

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Akashika Mate

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. WFP Warns of Worsening Hunger Crisis in Afghanistan–10 Million at Risk (Kabul Now, July 07; WFP in Afghanistan/X, July 07)

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has issued a stark warning that over 10 million Afghans are at risk of severe hunger this summer, as funding cuts force drastic reductions in humanitarian aid across the country. In a statement on July 07, 2025, WFP revealed it currently has resources to assist only 1 million people, leaving millions without critical food support during the most challenging months of the year. WFP officials highlighted that “we are running out of resources, and we are running out of time,” as the gap between urgent needs and available assistance widens. The crisis stems from a 40% cut in overall humanitarian aid to Afghanistan this year, affecting not just food relief but also access to clean water, healthcare, and education for the most vulnerable.

Key Factors Behind the Crisis

- **Funding Shortfalls:** The 2025 UN Humanitarian Response Plan requested \$3.6 billion, but less than half has been secured by mid-year.
- **Climate Shocks:** Droughts, floods, and erratic weather patterns have devastated agricultural livelihoods, exacerbating food insecurity.
- **Economic Collapse:** Since the Taliban takeover in 2021, Afghanistan’s economic isolation and reduced international engagement have left 28 million people in need of aid.
- **Access Constraints:** Rural and isolated regions remain hardest hit, with deteriorating access to basic services.

The WFP says it is being forced to prioritise only the most vulnerable, particularly in climate-affected and extremely impoverished areas. Without urgent donor action, humanitarian agencies fear a surge in malnutrition, displacement, and social unrest. The agency has called on the international community to close the funding gap, warning that Afghanistan faces a preventable humanitarian catastrophe if global donors fail to respond.

2. UN Condemns New Taliban Media Curbs, Cites Escalating Fear and Self-Censorship (Amu TV, July 10; ShiaWaves, July 11; The Tribune India, July 11)

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has raised alarm over the Taliban's latest media directive, warning it will deepen censorship and further strangle press freedom in the country. In a statement released on July 10, UNAMA criticised the Taliban's newly issued 'Policy for Holding Political Programs (Roundtables) in Afghanistan', which mandates pre-approval of political programmes, participants, and guests by the Taliban's Ministry of Information and Culture. The four-page directive compels media outlets to submit all political content to government censors before broadcast. Discussions must align with the Islamic Emirate's policies, and criticism of Taliban officials is restricted to 'respectful' terms under Islamic law, with violations punishable by license suspension or worse.

UNAMA warned that the formalisation of such repressive practices will "fuel widespread fear, increase self-censorship, and erode the fundamental rights of journalists" in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, the country has witnessed an unprecedented crackdown on independent media, including arrests, intimidation, and outright shutdowns of dissenting voices. Afghanistan's deteriorating media landscape is reflected in its dramatic fall on the [2025 World Press Freedom Index](#), where it ranks 175th out of 180 countries with just 17.88 points, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Media rights groups and international watchdogs are urging the Taliban to reverse these draconian measures and uphold basic freedoms. Failure to do so, they warn, will transform Afghanistan into one of the most repressive environments globally for free speech and independent journalism.

3. Unidentified Drone Spotted Over Kandahar, Sparks Surveillance Concerns (Khaama Press, July 14)

Reports from Kandahar province indicate the appearance of an unidentified drone over the city on the evening of July 13, raising fresh concerns about heightened aerial surveillance in Afghanistan. Local eyewitnesses noted the drone's presence from around 8:00 PM, circling overhead for several hours before disappearing without any official comment. So far, Taliban

authorities have made no statement clarifying the drone's origin or purpose. The unexplained incident has alarmed Kandahar residents, fuelling fears amidst an already tense security environment.

Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, there has been a noticeable uptick in drone activity, especially over key southern regions like Kandahar. Such aerial movements are often attributed to foreign intelligence-gathering, with the United States maintaining an "over-the-horizon" counter-terrorism posture post-withdrawal. Security analysts view these developments as part of a broader pattern of regional surveillance aimed at monitoring terrorist threats and the Taliban's internal power dynamics. However, the absence of official explanations risks fuelling civilian anxiety and mistrust. Without greater transparency from both domestic authorities and international stakeholders, such incidents may further complicate Afghanistan's fragile security landscape. Locals and experts alike stress the need for clear communication and accountability to ensure stability and foster trust among the population.

