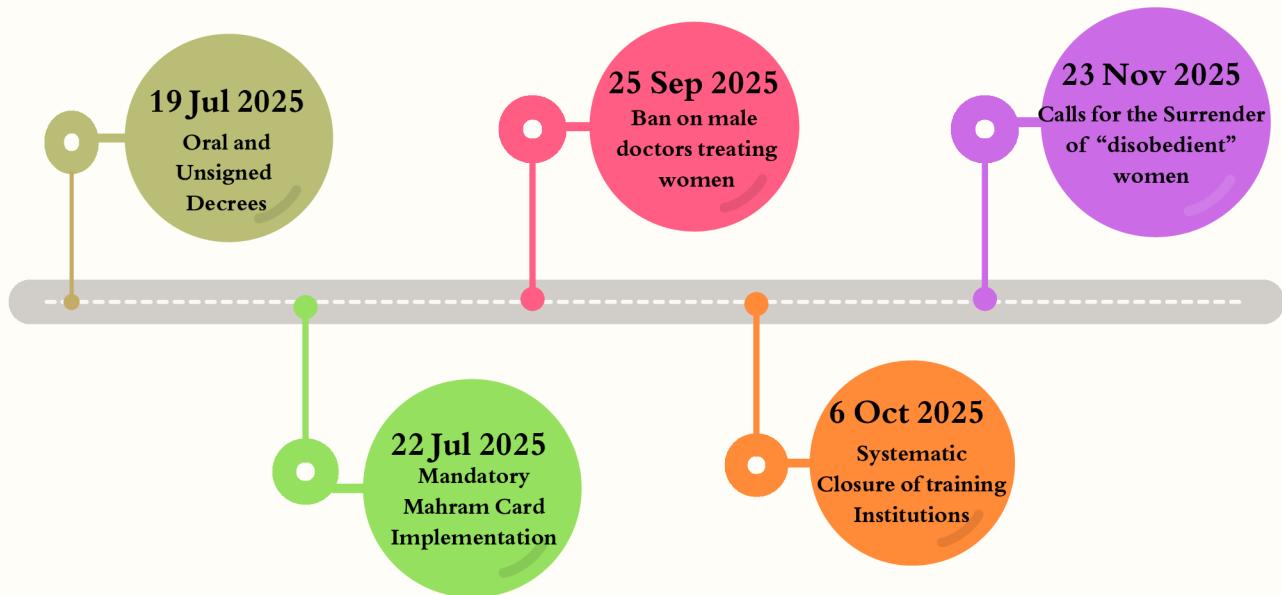


Figure 2: Evolution of Exclusionary Decrees. This timeline illustrates how restrictions have progressed from dress codes toward critical domains of health and livelihoods.

2.3. Transition to Informal and Oral Decrees: Evading International Accountability

One of the most significant political developments in 2025 was the leadership in Kandahar's shift toward the use of "informal and oral decrees." This transition from formally promulgated laws to a system of flexible authoritarianism is widely regarded as a deliberate strategy to consolidate internal power while simultaneously evading international legal accountability and oversight.

The absence of documentary transparency has created profound legal uncertainty for the population of Afghanistan. Many restrictions are now enforced through oral instructions that vary across provinces, rendering the legal environment unpredictable and enabling local authorities to act with broad discretion and without effective oversight (HRC, 59th, p. 5).

By removing official signatures and seals from many directives issued in 2025, the Taliban leadership has sought to obscure chains of command and impede the documentation of human rights violations by international bodies, including the International Criminal Court.

2.4. Institutionalization of Repression: Expansion of the Muhtasib System

In 2025, the legal framework was implemented by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (MPVPV), originally established by the Taliban in 1996 and reactivated in September 2021. The Ministry operates with the support of over 3,300 inspectors, known as Muhtasibs, without judicial oversight or independent checks and balances (UN Women, 2025, p. 4; U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p. 7).

Muhtasibs are vested with broad discretionary authority to identify and punish perceived violations of the moral code, including dress requirements and Mahram obligations. The institutionalization of this system has resulted in extensive digital and physical surveillance, with Muhtasibs authorized to inspect citizens' mobile phones at checkpoints and to enter private homes to monitor compliance and suppress dissent (HRC, 58th, p. 5).

This comprehensive enforcement mechanism has generated an environment of pervasive fear and surveillance, leading to widespread self-censorship and the systematic suppression of remaining civic spaces.

2.5. Annexing the Household: Coercing Male Family Members as Enforcers of Domestic Repression

In 2025, the Taliban's repressive strategy achieved a critical objective: the incorporation of the family's private sphere into the state surveillance system, effectively securitizing the household. This was implemented through the formal assignment of responsibility to male family members for enforcing compliance by women within the household. Under directives issued in 2025, men are subject to beatings, detention, and employment-related consequences if female family members are deemed by the Taliban to have violated imposed dress codes or restrictions on movement (HRC, 59th, p. 6).

This diffusion of responsibility has produced a pattern of "preemptive compliance," whereby families proactively restrict the freedoms of women and girls to avoid confrontation with authorities. By coercing male family members and securitizing the household, the regime has transformed the home into a state-controlled environment, ensuring that even when women are absent from public spaces, they remain under continuous surveillance by a government designated enforcer. This inward extension of surveillance constitutes the backbone of the 2025 control system, designed to ensure the complete social exclusion of women through mechanisms of enforced familial self regulation.

3. Identification of Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

The primary research data, comprising 411 independently documented cases recorded in 2025, demonstrate that violence against women and girls in Afghanistan is not a collection of isolated acts, but rather a coherent, targeted, and institutionalized pattern enforced by formal structures. This chapter categorizes the principal forms of documented violence and serves as an analytical reference framework for the chapters that follow.

