

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Akashika Mate

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. Afghanistan Signs \$10 Billion Energy Deal with Azizi Energy ([Khaama Press, August 02](#))

Afghanistan's interim administration has signed a \$10 billion agreement with Azizi Energy Invest to generate 10,000 megawatts of electricity by 2032, a project billed as a transformative step toward energy independence and economic growth. The agreement, signed on August 02 at the Government's Information and Media Centre in Kabul, was attended by senior Taliban leaders, including Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The memorandum covers electricity generation from thermal (coal and gas), hydro, wind, and solar sources, coupled with the expansion of transmission and distribution networks across several provinces. Under the deal, Azizi Energy will finance and execute the projects, while the Ministry of Water and Energy will handle coordination and oversight.

Afghanistan holds an estimated 3,20,000 megawatts of untapped energy potential, yet continues to import the bulk of its electricity. If implemented, the new plan could significantly reduce dependence on external supplies and boost industrial growth. However, public scepticism remains high. Since the Taliban's return to power, multiple development announcements have been made, but delivery has lagged behind promises, raising doubts about whether the ambitious 2032 target is achievable.

2. HRW Warns of Worsening Crisis on Fourth Anniversary of Islamic Emirate ([Human Rights Watch, August 05](#); [Tolo News, August 14](#))

On the eve of the fourth anniversary of the Islamic Emirate's return to power, Human Rights Watch described the situation in Afghanistan as critical, citing growing humanitarian challenges. The organisation pointed to the suspension of US aid, the forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan, and restrictions on Afghan migrants abroad as major factors worsening the crisis. Nicole Widdersheim, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Washington office, expressed deep concern over the condition of women and children in Afghanistan. She criticised the restrictions imposed on girls and women, stressed the responsibility of the Islamic Emirate to uphold the rights of all citizens, and urged the international community to step up humanitarian support.

“We, along with many NGOs and Afghans abroad, are raising these needs. Four years of rule, and the prospect of more, does not bode well for Afghan civilians, particularly women and children,” she said, adding that whoever holds authority in Afghanistan has a duty to protect the rights of all individuals within its borders. Women’s rights activists echoed these concerns, stressing the importance of reopening schools and universities for girls. Mumtaz Yousafzai, a women’s rights advocate, acknowledged some positive steps over the past four years but emphasised that excluding women from public life remains a serious challenge. The Islamic Emirate has previously maintained that the rights of all Afghan citizens are respected, while urging foreign countries and institutions not to interfere in Afghanistan’s internal matters, including education.

3. Kandahar Farmers Push for Greater Access to Global Raisin Markets **(Tolo News, August 07)**

Farmers in Kandahar’s Panjwayi district are calling for expanded export opportunities as raisin production rises but prices fall. Using traditional drying methods, placing harvested grapes under wooden canopies in the shade for up to eight days, farmers say the quality of the raisins remains high. Yet many growers struggle to sell their produce amid declining exports. “There must be export agreements for the fruits. Without contracts, we gain nothing,” noted Mohammad Rahim, another farmer. According to provincial agriculture officials, Kandahar’s raisin production is expected to reach 90,000-1,00,000 tons this year, with up to 25 tons reaching local markets daily. While authorities are working to secure international buyers, farmers remain concerned that low domestic demand will not sustain their livelihoods. The sector has received some investment: an \$8 million raisin processing plant with an annual capacity of 10,000 tons was recently inaugurated in Kabul’s Estalef district. However, growers in Kandahar insist that only reliable export agreements and access to global markets will make their harvest profitable.

4. Afghanistan Introduces New Framework for Mining Sector Management **(Tolo News, August 09)**

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has announced the adoption of a new standardised framework aimed at strengthening oversight of Afghanistan’s mining sector. The initiative seeks to prevent illegal extraction, regulate contracts, and ensure that mineral wealth

contributes directly to national economic growth. The framework prioritises four goals: job creation, attracting investment, boosting domestic industry, and advancing economic self-sufficiency. Central to the policy is a ban on the export of raw minerals, with authorities insisting that processing must take place within Afghanistan to generate added value. The ministry has also pledged to tighten the bidding process for mining contracts. Only firms with proven technical expertise, adequate financial resources, and long-term commitment will be eligible. “No contract will be finalised without ensuring a company’s technical and financial capabilities,” Homayoun Afghan, spokesperson for the ministry, stated, adding that the process is being handled with transparency and accuracy.