4. KSrelief Distributes Food Baskets to Afghan Returnees ([Arab News, July 15](#))

The Saudi aid agency KSrelief has distributed food assistance to vulnerable Afghan families as part of its ongoing humanitarian initiatives in Afghanistan, as well as in Sudan and Lebanon. In its latest update, KSrelief announced the distribution of 120 food baskets to Afghan refugees returning from Pakistan, who have resettled in Omari camp near the Torkham border crossing. According to the agency, at least 720 individuals benefited from this distribution, which falls under a dedicated security and emergency project covering 2025-2026. The initiative aims to assist returning Afghan families facing food insecurity and resettlement challenges. KSrelief's assistance comes at a time when Afghanistan is grappling with severe humanitarian pressures, particularly for returnees struggling with limited access to food, healthcare, and employment.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Developments with Russia

a. Russia to Host Seventh Moscow Format Talks with Full Taliban Participation (Amu Tv, July 02; Khaama Press, July 02)

Russia is set to host the seventh round of the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan in September or October 2025, according to Zamir Kabulov, Moscow's Special Representative for Afghanistan. While the exact date remains unconfirmed, Kabulov noted the session will likely follow the precedent of previous fall meetings. The upcoming round marks a significant shift in Russia's Afghanistan policy. Following an April 2025 decision by Russia's Supreme Court to suspend the Taliban's designation as a terrorist organisation, the Taliban will now participate as full members for the first time. Russian officials described this development as a step toward "full-scale cooperation" that could benefit both Russian and Afghan citizens.

b. Russia Becomes First Country to Officially Recognise Taliban Government (Al Jazeera, July 03; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, July 03)

In a landmark diplomatic shift, Russia has become the first country to formally recognise Afghanistan's Taliban government, nearly four years after the group seized power following the withdrawal of US troops in 2021. In an official statement, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed it had accepted the credentials of the new Afghan ambassador, describing the move as a step towards "productive bilateral cooperation." The Ministry added that this recognition is expected to accelerate collaboration across various sectors.

Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi hailed the move as a "brave decision" and a catalyst for further international recognition. "Now that the process of recognition has started, Russia was ahead of everyone," Muttaqi said during his meeting with Russian Ambassador Dmitry Zhirnov. This development is expected to intensify geopolitical scrutiny, especially from Washington, which continues to freeze Afghan central bank assets and maintains sanctions on Taliban leaders. These sanctions have largely isolated Afghanistan from the global banking system. Since the Taliban's return to power, Moscow has taken gradual steps to normalise relations—inviting Taliban delegations to the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum in

2022 and 2024, and holding ministerial-level talks in Moscow. President Vladimir Putin previously referred to the Taliban as “allies in the fight against terrorism,” specifically against Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), the group blamed for multiple attacks in Afghanistan and Russia. Russia’s Supreme Court had lifted the “terrorist organisation” label from the Taliban earlier this year. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reinforced this pragmatic shift, stating, “The new authorities in Kabul are a reality.” As the first formal recognition is now on record, the move is poised to reshape Afghanistan’s engagement with the world, and could prompt other countries to reassess their stance towards the Taliban regime.

c. Kabul Requests Russian Military Equipment After Diplomatic Breakthrough
(Khaama Press, July 11; Pakistan Defence, July 11)

Following Moscow’s formal recognition of the Taliban government, Afghanistan has officially requested the purchase of military equipment from Russia, signalling a new phase of bilateral cooperation. According to sources, the request was made via a formal letter from Taliban Defence Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, who described the move as the “beginning of a new phase of cooperation.” The letter cited Russian arms as suitable for meeting the “qualitative and quantitative” defence needs of Afghanistan. The Taliban have also directed their Ministry of Foreign Affairs to initiate legal and logistical arrangements for the deal, indicating Kabul’s desire to expand ties beyond diplomatic recognition into security cooperation. Sources in Kabul told a Russian outlet that the request serves as a “test of Russia’s sincerity”, seeking to gauge Moscow’s long-term intentions in Afghanistan.