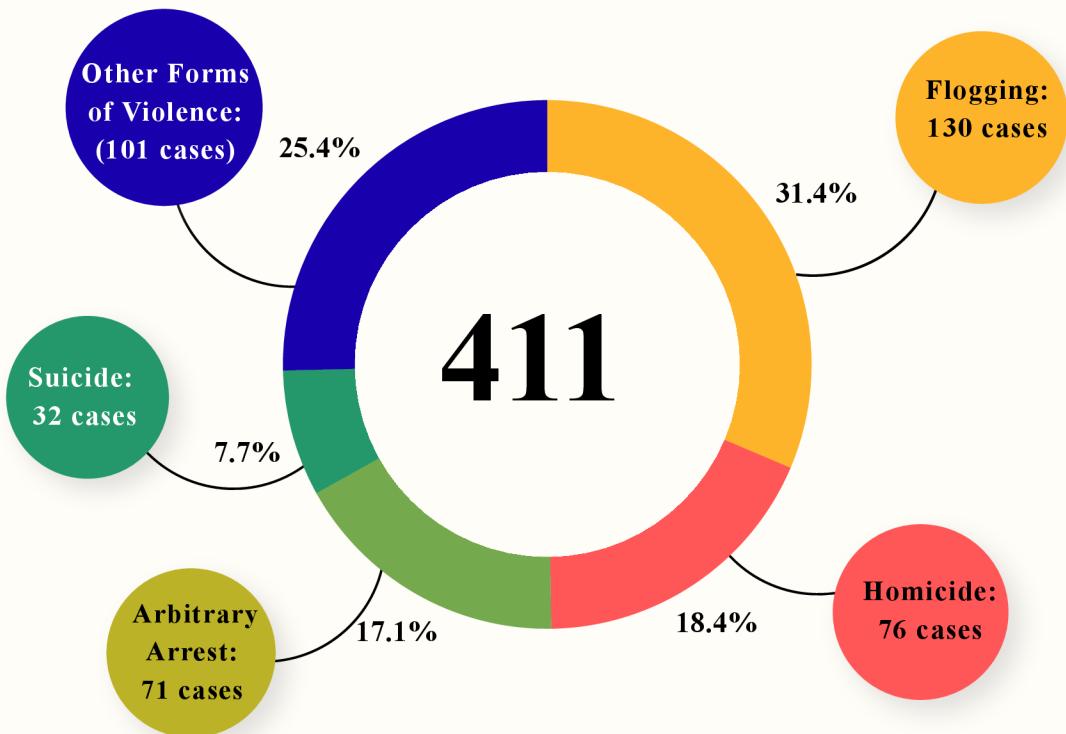


Figure 3: Overview of Documented Incidents in 2025; these data illustrate the extensive scope of violations of women's fundamental rights across physical health, psychological well-being, and individual freedoms.

3.1. Direct Physical Violence

Analysis of the data indicates that direct physical violence was among the most prevalent forms of repression in 2025. Among the documented cases, 118 instances of severe beatings and 130 instances of public flogging were recorded. These punishments were frequently carried out without any formal judicial process and solely on the basis of the discretion exercised by Muhtasibs, as well as elements affiliated with the General Directorate of Intelligence (HRC, 58th, p. 4).

The spatial and temporal patterns of these acts of violence demonstrate that corporal punishments were deliberately imposed in public spaces, at checkpoints, or in high-traffic areas. In many instances, local populations were compelled, coerced, threatened, or encouraged to attend the sites where punishments were administered.

The objective of this approach was not limited to the individual punishment of victims, but rather to the creation of a collective deterrent effect and the instillation of widespread fear among other women and members of society.

Qualitative evidence indicates that many victims, after experiencing physical violence, suffered severe restrictions on movement, withdrew from social activities, and engaged in behavioral self-censorship. From this perspective, direct physical violence functions as the starting point of a chain of long-term psychological and social consequences.

3.2. Lethal Violence: Killings of Women and Documentation of 76 Intentional Homicides

The gravest dimension of the 2025 crisis is the escalation of lethal violence against women. The research team documented and verified 76 cases of intentional killings (femicide), involving women who resisted property confiscation, forced marriage, or being compelled to return to abusive relationships. The pattern of these killings demonstrates that lethal violence constituted an integral component of a mechanism designed to suppress and ultimately eliminate women's resistance, rather than being an incidental consequence of generalized insecurity.

The research team emphasizes that these 76 cases represent a minimum estimate, as many extrajudicial killings remain undocumented and unreported due to the pervasive climate of repression and threats faced by the families of survivors.

3.3. Psychological Violence: Suicidal Ideation as a Final Act of Protest

The 32 documented suicides resulting in death among the 411 recorded cases reflect a catastrophic deterioration in the mental health of women and girls. International observers have interpreted these acts not merely as clinical psychological failures, but as a form of "final act of protest" against the systematic erasure of female identity. The Observatory's key findings directly link this increase in self-harm to the lack of educational and professional opportunities, particularly for the 18–34 age group, which accounts for over 82 percent of the victim database. The majority of psychological violence originates from persistent verbal threats, warrantless home intrusions, surveillance of private communications, and related practices.

Consequently, 90 percent of women in Afghanistan now rate their mental health as "poor" or "very poor," yet they remain trapped in an environment where mental health services are extremely limited, and access to specialized care has become increasingly "inaccessible" due to gender-segregation requirements (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p. 10).

3.4. Sexual Violence: Reports of Rape in Taliban Detention

The research team recorded and verified three cases of sexual violence in 2025 and emphasized that, given the nature of the violence, there is a likelihood of additional cases; however, due to prevailing societal attitudes and fear of the regime, many of these incidents remain unreported. The documentation of these cases is very difficult because of the severity of social stigma and pressure on victims.

Sources indicate that in some cases, sexual assault was often used as a method of interrogation or “recreational torture” in detention facilities operated by the regime’s General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI). These violations were primarily concentrated among women activists and those accused of moral corruption, with the aim of destroying the victim’s social reputation and ensuring future silence. (HRC, 59th, p.11)

3.5. Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearance: The Role of the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI)

Arbitrary detentions constituted one of the central pillars of the state’s control strategy in 2025, with 72 cases recorded and verified. The highest concentration of these detentions occurred in Kabul Province (39 cases), where GDI, operating under maximum surveillance measures, sought to neutralize any potential civic activity.

According to monitoring protocols, many of these detentions were accompanied by enforced disappearances, with victims held in unofficial locations and denied access to legal counsel. Release was granted only after male family members signed written guarantees on behalf of the detainees (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p.13).

3.6. Institutionalized Violence: The Disciplinary System as Centralized State Policy

Primary research data indicate that institutionalized violence refers to the use of administrative mechanisms by the state to restrict women’s presence in public life. This system is characterized by a pattern of “non-response,” whereby 258 of the 411 recorded and verified cases received no intervention from judicial or medical authorities, demonstrating that the 2025 legal framework effectively operates as a continuation of state repression.