Economic experts have echoed these priorities and noted that foreign investors, whether from Uzbekistan, China, Russia, or elsewhere, must also invest in Afghanistan’s processing sector, not only in extraction. While several of Afghanistan’s major mineral deposits remain under exploration, the ministry claims that those already in production are generating revenue and delivering benefits to local communities. Officials argue that if managed effectively, mining could become one of the country’s primary drivers of long-term development.

5. Ghazni City Master Plan Approved for Implementation ([Tolo News, August 14](#))

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has approved and handed over Ghazni city’s strategic and reform plans to the provincial municipality for implementation. The 20-year strategy includes urban development measures, expansion of internal roads, and the designation of zones for commercial, industrial, health, and public service activities. For the first time, provisions for constructing multi-storey residential buildings have also been included. Ghazni Mayor Mohammad Nabi Hamza explained that the new master plan covers areas from Espanda to Kotla and from Nawabad to Qala-e-Joz, with necessary revisions made to earlier versions. Rahmatullah Baheer, head of urban affairs at the provincial Department of Urban Development and Housing, highlighted that the plan introduces new commercial zones, cold storage facilities, and expanded internal roads. The initiative aims to address current needs by improving city organisation, road infrastructure, and housing. Multi-storey residential buildings ranging from three to fifteen floors will be permitted to ease housing shortages, particularly for returning refugees. Hamid-ur-Rahman Shaheedkhil, head of engineering at the

department, noted that the new buildings are expected to help resolve pressing accommodation issues.

Residents of Ghazni welcomed the plans and urged for rapid implementation. Local resident Mohammad Abbas pointed to traffic congestion and disorganisation as major problems, while Mohammad Nabi said the strategy would create jobs, improve city organisation, and make daily life easier. Challenges facing the city currently include poor road standards, traffic congestion, a lack of designated zones for commercial and industrial activities, and inadequate water and sewage systems. The newly approved plans are expected to address these long-standing issues.

6. Pashdan Dam Inaugurated in Herat After Fifteen Years of Construction ([Amu TV, August 14](#); [Ariana News, August 14](#))

The Pashdan Dam in Herat was officially inaugurated by officials of the caretaker government. At the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar stressed the government's commitment to managing Afghanistan's flowing waters, noting that improved water management would strengthen the economy, reduce poverty, and curb unemployment and migration. Mohammad Arif Achakzai, head of the project, explained that the dam will directly irrigate 13,000 hectares of farmland across the districts of Karukh, Pashtun Zarghun, Guzara, and parts of Injil, excluding the Soltani canal.

The Ministry of Energy and Water announced plans for additional water and power projects nationwide. Acting Minister Abdul Latif Mansoor highlighted that \$117 million had been invested in the Pashdan Dam, intended to address drought conditions in Herat, and confirmed that survey work for the Kahdanak Dam in Shindand district is already underway. Herat Governor Noor Ahmad Islamjar referred to other major infrastructure projects in progress, including the Herat-Chishti Sharif and Herat-Ghor highways, the TAPI and TAP pipelines, the Torghundi port and railway, as well as the fibre optic line. Spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid called on Afghan traders at home and abroad to invest in Afghanistan, assuring that security and opportunities for investment are in place.



Source: Amu TV

The Pashdan Dam, located in Karukh district east of Herat city, has a storage capacity of 54 million cubic metres of water, can generate two megawatts of electricity, and will irrigate 13,000 hectares of farmland. Construction began nearly fifteen years ago but faced repeated delays before completion.

7. Fourth Anniversary of Islamic Emirate Marked with Celebrations in Kabul ([Tolo News, August 15](#))

The fourth anniversary of the Islamic Emirate's return to power was marked in Kabul with large-scale celebrations. From early morning, thousands of citizens carrying Islamic Emirate flags paraded across different parts of the city, joined by both civilian and military members of the administration. Residents expressed their joy at the occasion. Basir Ahmad from Maidan Wardak said he was happier than even on Eid, noting that people had long awaited this day. Another resident, Nasrullah Nasrat from Kabul, urged the international community to recognise the Islamic Emirate and support Afghanistan rather than pursue political confrontation. By the afternoon, the commemorations took on a new dimension as aircraft of the Islamic Emirate's Air Force performed aerial manoeuvres and released coloured sprays over several areas of Kabul. Mohammad Nabi, from Paktia, described the day as a moment of collective happiness for Afghans. Ajmal, a resident of Kabul, viewed the anniversary as the day Afghanistan was freed from the United States and Western occupation. While some citizens saw the 24th of Asad celebrations as a reflection of national unity, others suggested the occasion should also be used to enhance public participation and strengthen communication between the government and the people.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Developments with the United States of America

a. Afghanistan Targeted by New US Trade Tariffs (Ariana News, August 01; Tolo News, August 01; BBC, August 07;