2. Developments with Pakistan

a. Bilawal Bhutto Warns Taliban’s Doha Violations Threaten Regional Stability
(Afghanistan International, July 02; The Express Tribune Pakistan, July 02)

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, has warned that the Taliban’s repeated violations of their commitments under the Doha Agreement are undermining regional stability and hampering efforts to combat terrorism. Speaking at a seminar in Islamabad titled ‘Pakistan: A Barrier Against Terrorism,’ Bhutto stated that terrorism remains a global menace,

not merely a domestic challenge. He highlighted Pakistan's significant sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, both in terms of human life and economic costs.

Addressing the Taliban leadership directly, Bhutto urged them to adhere to the pledges made in the Doha Accord, stressing that doing so is essential to preventing further destabilisation and fostering regional cooperation. The Doha Agreement, signed between the Taliban and the United States in 2020, included assurances that Afghanistan's territory would not be used by extremist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS to launch attacks against other nations. However, doubts about the Taliban's compliance with these commitments have continued to grow.

b. Pakistan Military Kills 30 Militants Near Afghan Border Amid Rising Security Tensions (Associated Press, July 04; France24, July 04; Khaama Press, July 05)

Pakistan's military has announced that security forces killed at least 30 militants during a counterterrorism operation in North Waziristan, near the border with Afghanistan. The operation, carried out on July 04, was aimed at preventing militant infiltration from Afghan territory and foiling a major terrorist attack. According to the official military statement, the militants attempted to cross into Pakistan and were alleged to be linked to India. A substantial cache of weapons and ammunition was recovered during the operation. Islamabad has renewed its calls on the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan to take action against "foreign proxy groups" operating from Afghan territory. Pakistani officials have long accused Kabul of providing safe havens to TTP militants, a charge the Taliban leadership consistently denies. The incident follows another encounter on June 24 in South Waziristan, where 11 militants and 2 Pakistani soldiers were killed. Together, these incidents underscore the escalating security risks along the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier, where cross-border militant activity has been on the rise since the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

c. Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Hits \$1 Billion Mark in Early 2025 (Khaama Press, July 13; Profit by Pakistan Today, July 15)

Despite ongoing regional uncertainties, bilateral trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan has surged to nearly \$1 billion in the first half of 2025, according to Afghanistan's Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Official data reports total trade volume at \$989 million, with \$277 million in Afghan exports and \$712 million in imports from Pakistan. This uptick signals a

steady improvement in economic ties and border management between the two neighbours. Afghanistan's major exports included cotton, coal, onions, tomatoes, raisins, mung beans, and talc stone, while key imports comprised sella rice, pharmaceuticals, sugar, cotton fabrics, and industrial raw materials crucial for domestic industries. Ministry spokesperson Abdul Salam Jawad highlighted trade's stabilising role in Afghanistan's fragile economy and praised enhanced logistical coordination at border crossings. The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) confirmed export figures have improved compared to the same period last year.

Trade flows are primarily routed through Chaman, Spin Boldak, Torkham, and Dand Patan crossings, with the Ghulam Khan route remaining closed. ACCI board member Khan Jan Alokozai noted reduced delays and improved logistics as key contributors to trade growth. Regional analysts see this trade momentum as a pathway to tempering political tensions and building mutual economic resilience. International bodies like the World Bank continue to advocate for deeper regional trade integration as a cornerstone of Afghanistan's recovery.

d. Fazal ur Rehman Rejects Durand Line as Border, Raising Political Tensions
(Tolo News, July 15)






Fazal ur Rehman, leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI-F), has publicly stated that Islamabad's claim of the Durand Line as an official border is not acceptable from Afghanistan's perspective. Speaking at a tribal gathering in Peshawar, Rehman warned that unilateral actions along this contested boundary should be avoided by both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Rehman remarked, "Whoever says the Durand Line is a border, these are one-sided statements and they are not acceptable to Afghanistan. Neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan should act unilaterally along this line."