Evidence of institutional violence in 2025 includes the following:

- The Mahram Card system in Kandahar Province, which obstructs women’s access to healthcare services and employment.
- The closure of the last remaining women’s safe houses, leaving victims caught between active physical threats and the absence of shelter.
- The annulment of divorces issued during the Republican period, which, through Circular No. 15, has forced thousands of women back into violent marriages.

Data analysis further indicates that the Taliban have moved beyond regulating social behavior and entered a phase of organized and biologically oriented persecution, in which the systematic denial of women’s institutional rights functions as a primary instrument of governance.

4. Analysis of Violence Across Three Age Groups

This chapter examines age-based targeting as a central axis of repression in 2025. Disaggregating the data by age groups reveals distinct patterns of violence, structural exclusion, and systematic deprivation. The findings indicate that repression has not been applied uniformly, but rather has been calibrated according to the social, cognitive, and biological roles associated with each age group. Within this framework, age has become a key instrument for exercising control, imposing punishment, and facilitating the gradual removal of women and girls from the structures of society.

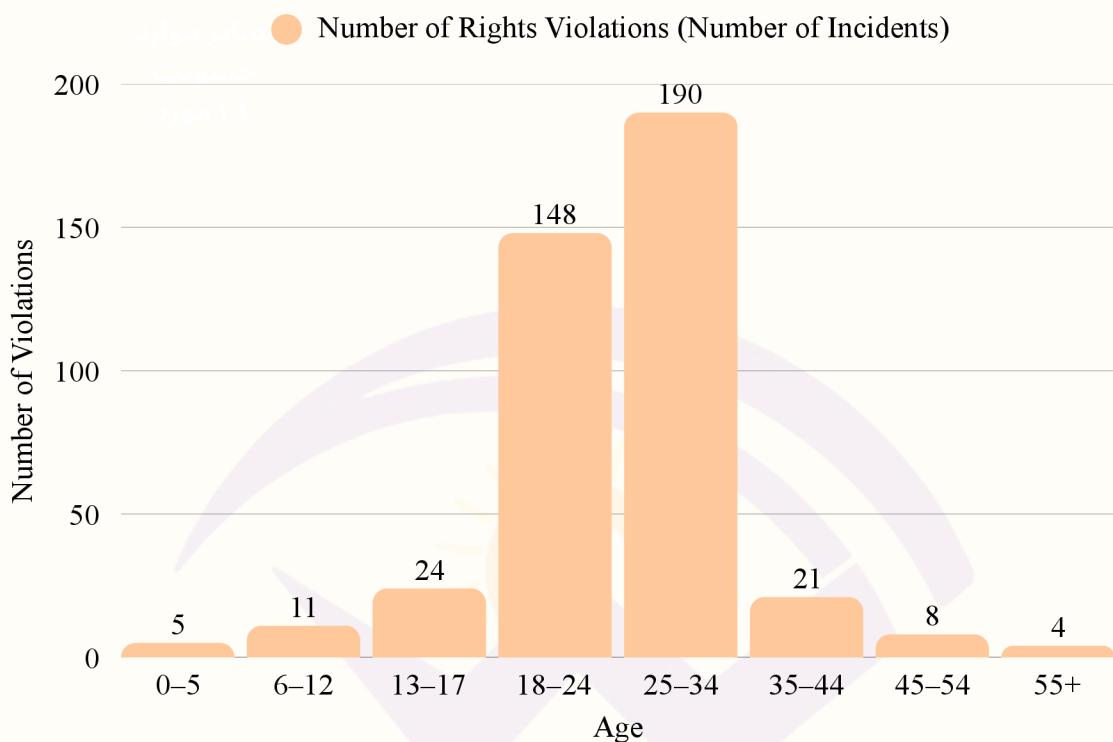


Figure 4: Demographic Analysis of Victims; The concentration of repression on the young and educated generation constitutes evidence of a strategy aimed at eliminating awareness and the potential for change within Afghanistan women's society.

4.1. Vulnerability of Children and Adolescent Girls (Ages 0–17): Risk of Child Labor and Early Marriage

Although the number of documented cases of direct violence affecting this group is limited (16 cases involving girls aged 0–12 and 24 cases involving girls aged 13–17), the data indicate that these children have been subjected to the systematic collapse of protective, educational, and safeguarding mechanisms.

Available evidence confirms that girls aged 0–17 face elevated risks of child marriage, child labor, abuse, and trafficking. This heightened vulnerability is directly linked to the ban on girls' education, imposed household poverty, and the systematic dismantling of social support networks (HRC, 58th, p. 9).

The redefinition of “childhood” based on physical signs of puberty, rather than the internationally recognized threshold of 18 years, has effectively resulted in the systematic removal of essential legal protections, leaving girls entirely vulnerable. As a direct consequence of this protection gap, documented cases show that girls within this age range, in the absence of any legal or social safeguards, have died by suicide as a “final act of protest” against forced marriage to middle-aged Taliban commanders.

4.2. Young Women (Ages 18–34): Systematic Targeting of an Educated and Aware Generation

Analysis of the 2025 data indicates that women aged 18–34 experienced the highest volume of human rights violations. The 18–24 age group (148 cases) and the 25–34 age group (190 cases) together accounted for 338 of the total recorded incidents. More than 140 of these women had completed or partially completed higher education, reinforcing the hypothesis of “gendered elite targeting” and indicating that the regime systematically sought to incapacitate women with the capacity for analysis, organization, and the transmission of narratives beyond national borders. This concentration of repression on the most dynamic, educated, and socially engaged cohort of women empirically confirms the hypothesis of “targeting awareness as a perceived threat.”