The United States has raised tariffs on Afghan exports from 10% to 15%, extending former President Donald Trump's protectionist trade policy to Kabul. The move comes only months after the initial 10% tariff was imposed, signalling what analysts see as a gesture more political than economic. Afghanistan's exports make up only a small fraction of total US imports, but officials in Kabul argue the decision carries symbolic weight. Deputy Minister of Economy Abdul Latif Nazari called the measure "politically motivated and intended to exert pressure on the Afghan people." He added that past attempts to use pressure tactics against Afghanistan have "always failed." Economic experts warn that the tariff hike could limit Afghanistan's access to U.S. markets. Mir Shaker Yaqoubi noted that the move undermines the competitiveness of Afghan products, particularly handicrafts, dried fruits, and carpets. "It risks reducing trade volumes and further exposes Afghanistan's weak commercial infrastructure, leaving the country disadvantaged in its relations with Washington," he said. Representatives of Afghanistan's Chamber of Commerce stressed that the country had previously benefited from tariff exemptions under its least-developed country (LDC) status in both the US and the European Union. The rollback of such preferential treatment, they argue, could shrink opportunities for Afghan exporters at a time when regional competition is already high.

b. Afghan Adjustment Act Reintroduced in US Congress to Aid Evacuated Afghans (Representative Jason Crow, August 05; Tolo News, August 06; National Immigration Forum, August 15)

Nearly four years after the US military withdrawal from Afghanistan, thousands of Afghans who supported American institutions remain in legal limbo. A bipartisan group of lawmakers has now reintroduced the Afghan Adjustment Act, seeking to provide these evacuees a pathway to permanent residency. According to the US House of Representatives, the bill would allow tens of thousands of Afghans evacuated in 2021 to adjust their status after additional security vetting. Lawmakers argue that stability is essential for those rebuilding their lives in the United States. Immigration activists, however, caution that the bill faces political hurdles. "This bill

can help vulnerable Afghans obtain permanent residency in the US and avoid deportation, but its passage is not easy because many politicians oppose immigration, and the legal and security process is very complex,” said Alireza Karimi. The Afghan Evac organisation, which has lobbied for the measure, called it a moral obligation: “This marks the third time Congress has had the chance to do right by the Afghans who stood with us during 20 years of war. We cannot afford another delay.” Others note the bill may also serve as a filter. “Those who are genuine collaborators will receive permanent residency, while others who were brought to the U.S. through support from caseworkers and supervisors may be deported after identification and documentation,” said activist Mohammad Jamal Muslim. Meanwhile, Afghans stuck in third countries such as Pakistan have urged the US to expedite their transfers under the P-1 and P-2 refugee programmes, warning of worsening financial and psychological hardship. Their fate remains uncertain, particularly as former President Donald Trump’s earlier travel ban on Afghanistan still casts a shadow over current policy debates.

c. US Annual Report Highlights Human Rights Concerns in Afghanistan (US State Department, August 12; Tolo News, August 13)

The US State Department’s 2024 annual report accused the Islamic Emirate of widespread human rights violations, particularly against women and girls. The report stated that bans on education, employment, and freedom of movement have severely undermined women’s rights. It urged the international community to maintain close oversight of the situation and take effective steps to support Afghan women, children, and other citizens. “There was significant deterioration in respect for women’s rights during the year due to edicts that further restricted access to education, employment, and freedom of movement for women and girls, effectively removing them from public spaces,” the report noted.

However, analysts voiced criticism of the report. Edris Mohammadi Zazai called it “a drama” aimed at dominating third-world countries, questioning why similar scrutiny was not applied elsewhere. Rohullah Hotak likewise dismissed it as unreliable and politically motivated, saying issues should be addressed through dialogue with the Islamic Emirate. Human Rights Watch also questioned the report’s credibility, claiming that parts had been altered or omitted, and noting contradictions with U.S. policies on Afghan refugees during the Trump administration. Meanwhile, UN Women renewed its concern over restrictions on Afghan women and girls, particularly regarding access to education and employment, as the Islamic Emirate enters its fourth year in power.