Political analysts suggest that such statements from a senior political leader could create internal political pressure in Pakistan, potentially pushing the government to adopt a more cautious approach regarding its border policy with Afghanistan. The Durand Line has remained one of the most contentious issues between Kabul and Islamabad for decades, frequently triggering diplomatic tensions and border clashes. Rehman's remarks come amid a broader backdrop of fluctuating Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, marked by rising security concerns and territorial disputes.

3. UN General Assembly Adopts Resolution on Afghanistan Amid Deep Divisions ([Hasht-e-Subh Daily, July 07](#); [UNGA, July 07](#); [All India Radio News, July 08](#); [Associated Press, July 08](#))

On July 07, 2025, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, highlighting deepening global concern over the humanitarian, political, and security crisis in the country. The session saw representatives from around the world express alarm at the presence of terrorist groups, worsening human rights violations, the absence of an inclusive government, and a growing humanitarian catastrophe. The resolution passed with 116 votes in favour and two abstentions, stressing the urgent need for inclusive governance, human rights protections, and counter-terrorism measures.

Global Reactions to the UNGA Resolution

COUNTRY/BLOC	KEY POSITION & STATEMENT
 Afghanistan (Naseer Ahmad Faiq)	Condemned Taliban rule, calling them non-representative of the Afghan people. Highlighted gender apartheid, regression of rights, and demanded accountability mechanisms.
 United States (Jonathan Shrier)	Voted against the resolution, labelling engagement as futile after four years with no results. Criticised Taliban oppression, announced aid cuts, and expressed frustration with the Doha process.
 European Union	Supported the resolution, condemned the erasure of women's rights, warned of gender-based persecution, and stressed the Taliban's moral duty to uphold rights.
 Russia	Criticised the West's biased approach, supported regional engagement with the Taliban through Russia, China, Pakistan, and Iran, and accused the West of ignoring economic hardships.
 China (Geng Shuang)	Acknowledged the presence of terrorist groups but praised the Taliban for security improvements. Advocated consultative engagement and regional dialogue on Afghanistan.

 Pakistan (Asim Iftikhar Ahmad)	Backed the Doha process, recognised Taliban's de facto control, warned against external interference, and raised concerns over terrorism affecting Pakistan.
 Turkey	Expressed concerns over ISIS activities and restrictions on women's rights, stressed the need for inclusive governance and improved human rights.
 Germany (Resolution Sponsor)	Spearheaded the resolution, condemned the Taliban's erasure of women's rights, argued for continued engagement, and stressed support for Afghan refugees.
 India (Parvathaneni Harish)	Abstained , criticised 'business-as-usual' approach, highlighted terror concerns, and reaffirmed humanitarian aid and regional stability focus.

4. ICC Issues Arrest Warrants for Taliban Leaders Over Gender Persecution (ICC Press Release, July 08; The Guardian, July 08; Khaama Press, July 09)

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for two senior Taliban figures—Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani—accusing them of crimes against humanity for the systematic persecution of women and girls in Afghanistan. The ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber II, in its official ruling on July 08, 2025, stated there are "reasonable grounds to believe" that the two Taliban leaders orchestrated a government policy of gender-based oppression, violating fundamental rights since their rise to power on August 15, 2021. According to the Court, the Taliban leadership enforced systematic discrimination through decrees and edicts that denied education, freedom of movement, expression, privacy, family life, and access to public spaces for women and girls. The ruling also highlighted oppression of individuals based on gender identity and those seen as "allies of women and girls", classifying these actions under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute.

UN and human rights groups have long warned of gender apartheid in Afghanistan. The ICC's decision was welcomed by activists globally. Afghan women's rights activist Tahera Nasiri stated that this move by the ICC is an acknowledgement of the suffering Afghan women have endured. "[Akhundzada and Haqqani] are no longer just leaders of Afghanistan, they are wanted men," she said. Human Rights Watch called the development a landmark in

recognising gender persecution as a crime, urging international cooperation to enforce the warrants.