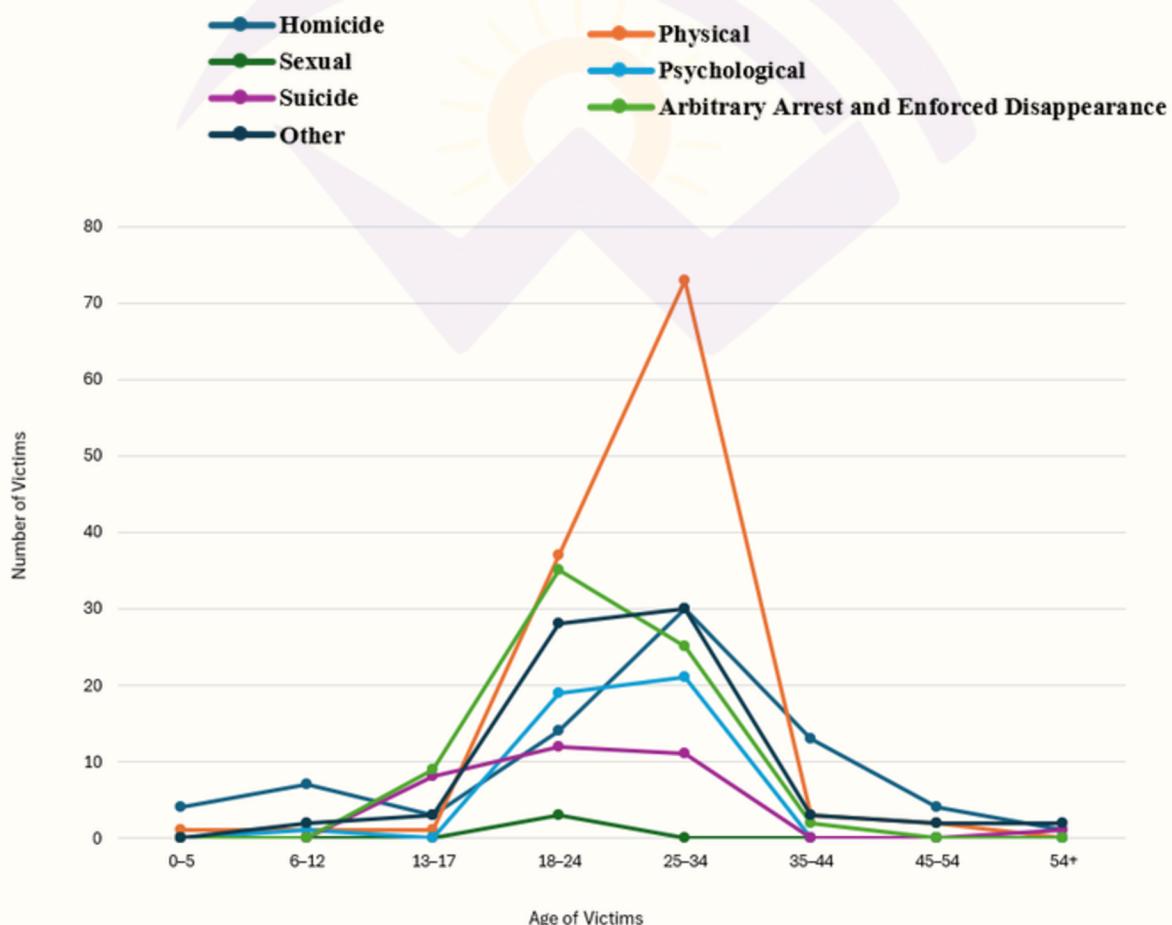


Figure 5: Types and Severity of Violence Across Eight Different Age Groups

Women in this age group were the most frequent victims of arbitrary detention (71 cases) and public corporal punishment, including flogging (130 cases). The pattern of enforcement employed by the GDI exhibits elements of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, and has been implemented within the framework of an organized policy aimed at suppressing women's civic, online, and clandestine activities (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p. 12).

4.3. Older Women (Ages 35 and Above): Asset Confiscation and the Collapse of Retirement Support

For women aged 35 and above, primary data have identified at least 33 documented violations, predominantly involving economic deprivation, confiscation or loss of assets, and the collapse of social support networks established during the Republican period, particularly affecting older women who have demonstrated resistance.

One of the most severe cases among the independently documented files recorded in 2025 involves the brutal torture and attempted killing (throat-slitting) of a woman in a province of west-central Afghanistan. This attack was carried out deliberately at night, with intent to kill, by individuals affiliated with the Taliban, following a verbal confrontation that had occurred the previous day between the victim and family members of a Taliban fighter. According to the research team's findings, the pattern applied against older women in 2025 reflects the concurrent use of physical violence and targeted economic deprivation as systematic instruments of control.

In addition, this age group has been severely affected by the abolition of the state pension system in April 2024, which left approximately 150,000 retirees, including many widows—without income or financial support (HRC, 58th, p. 9).

