

URGENT ACTION

STUDENT AT RISK OF DEPORTATION TO AFGHANISTAN

18-year old student Taibeh Abbasi is at imminent risk of being deported to Afghanistan, a country she has never been to. Despite the rise in the number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, Norway has declared Kabul safe for returns. Should Taibeh Abbasi be deported to war-torn Afghanistan, she would be at serious risk of human rights violations.

18 year-old student **Taibeh Abbasi**, alongside her mother and two brothers, is at risk of being deported from Norway to Afghanistan at any moment following the Supreme Court's decision on 30 November 2017 to reject the family's appeal of the decision to revoke their refugee status. On 19 February, the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) rejected their petition for reversal and ordered the family to leave Norway by 11 March.

Taibeh Abbasi was born in Iran to Afghan parents belonging to the Hazara minority ethnic group. The family fled Afghanistan in 1998, during the Taliban's regime. Due to discrimination in Iran, Taibeh Abbasi's family left for Norway in the summer of 2012. They have since lived in Trondheim, central Norway, where Taibeh Abbasi and her brothers attend school and have fully integrated. Taibeh Abbasi and her family were granted refugee status in Norway in September 2012. However on 25 March 2014 the Immigration Director revoked the family's status, stating that there was insufficient proof of a well-founded fear of persecution in Afghanistan and that Kabul was deemed a safe place for return. The family's appeal before the Immigration Appeals Board on 14 October 2017 was rejected, as were subsequent appeals before Norway's courts. The Norwegian migration authorities maintain that Kabul constitutes an internal flight alternative for Taibeh Abbasi and her family. In terms of civilian casualties, however, Kabul is currently the most dangerous province in Afghanistan. The security situation in the country is deteriorating and no area can be considered safe, as a range of armed groups are fighting for the control of territory. If deported, Taibeh Abbasi and her family would be exposed to a risk of serious harm.

"In Kabul there is no future for me and my brothers", says Taibeh Abbasi. "We will be exposed to discrimination and physically feel what it is like to be an exposed minority. I as a girl am particularly exposed. My dreams of an education and a career will be broken".

Many Afghans in Norway are at risk of return to war-ravaged Afghanistan despite these returns being unlawful under international law. The binding international legal principle of *non-refoulement* means that European countries cannot transfer anyone to a place where they are at a real risk of serious human rights violations. Sending people to harm and persecution in Afghanistan, as violence escalates, is a violation of international law.

Please write immediately in Norwegian, English or your own language, calling on the authorities:

- To immediately halt the deportation of Taibeh Abbasi and her family to Afghanistan;
- To temporarily halt all returns to Afghanistan until they can take place in safety and dignity.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JULY 2018 TO:

Prime Minister
Ms. Erna Solberg
Email: erna.solberg@smk.dep.no /
postmottak@smk.dep.no
Twitter: @erna_solberg
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Leader of the Liberal Party of Norway
Ms. Trine Skei Grande
Email: tsg@kud.dep.no
Twitter: @Trinesg
Salutation: Dear Ms. Grande

Leader of the Opposition Party
Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre
Email: jonas-gahr.store@stortinget.no
Salutation: Dear Mr. Støre

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HER EXCELLENCY MRS MONA JUUL, Royal Norwegian Embassy, 25 Belgrave Square SW1X 8QD, 020 7591 5500, Fax 020 7245 6993, emb.london@mfa.no, www.norway.org.uk

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 9/18. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur36/7735/2018/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Afghanistan is currently gripped by a non-international armed conflict between what are known as “Anti-Government Elements” and pro-government forces. Among the Anti-Government Elements are the Taliban and the group calling itself the Islamic State, but more than 20 armed groups are operating inside the country. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that 2016 was the deadliest year on record for civilians in Afghanistan, with 11,418 people killed or injured. According to the UN, conflict-related insecurity and violence inflicted severe harm on civilians, especially women and children.

The deterioration of the security situation has persisted into 2017. Between 1 January and 30 June 2017, UNAMA documented 5,243 civilian casualties. Most were injured by the Anti-Government Elements, using improvised explosive devices such as suicide bombs. In terms of civilian casualties, Kabul is the most dangerous province in Afghanistan, although people are at risk across the country. The conflict is volatile and involves multiple groups that are constantly seeking to gain or regain territory, and whose actions can be unpredictable.

Many people in the country are also at particular risk of persecution across the country, regardless of whether the area is under the effective control of Pro-Government Forces or Anti-Government Elements. In areas under the control of the government, state agents routinely perpetrate human rights violations. Pro-government armed groups are responsible for abuses such as deliberate killings, assault, extortion and intimidation. In regions in which Anti-Government Elements are in control, human rights violations are widespread. These include extrajudicial executions, torture and ill-treatment, as well as denials of the rights to free movement, freedom of expression, political participation, and access to education and the right to health care. Moreover, both sides of the conflict perpetrate human rights violations in areas outside their respective control.

But even though violence is on the rise, European countries are forcing increasing numbers of people to go to Afghanistan – including almost 10,000 people in 2016. Norway is one of the European countries that returns the most Afghans. According to Eurostat, 760 people were returned in 2016 and 172 in the first half of 2017. Amnesty International has documented harrowing cases of Afghans who have been returned from European countries only to be killed, injured in bomb attacks, or left to live in constant fear of persecution.

To effect these returns, Norway, together with other European governments, have arbitrarily called some areas of “Afghanistan” safe, relying on the idea of an “Internal Flight Alternative”. In other words, the authorities recognize that the person’s province of origin is dangerous but expect them to live elsewhere in the country. Norway considers that Kabul can constitute an internal flight alternative, but Kabul province continues to be the site of the highest number of civilian casualties and as such there is no credible internal flight alternative in Afghanistan.

Name: Taibeh Abbasi

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 9/18 Index: EUR 36/7957/2018 Issue Date: 28 February 2018