The Taliban regime's targeted repression included murder, torture, rape, imprisonment, and enforced disappearances, as well as restrictions on female education, employment, and public participation. The ICC noted that while the warrants are currently sealed to protect victims and witnesses, disclosing their existence serves the public interest by promoting accountability and potentially deterring further abuses. At a later press conference, UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric reaffirmed the UN's support for the ICC's decision and emphasised that the organisation fully supports the independence and autonomy of the court, urging other nations to do the same. While the practical enforcement of these warrants remains challenging, given certain nations' ongoing engagement with the Taliban, the ICC's move has been hailed as a powerful step towards global justice for Afghan women and marginalised groups.

5. Japan Pledges \$5 Million to Boost Polio Eradication in Afghanistan (UNICEF, July 10)

The Government of Japan has committed US\$5 million through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to bolster polio eradication efforts and strengthen routine immunisation programmes across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Announced on July 10, this one-year initiative will reach over 13 million Afghan children with lifesaving vaccines, focusing on both polio and routine immunisations. The programme is being delivered in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The funding comes at a critical time, as Afghanistan remains one of only two countries where wild poliovirus transmission persists. Recent resurgences of polio, particularly in hard-to-reach and mobile populations, have highlighted the urgency of closing immunisation gaps. Japan has been a steadfast supporter of Afghanistan's healthcare sector for over two decades, aiding in vaccine procurement, cold chain infrastructure, and technical assistance. This latest grant will cover key gaps in vaccine supply, healthcare personnel, and outbreak response capacity, contributing significantly to the global goal of eradicating polio. UNICEF expressed gratitude for Japan's continued solidarity and underlined that the initiative brings Afghanistan one step closer to a polio-free future, safeguarding millions of young lives in the process.

6. Developments with Germany

a. Germany Eyes Direct Talks with Taliban on Deporting Criminal Afghan Migrants (Deutsche Welle News, July 03)

Germany's Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt has announced plans to deport Afghan migrants convicted of crimes, signalling readiness to negotiate directly with Taliban authorities to facilitate the process. In an interview, Dobrindt said returning "dangerous criminals" serves Germany's national security interests, citing recent violent incidents involving extremist offenders. "I am ready to reach the necessary agreements with those who are in power in Afghanistan," he stated, referring to the Taliban-led government. The announcement marks a significant shift in policy. Germany had halted deportations to Afghanistan in 2021 following the Taliban's return to power, resuming limited removals via Qatar in August 2024. Dobrindt now advocates for direct engagement with Kabul to speed up the process.

The proposal has ignited political debate. Opposition parties, including the SPD and Green Party, warn that such talks risk legitimising the Taliban regime, known for its severe human rights violations. The United Nations has also criticised forced returns to Afghanistan, citing risks to women, minorities, and political dissidents. Despite the criticism, Chancellor Friedrich Merz's government remains committed to tightening immigration controls, aligning with campaign promises to combat irregular migration and enhance public safety.

b. Germany Reaffirms Visa Commitments to Afghans Amid Policy Uncertainty (Kabul Now, July 13)

Germany's Foreign Minister has reiterated Berlin's commitment to honouring visa pledges made to Afghans, amid growing anxiety over recent immigration policy shifts and legal disputes. The clarification follows mounting concern among Afghan refugees and advocacy groups, after reports emerged suggesting Germany's federal admission programme had been suspended under the new government. Earlier this month, public protests and legal challenges highlighted fears of broken promises to Afghans awaiting resettlement. A [recent Berlin court ruling](#) mandated that the government must fulfil previous visa commitments. The judgment has rekindled debate over Germany's responsibilities toward Afghanistan following the US and

NATO withdrawal in 2021. The reassurance comes amid individual cases drawing public attention, including Afghan families left in limbo under Taliban rule, facing escalating restrictions, particularly on women and minorities. Despite the halt in new admissions, the latest government-chartered flight successfully relocated over 130 Afghan refugees to Germany, signalling that processing for previously approved applicants continues, albeit at a slower pace. Germany's policy landscape has shifted since Chancellor Friedrich Merz took office, adopting a stricter migration approach. Human rights organisations warn that backtracking on humanitarian promises could endanger vulnerable Afghans.