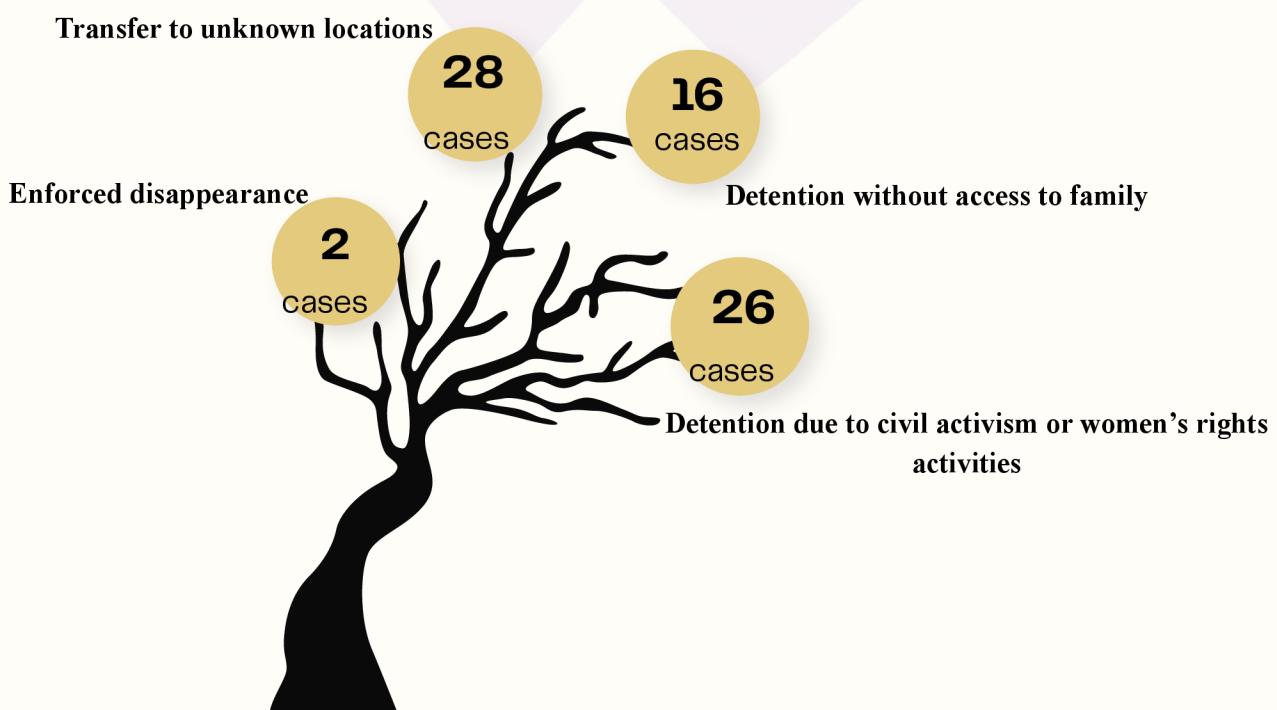


Figure 6: Arbitrary Detentions by the Taliban (Based on Documented Cases)

5. Geographical Distribution of Violence Against Women and Girls

Geographical analysis of violence against women demonstrates that violations of women's rights in Afghanistan are not confined to specific or peripheral regions, but constitute a pervasive, nationwide pattern. Nevertheless, the intensity, forms, and mechanisms of violence vary according to geographic location, the degree of presence of formal institutions, and local social structures.

This chapter aims to identify spatial patterns of violence by examining the geographic distribution of recorded and verified cases, in order to clarify how repressive governance is applied differently across urban, semi-urban, and rural contexts.

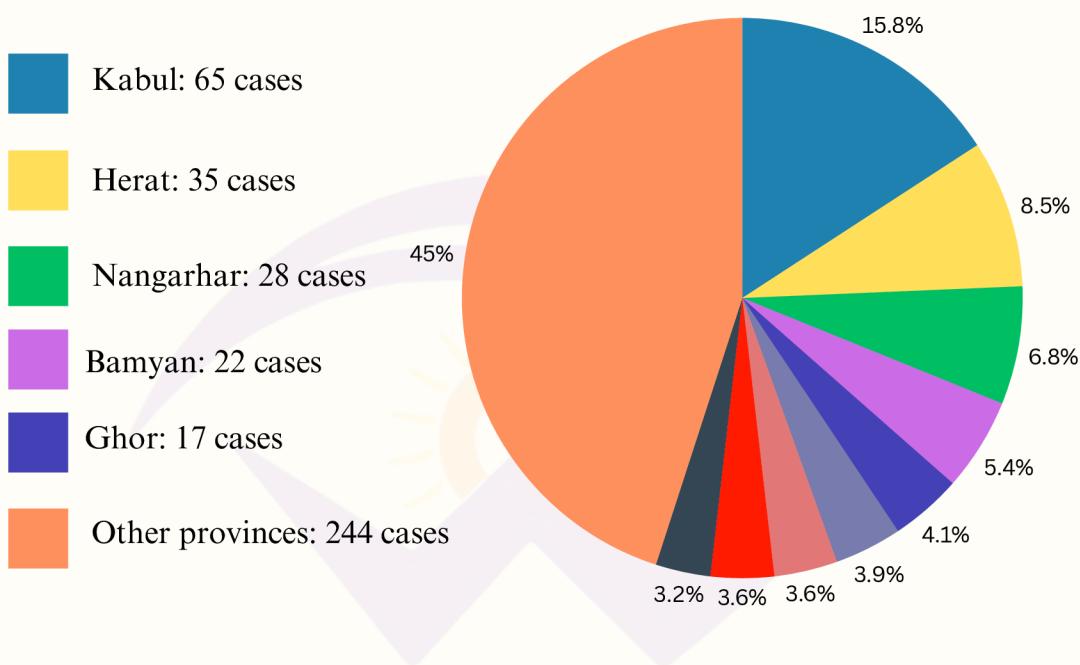


Figure 7: Geographical Distribution of Documented Violence

5.1. Kabul Province: High Concentration of Arbitrary Detentions

Data from 2025 demonstrate that Kabul Province functions as an administrative “laboratory” for the Taliban’s maximum-surveillance model. The province recorded the highest volume of human rights violations (65 cases, equivalent to 15.8 percent of all documented incidents nationwide). Findings indicate that repression in the capital has evolved from basic physical violence to a sophisticated system of “digital disruption” and targeted institutional terror.

Kabul is the primary site of arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances, with 39 of the 71 recorded and verified cases in this category occurring in the province. These detentions, often carried out by GDI, specifically target women activists, journalists, and individuals accused of violating the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) regulations.



5.2. Nangarhar Province: Lethal Enforcement and High Rate of Documented Killings

Recorded cases in 2025 identify Nangarhar Province as the deadliest province for women during that year. The province accounts for 6.8 percent of all documented cases (28 incidents) and recorded the highest number of intentional killings (16 cases).

Research data further indicate that the presence of more than 900,000 vulnerable returnees from Pakistan by the end of 2025 has intensified the protection and support crisis in the province. Returning women face a dual layer of deprivation: settlement in high-risk areas with limited services, combined with exposure to the most severe physical restrictions imposed by the Taliban (UNHCR, 2025, p. 3).

5.3. Kandahar Province: Command Center of the Mahram Card and Medical Restrictions

Although Kandahar Province recorded a lower number of reported incidents (16 cases), the primary findings of the monitoring team identify it as the “command center” for structurally engineering gender apartheid in 2025. The research team emphasizes that the lower volume of documented cases from Kandahar does not indicate safety but rather reflects severe suppression of information in an environment where mosques, urban spaces, and private homes have become centers of interrogation.

Kandahar was the point of origin of the Mahram Card system, an administrative barrier introduced in July 2025, which requires women employed in the healthcare sector to present daily documentation confirming the presence of a male guardian (Mahram) at their workplace (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p. 10).

In addition, the ban on medical education issued in December 2024 was strictly enforced in Kandahar, resulting in the closure of specialized training programs for midwives and nurses (WHO, 2025, p. 16).

5.4. Herat and Bamyan Provinces: Suppression of Regional Civil Activity and Education

In the western and central regions, primary data indicate a systematic decline of civil society activity at the regional level.

- **Herat Province (35 cases):** The province recorded the second-highest volume of documented violations (8.5 percent). Elevated rates of suicide and self-harm in Herat have been linked to the exclusion of women from the local economy and bans on their participation in public life and access to mosques during Ramadan (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p. 18).
- **Bamyan Province (22 cases):** The province has witnessed a targeted campaign aimed at dismantling women’s “informal economy.” The closure of literacy centers and vocational workshops (including tailoring and computer classes) in October 2025 has been confirmed.

These measures have been analyzed as a deliberate strategy to sever the “last lifelines of awareness” and isolate women from social support networks, resulting in increased “invisible” psychological harms, including severe depression and social withdrawal.

| Type of Violation | Province with Highest Reports | Number of Cases | Analytical Interpretation |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Homicide | Nangarhar | 16 | Recorded the highest number of cases, indicating an elevated threat to life. |
| Physical Violence | Kabul | 10 | High concentration likely linked to population density and the presence of security forces. |
| Sexual Violence | Balkh | 2 | Low number of reports points to severe underreporting. |
| Suicide | Kandahar | 5 | Rate is alarming and warrants examination of underlying social and psychological factors. |
| Arbitrary Arrest and Enforced Disappearance | Kabul | 39 | Kabul has emerged as the primary epicenter for this category of human rights |
| Other Violations | Herat | 10 | Diversity and high volume are notable. |

Figure 8 : Provinces with the Highest Reported Incidence of Each Type of Women's Rights Violation

6. Engineering Silence: From Digital Isolation to Erasure from Survival

This chapter examines a range of indirect restrictions that affected the daily lives of women in 2025. From communication blackouts and digital surveillance to the collapse of support mechanisms, restrictions on healthcare, and control over movement, these measures collectively contributed to the isolation and gradual exclusion of women from public life.

6.1. Enforced Silence: From Internet Blackouts to Digital Surveillance

In 2025, the deliberate disruption and throttling of internet and telecommunications services became a tool for isolating women. These measures blocked vital channels for reporting, seeking assistance, and accessing emergency support, severely restricting women's connections to the outside world. The disruptions were neither accidental nor technical; they were implemented alongside new restrictions, effectively turning homes into spaces of nationwide confinement.

This situation was further intensified by pervasive digital surveillance, whereby Muhtasibs inspect mobile phones at checkpoints to monitor "unauthorized" communications or access to alternative news sources. In this environment, the threat of digital exposure has become a powerful deterrent, compelling women to self-censor and remain silent, a silence that significantly hinders the transmission of evidence on women's rights violations to international bodies.

6.2. Impunity System: Closure of Women's Safe Houses and Shelters

A central component of the impunity system in 2025 was the complete dismantling of support infrastructure for women fleeing violence. The Taliban systematically dissolved the Ministry of Women's Affairs and its 27 support centers, including all women's shelters and safe houses (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p.14).

Primary research data indicate that with the closure of these last safe spaces, survivors were trapped between physical threats and the complete absence of institutional support. The lack of safe houses meant that even when violence was reported, no legal or protective response was available from formal or informal authorities. Consequently, women were often forced to return to violent domestic environments or, in cases of fleeing perceived "moral crimes," faced arbitrary detention.

6.3. Barriers to Survival: Gendered Impacts of Restrictions on Independent Access to Health Care Services

In 2025, women's right to health has been widely violated through administrative and legal barriers. The requirement to be accompanied by a mahram, imposed under the PVPV regulations, has rendered independent access to health care facilities effectively impossible for nearly 80 percent of rural women. As a result, women are denied essential treatment in dermatology and dental clinics due to the absence of female health workers and prohibitions preventing male physicians from examining or treating them.



This situation has been further exacerbated by the ban on women's medical education enacted in December 2024, a measure that will lead to a severe and long-term decline in the number of female doctors, nurses, and midwives within the national health system.

Overall, these restrictions not only limit access to health care services but actively increase the risk of mortality, with United Nations experts warning of a potential 50 percent rise in maternal mortality as a direct consequence of these institutionalized bans (U.S. Policy Advocates, 2025, p.10).

6.4. Restrictions on Freedom of Movement: Strict Mahram Requirements and Harassment at Checkpoints

Restrictions on women's mobility have moved beyond social norms and evolved into a rigid system of administrative control. A prominent example is the requirement imposed on women employed in the health sector and their male mahrams to carry physical authorization documents to prove kinship. This system mandates the physical presence of a male mahram at the workplace throughout the day—an obligation that has forced many women to resign from their jobs, as their male relatives are unable to forgo their own livelihoods.

Beyond formal employment, women face strict interrogations at checkpoints even while traveling short distances, including questioning over dress code compliance and the absence of a mahram. These restrictions subject women to constant surveillance and effectively transform public spaces into an extension of the control apparatus, depriving them of the fundamental right to safe and autonomous movement within society.

5.6. Gendered Intellectual Erasure: Long Term Consequences of the Systematic Elimination of Women's Professional Identity

Primary research data characterize the Taliban's 2025 strategy as a deliberate process of gendered intellectual erasure, disproportionately targeting the most highly educated segment of the female population. Analysis of 411 documented cases indicates that more than 140 women had completed higher education or held semi-professional qualifications, confirming that knowledge itself has become a risk factor for state-directed repression. This strategy is pursued with the explicit aim of dismantling women's leadership capacity and erasing the professional and institutional memory accumulated during the Republican era.

This process of systematic erasure was further institutionalized in August 2025, when the de facto Ministry of Higher Education ordered the removal of 18 subjects from university curricula, including human rights, gender equality, and political science. In parallel, 679 books and educational materials were banned for being inconsistent with the regime's interpretation of cultural values. For the women documented in this dataset, this emerging "bureaucracy of erasure" has transformed private homes into spaces of enforced confinement, where the sustained denial of intellectual life functions as a central mechanism of control and social exclusion (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2025, p. 26).



7. Crisis Conditions and the Complex Vulnerability of Women

This chapter examines how, in 2025, humanitarian crises, climate-related shocks, and forced returns, intersecting with prevailing gendered policies, became active mechanisms for the exclusion and erosion of women's and girls' status. This pattern reflects the governing authorities' persistent disregard for their international obligations regarding protection, equality, and human dignity.