7. US Defence Secretary Blasts 2021 Afghanistan Exit as a 'Tragic Disaster' (Khaama Press, July 13; Tolo News, July 13)

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has labelled the 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal a “tragic and catastrophic” failure, sharply criticising the Biden administration for decisions he claims have undermined America's global influence. Speaking at a defence summit in Florida, Hegseth reflected on the chaotic evacuation, which resulted in the deaths of 13 US troops and over 170 Afghan civilians. He blamed “poor political choices” for the deadly Kabul airport bombing and warned that the disorderly retreat projected weakness internationally. Hegseth suggested the withdrawal emboldened global adversaries, stating, “If the Afghanistan disaster hadn't happened, the Ukraine war likely wouldn't have either.” This aligns with President Donald Trump's assertions linking the withdrawal to Russia's subsequent 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Hegseth confirmed that the Department of Defense's comprehensive review into the Afghanistan exit will continue through 2026, with an eye on accountability for the decisions made.

AFGHANISTAN'S RETURNEE CRISIS

1. Pakistan Considers Extension of Afghan Migrant Deportation Deadline Amid Mounting Pressure (Khaama Press, July 01)

Pakistan is reviewing a proposal to extend the deportation deadline for 1.4 million legally residing Afghan migrants, following the expiration of the original June 30 deadline. The move comes amid mounting criticism from international organisations and growing humanitarian concerns about the capacity of Afghanistan to absorb the returning population. Officials confirmed that the proposed extension, aimed at allowing migrants additional time to settle personal affairs, sell property, and wind down businesses, was presented to the federal cabinet last week. A final decision is expected soon.

Currently, Pakistan hosts 1.4 million Afghans with legal registration cards, 8,00,000 with Afghan citizenship cards, and approximately 1 million undocumented individuals. While the government's repatriation campaign has focused primarily on undocumented migrants, rights groups report that even documented individuals have faced arbitrary arrests and forced returns. With Afghanistan still facing the consequences of economic collapse and political uncertainty, the fate of millions of returnees remains precarious. The proposed extension is seen as a necessary step toward ensuring safe, voluntary, and dignified returns, but observers stress that broader international engagement and humanitarian funding are essential to prevent further deterioration.

2. Tajikistan Issues 15-Day Ultimatum to Afghan Refugees (Khaama Press, July 09; The Times of Central Asia, July 10)

Tajikistan has reportedly given Afghan refugees just 15 days to leave the country, triggering panic among thousands, many of whom hold valid residency documents and are now facing forced deportation to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Allegedly, Tajik authorities have begun detaining Afghan nationals, including those with legal immigration status, often without prior notice or legal recourse. Reports indicate that dozens of Afghan men are being arrested daily,

particularly in areas such as Vahdat township and Rudaki district in Dushanbe. Many were taken directly from their workplaces without informing family members.

Currently, over 13,000 Afghan nationals reside in Tajikistan, many of them former civil servants, military personnel, and government affiliates who fled following the fall of Kabul in August 2021. A large number are awaiting resettlement decisions from third countries such as Canada, and forced return at this stage could jeopardise their cases and expose them to grave risk. Tajikistan now joins Iran and Pakistan, both of which have significantly escalated deportation campaigns in recent months. The collective regional trend reflects an increasingly hostile environment for Afghan refugees, despite international protection obligations.

3. WHO Warns of Rising Infectious Diseases Among Deported Afghan Migrants (ANI News, July 10; ShiaWaves, July 12)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a warning over the rising incidence of infectious diseases among Afghan migrants deported from neighbouring countries, citing poor sanitary conditions, overcrowding, and strained medical infrastructure at major border crossings. According to on-site assessments, particularly at Islam Qala in Herat Province, the most commonly reported illnesses include upper respiratory infections, diarrhoea, dehydration, scabies, and suspected COVID-19 cases. Vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly are particularly affected.

In response, WHO has launched emergency health screenings and mass vaccination campaigns in coordination with local Afghan health authorities. At Islam Qala alone, over 8,700 children have received oral polio vaccines, and more than 8,300 individuals have been given injectable polio vaccines. Measles vaccinations have also been administered to thousands of children in high-risk areas. As of now, nearly 29,000 returnees have been screened or vaccinated across major border points, including Spin Boldak, Torkham, and Islam Qala. WHO mobile teams continue to provide daily health assessments at zero-point borders and reception centres. The organisation has emphasised the urgent need for expanded medical resources, staffing, and funding to prevent larger outbreaks and to sustain basic health services for deported migrants. With mass returns continuing, WHO warns that the risk of public health crises will rise sharply without international support and swift action.

4. UNHCR Warns of Humanitarian Emergency as Over 1.6 Million Afghans Return from Iran and Pakistan ([Arab News, July 11](#))

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has issued an urgent appeal for international cooperation and funding as Afghanistan faces a growing humanitarian emergency fueled by mass returnee flows from Iran and Pakistan. More than 1.6 million Afghans have returned so far in 2025, including over 1.3 million from Iran alone, many under coercive or involuntary circumstances. According to UNHCR Afghanistan Representative Arafat Jamal, daily returnee numbers are now peaking at 40,000 to 50,000 at crossings like Islam Qala, with July 04 registering the highest single-day total this year. The agency is now preparing for up to 3 million arrivals by year-end, warning that the scale and intensity of returns are unsustainable in a country already beset by poverty, drought, and conflict.

Returnees, many born abroad and unfamiliar with Afghanistan's realities, are arriving "tired, disoriented, brutalised, and often in despair," he noted, raising particular concern for women and girls returning to a society where their rights are systematically suppressed. Iran has signalled plans to deport as many as 4 million Afghans, which could double the returnee caseload. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization recently issued a drought alert, and the UN Development Programme estimates that 70% of Afghans live at subsistence levels.

UNHCR's current humanitarian operations are only 28% funded, forcing difficult trade-offs in the field, such as reducing food rations or limiting access to blankets and shelter. Despite the funding gaps, the agency continues to provide emergency food, water, transport, shelter, and protection for unaccompanied children, including more than 400 minors deported from Iran in two weeks. UNHCR has renewed its appeal for a coordinated regional strategy, increased donor support, and the implementation of the recent UN General Assembly resolution calling for safe, voluntary, and dignified returns.

5. Turkish Far-Right Leader Calls for Deportation of Afghan Refugees Amid Rising Anti-Migrant Sentiment ([Kokcha News, July 13](#); [Khaama Press, July 14](#))

As Iran continues its mass deportations of Afghan migrants, Ümit Özdağ, leader of Turkey's far-right Zafer Party, has renewed calls for the immediate repatriation of Afghan and Syrian refugees from Turkey. Speaking at a party event in Kocaeli on July 13, Özdağ cited "national security concerns" and urged the government to follow Iran's example. Referring to Iran's recent expulsion of over 500,000 Afghans, Özdağ stated, "We must return Syrians and Afghans to their countries in accordance with our own laws." He further amplified unverified Iranian claims that some Afghan migrants had cooperated with Israeli intelligence—an allegation linked to recent regional tensions, which Iranian officials have publicly downplayed.

The remarks come amid a surge in anti-Afghan rhetoric across the region. In Turkey, growing public discontent with migration policy has become a central political issue. Opposition parties, including the İYİ Party and the Republican People's Party (CHP), have increasingly criticised President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's handling of migration, accusing the government of using refugees as political leverage with the West. According to official figures, Turkey hosted over 1.39,000 Afghan nationals in 2024, though the actual number, including undocumented migrants, is believed to be significantly higher. The Directorate General of Migration Management reported that over 2,30,000 undocumented migrants were detained and deported last year, though comprehensive data on repatriations remains limited.

Özdağ, who was convicted in 2024 for inciting hostility against Syrian refugees, continues to shape far-right discourse in Turkey, with his anti-immigration stance pressuring mainstream parties ahead of future elections. Human rights organisations have condemned the escalating calls for mass deportations, warning that forced returns to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan may violate international law and put returnees at risk of persecution, detention, and violence. The international community has urged Turkey to uphold its humanitarian and legal obligations under refugee conventions, even as migration pressures intensify.