7.1. Natural Disasters and Administrative Apartheid: The 2025 Eastern Afghanistan Earthquake

The humanitarian landscape of 2025 was profoundly altered by a devastating earthquake in eastern Afghanistan on 31 August and 1 September, resulting in over 2,200 deaths and the destruction of approximately 6,700 homes (UNHCR, 2025, p. 52).

In the aftermath, de facto authorities prioritized enforcement of the PVPV over life-saving humanitarian assistance, with roughly 70 percent of humanitarian access incidents obstructed by direct government intervention. Simultaneously, the disciplinary system remained operative even in the devastated areas: women attempting to evacuate damaged buildings were subjected to harassment at temporary checkpoints due to the absence of a mahram, and many were denied medical care either due to the shortage of female health personnel or restrictions preventing male staff from treating them.

7.2. Returnee Shock: Protection Risks Facing 1.8 Million Women Returned from Iran and Pakistan

Between January and November 2025, Afghanistan experienced an unprecedented protection crisis following the return of 2.7 million individuals, including 1.8 million from Iran and 900,000 from Pakistan. Women and girls comprised 51 percent of this returnee population and re-entered the country within a "climate of surveillance and fear," where their most basic rights had been stripped away (UNHCR, 2025, p. 6).

Reports link the sharp increase in returns to heightened physical safety concerns, with 35 percent of returning women reporting that overcrowding and the absence of secure locks in reception facilities made them feel unsafe even when accessing basic sanitation services (UNHCR, 2025, p. 17).

7.3. Precarious Return: Vulnerability of Returnees to Forced Marriage and Exploitation

The reintegration of returning women in 2025 exposed them to severe exploitation. Among all groups assessed, women returning from Pakistan had the lowest levels of access to advanced education, rendering them highly dependent on male relatives who were themselves experiencing acute economic shocks.

In provinces such as Kandahar, increases in early and forced marriages among returning girls were documented. Households facing up to 90 percent livelihood insecurity often adopted this practice as a negative coping strategy (UN Women, 2025, p. 10).

This reintegration process was further shaped by the implementation of “Directive No. 15,” a regulation permitting the annulment of divorces issued during the republican period. As a result, returning women were compelled to re-enter violent domestic environments from which they had previously escaped.

8. Collapse of Protection and Access to Justice

8.1. From the Constitution to Threats: Deprivation of Women’s Access to Justice

Documented cases indicate that following the suspension of the 2004 Constitution of the Republican period and the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the rule of law in Afghanistan has effectively collapsed. The systematic purge of women from the legal sector, including the dismissal of approximately 270 female judges, hundreds of female prosecutors, and the dissolution of the Bar Association, has resulted in a severe reduction of women’s access to justice (HRC, 59th, p. 6).

Survivors of violence are often denied the right to speak in court and must rely on their mahrams to testify on their behalf, a practice that further excludes women from judicial processes. The issuance of oral, unsigned “orders,” combined with the consolidation of prosecutorial, judicial, and enforcement roles within a single day, has eliminated legal certainty and rendered the pursuit of justice perilous. Even when severe abuses, such as physical assault, are reported, survivors frequently face threats of counter-detention, while the closure of the last remaining women’s shelters has left survivors of domestic violence without refuge or viable legal recourse (HRC, 59th, p. 8).

8.2. Institutional Silence: 258 Unaddressed Cases of Violence

Independent documentation from 2025 indicates that the current powerholders in Afghanistan have moved beyond a stage of incapacity to protect and entered a condition of “active institutional silence.” Of the 411 verified cases of violations, 258 cases equivalent to 62.7 percent, received no intervention whatsoever from judicial, medical, or social institutions.

This pattern of “non-response” reflects a deliberate policy of legal abandonment, through which approximately 85 percent of acts of violence perpetrated by state forces remain beyond the reach of any internal complaints mechanisms. As a result, the present state apparatus not only fails to fulfill its duty to protect women, but functions as an active partner in their repression.

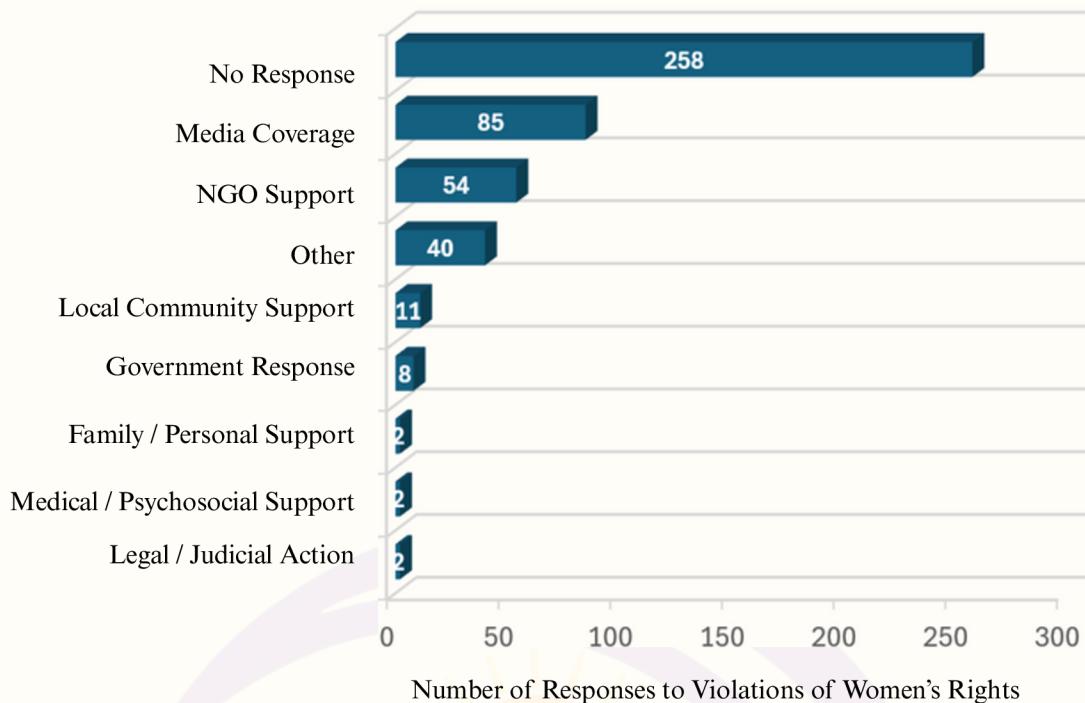


Figure 9: Distribution of Types of Responses to Violations of Women’s Rights by Number of Documented Cases

9. Institutional Silence and the Framework of Impunity

The findings presented in the preceding chapters of this report document multiple dimensions of structural violence against women in Afghanistan. These include the dismantling of support infrastructures in Chapter 6, the exclusion of women from the justice system and the pattern of institutional non response in Chapter 8, and the securitization of the family sphere through administrative and judicial policies in Chapter 2. Rather than reiterating these findings, this chapter brings them together to demonstrate how the cumulative effect of these policies has produced an integrated framework of institutional impunity, one that has effectively closed all internal avenues for protection, complaint, and redress.