6. US Ends Temporary Protected Status for Afghans, Thousands Face Deportation (Khaama Press, July 15)

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has officially ended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Afghan nationals, putting over 9,000 individuals at risk of deportation. The decision, effective from July 14, 2025, follows the expiration of a 60-day

implementation window after TPS was last extended through May 2025. Originally granted in May 2022 in response to the humanitarian and security crisis in Afghanistan, TPS offered temporary legal status to Afghan nationals already present in the U.S. following the Taliban's return to power. The DHS now cites "improved conditions" in Afghanistan as the reason for terminating the designation.

Critics, however, strongly dispute this rationale. Human rights advocates and immigration experts warn that returning Afghans—especially women, girls, and former interpreters—to Taliban-controlled territory could expose them to persecution, detention, and gender-based violence. Without asylum, permanent residency, or alternate legal status, many Afghans under TPS must now urgently seek legal counsel or risk detention and forced removal. Legal advocates are mobilising to assist affected individuals and have called on the Biden administration to reinstate humanitarian protections, citing the ongoing repression and insecurity in Afghanistan. The decision adds to growing scrutiny over US immigration policy and its treatment of vulnerable communities who had supported or depended on American efforts during the two-decade-long presence in Afghanistan.

7. UNAMA Chief Calls for Urgent Global Response to Mass Afghan Deportations from Iran (Khaama Press, July 15)

Roza Otunbayeva, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), has issued a strong appeal for immediate international assistance in response to the mass deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran. On July 15, Otunbayeva visited the Islam Qala border crossing in Herat province, where she met with recently deported Afghan returnees facing dire humanitarian conditions. UNAMA reports that many returnees had been expelled without prior notice, resources, or shelter, placing immense strain on already overburdened border facilities.

Otunbayeva warned that the sheer scale of daily returns, estimated at 30,000 people, is beyond the capacity of both the Taliban administration and humanitarian agencies. "This should sound the alarm for the global community," she stated. "Afghanistan cannot absorb this shock alone." She highlighted that over 1.3 million Afghans have been deported so far, returning to a country where 70% of the population lives below the poverty line, and climate-induced drought

continues to devastate livelihoods. Otunbayeva called on the international community: “Do not turn away. Returnees must not be abandoned. What we are witnessing is a direct result of unmet global responsibilities.” Humanitarian groups have echoed her concerns, warning that without emergency funding, shelter, and medical aid, the crisis could spiral into a broader humanitarian catastrophe. The UN continues to press for a coordinated international response, urging donor nations to provide both immediate relief and long-term reintegration support for the returnees.

8. The UK Secretly Relocated Thousands of Afghans After Massive Data Breach Exposed Identities to Taliban (Reuters, July 15)

The British government quietly launched a large-scale relocation scheme after a Ministry of Defence (MoD) data breach compromised the personal details of over 33,000 Afghans, court documents revealed this week. The breach, which exposed individuals who had supported British forces in Afghanistan, prompted fears of Taliban reprisals and led to urgent efforts to extract those at risk. In a May 2024 High Court judgment, made public only now, the court acknowledged that as many as 20,000 people may ultimately require relocation to the UK, at a projected cost of several billion pounds. Defence Minister John Healey confirmed that around 4,500 individuals are currently in the UK or in transit, with the effort already costing £400 million. A Ministry-commissioned review reported that more than 16,000 people affected by the breach had been relocated by May 2025.

The leak occurred in early 2022, disclosing sensitive information from applicants to the UK’s Afghan relocation programme. The breach went unnoticed until August 2023, when portions of the data appeared on Facebook, triggering an emergency response. The Conservative-led government at the time secured a superinjunction to prevent public reporting on the breach, citing threats of extrajudicial killings or serious violence. That injunction has now been lifted under Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s new government, which launched a review into the incident. While the review reaffirmed that Afghanistan remains dangerous, it noted limited evidence of a systematic Taliban campaign of retribution against those linked to foreign forces. The UK government now faces potential legal claims from those impacted by the breach, adding to the financial and political fallout. The case has renewed scrutiny over data security, the handling of Afghan allies, and Britain’s moral obligations following its 2021 military withdrawal.

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