9.1. From the Erosion of Protection to the Systematic Denial of Support for Women

As demonstrated in Chapter 6.2, the complete dissolution of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the closure of 27 protection centers and safe houses dismantled the formal protection network for survivors of violence. Within the analytical framework of this chapter, this action is assessed not merely as an administrative policy, but as the starting point of a systematic withdrawal of support from women at risk of violence.

The removal of these infrastructures, without the introduction of any effective alternative support mechanisms, has created conditions in which survivors of violence, even when attempting to escape life threatening environments, face the risk of arrest or punishment rather than protection. Consequently, the absence of protection has directly reinforced the impunity of perpetrators of violence.

9.2. Institutional Silence as the Pillar of Impunity

The pattern of “non-response,” analyzed in detail in Chapter 8.3, is revisited in this chapter as the central pillar of the framework of institutional impunity. The absence of judicial, medical, or social intervention in the majority of documented cases reflects a condition in which the silence of responsible institutions is not an incidental failure, but an integral component of the governing system’s operational logic.

Within this framework, the pursuit of justice or protection itself becomes a high-risk act. Survivors of violence, aware of the absence of institutional response and the potential criminal or security repercussions, are deterred from reporting abuses, thereby reproducing a self-perpetuating cycle of violence and impunity.

9.3. Structural Obstruction of Justice and the Elimination of Independent Voices

As documented in Chapter 8.2, the systematic dismissal of female judges and prosecutors, the revocation of licenses for independent lawyers, and the dissolution of professional legal bodies have resulted in the effective collapse of women’s access to justice. Within the framework of this chapter, these measures are analyzed as complementary to institutional silence.

The elimination of independent legal actors ensures that even in the rare instances where abuses are reported, judicial processes are incapable of producing an effective response. Consequently, the existing legal system is not only ineffective in addressing violations, but functions in practice as a mechanism for entrenching impunity for perpetrators.

9.4. Incorporation of the Private Sphere into the Apparatus of Impunity

Policies analyzed in Chapter 2.5 as the “weaponization of the family” are reinterpreted in this chapter as an extension of the framework of impunity into the private sphere. By transferring responsibility for women’s “compliance” to male family members and employing instruments such as forced mediation and the review of divorce rulings, the state has transformed the domestic sphere into an integral component of its control apparatus.

This approach enables the enforcement of control, silencing, and social exclusion of women without the continuous presence of security forces, while simultaneously obscuring the state’s direct responsibility. The result is the consolidation of structural impunity through the privatization of violence.

9.5. Summary: Complete Collapse of Domestic Pathways

The combination of the dismantling of support infrastructures, systematic institutional silence, the obstruction of access to justice, and the incorporation of the private sphere into the prevailing control order demonstrates that, in 2025, no effective domestic pathways for protection or accountability remain. In practical terms, this situation has produced a framework of institutional impunity that stands in clear contradiction to Afghanistan's international obligations.

Accordingly, the findings of this chapter confirm that recourse to international mechanisms is not a political choice, but a necessity arising from the complete collapse of the domestic system of protection and justice. This assessment forms the basis for the strategic recommendations presented in the following chapter.

10. The Imperative for International Intervention and Pathways to Accountability

10.1. From Domestic Collapse to International Obligation

As demonstrated in Chapter 9, the convergence of the dismantling of support infrastructures, systematic institutional silence, the obstruction of access to justice, and the privatization of violence has resulted in the complete collapse of domestic pathways for protection and accountability. Under such conditions, any assumption of the existence of "internal solutions" for the protection of women and girls lacks an objective foundation.

Accordingly, recourse to international mechanisms is not a political or preferential choice, but an obligation arising from the total absence of effective protection at the national level.

10.2. Persistent Violations of International Obligations

The findings of this report demonstrate that the policies and practices in force in 2025 are in sustained violation of Afghanistan's international obligations, including those arising from:

- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); and
- peremptory norms of international law prohibiting discrimination and gender-based violence.

These violations are not isolated or temporary, but structural, pervasive, and grounded in institutionalized official and unofficial policies.

10.3. The Responsibility of the International Community under Conditions of Institutional Impunity

Where a governing system is either actively or passively unwilling or unable to fulfill its fundamental obligations to protect the civilian population, particularly women and girls, the responsibility of the international community becomes paramount.

The framework of institutional impunity documented in this report meets the necessary thresholds for the activation of international monitoring, accountability, and action, particularly in contexts where violence and discrimination have been transformed into instruments of governance.

10.4. International Mechanisms for Accountability and Monitoring

In light of the complete closure of domestic pathways, this report underscores the necessity of utilizing the following mechanisms:

- Strengthening and expanding the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan;
- Targeted documentation for use in international accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court;
- Activation of the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures, particularly those addressing gender-based violence;
- Ensuring that international engagement policies with the de facto authorities are conditioned on verifiable improvements in the situation of women's rights.

10.5. Final Conclusion

The findings of this report establish that, in 2025, women and girls in Afghanistan are living under conditions in which they are not only deprived of effective domestic protection, but are also subjected to a framework of institutional impunity that has effectively extinguished access to justice, protection, and remedies.

In such circumstances, silence, inaction, or delayed engagement by the international community risks normalizing this situation and entrenching serious and systematic human rights violations. Coordinated, sustained, and rights based action grounded in international law therefore constitutes not merely a moral responsibility, but a legal obligation.

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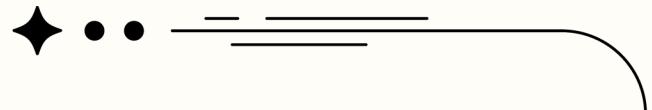
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