2. UN Approves Hanafi's Travel to Doha for Medical Purposes ([Ariana News, August 02](#))

The United Nations Security Council has granted a travel exemption to Abdul Salam Hanafi, Administrative Deputy to the Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, permitting him to visit Doha, Qatar, for medical treatment. According to a statement from the UN Security Council's sanctions committee, Hanafi is authorised to travel between August 14 and 31, 2025. Analysts, however, suggest that the trip may go beyond medical purposes. Political commentator Kamran Aman noted that the Islamic Emirate's embassy in Doha could facilitate Hanafi's interactions with diplomats. The exemption comes at a sensitive time, as discussions continue on the fourth round of the Doha Process and the UN's newly proposed 'Roadmap for Afghanistan.' International relations expert Wais Naseri pointed out that Taliban leaders have made frequent overseas trips since 2021. "According to Amir Khan Muttaqi, the number of these foreign trips has exceeded one hundred," he observed. Najib Rahman Shumal, another political analyst, said Hanafi's presence in Qatar could serve a dual purpose. "During this trip, preparations may be made for the upcoming fourth round of the Doha Process, including steps to enable the participation of the caretaker government," he noted. This is not Hanafi's first exemption. On June 16, 2025, the Security Council's sanctions committee had previously allowed him to attend the Ninth China-South Asia Economic and Trade Expo in China.

3. Islamic Emirate Welcomes UN Regional Office for Sustainable Development ([EFE Comunica, August 04](#); [Tolo News, August 04](#); [Prensa Latina, August 05](#))

The Islamic Emirate has welcomed the opening of a new United Nations regional office for sustainable development, established to focus on Afghanistan and Central Asia. The office, hosted by Kazakhstan, is designed to advance regional cooperation and development goals. Deputy Spokesperson Hamdullah Fitrat said the caretaker government supports any initiative that contributes to Afghanistan's stability. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev underscored his country's commitment to Afghanistan, stressing that long-term peace and development are essential for regional security. While welcoming the initiative, some analysts expressed reservations. Political commentator Saleem Paygir suggested the office would have been more effective if based inside Afghanistan, while economic analyst Mohammad Karim Azimi argued that offices abroad risk limited impact if Afghanistan lacks direct representation.

At the inauguration ceremony, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed the urgent need for regional and international support for Afghanistan, adding that the new centre could play a vital role in enhancing coordination and shared responsibility.

4. Developments with Tajikistan

a. Tajikistan Reports Spike in Armed Clashes with Afghan Drug Traffickers (Khaama Press, August 04)

Tajikistan has recorded ten armed clashes with drug traffickers along its border with Afghanistan so far this year, most of them near Badakhshan province, according to Zafar Samad, head of the Drug Control Agency. In the most recent incident, four Afghan nationals were killed. Authorities said more than 3.1 tonnes of narcotics have been seized since January, with over one tonne intercepted directly along the frontier. Officials noted that both the scale of drug trafficking and the number of armed confrontations have risen compared to last year. Afghanistan remains the main source of narcotics moving through Tajikistan toward regional and international markets. Tajik authorities have repeatedly voiced concerns about the presence of terrorist groups and smuggling networks operating from Afghan territory. The Taliban has not commented on the latest clashes. Analysts warn that without stronger regional cooperation and counter-narcotics coordination, cross-border tensions and security risks are likely to deepen.

b. Afghanistan Faces Power Shortages as Imports from Tajikistan Decline (Tolo News, August 08)

Afghanistan's electricity supply has been hit this summer as imports from Tajikistan dropped from 400 megawatts last year to just 310-320 megawatts, the head of the Breshna company told Tolo News. Domestic hydropower output has also fallen due to drought, with Naghlu and Surobi dams producing only a fraction of last year's 102 megawatts. Despite the shortfall, Breshna is supplying consumers with 12-13 hours of electricity daily, relying heavily on thermal generators. But this comes at a steep cost: each kilowatt costs 35 afghanis to produce, while households and industries are charged far less, leaving the company with mounting losses. Kabul residents continue to face daily blackouts, with many urging the authorities to find lasting solutions. Experts stress the need for large-scale investment in domestic energy production. Last week, the Ministry of Water and Energy signed a \$10 billion agreement with

a private Afghan firm to generate 10,000 megawatts from solar, coal, hydro, wind, and gas sources. For now, however, Afghans remain caught between rising demand, falling imports, and costly stopgap measures.

5. Afghanistan and Tatarstan Sign \$183 Million Trade Agreements **(Kabul Now, August 07)**

Afghanistan's private sector has signed five trade agreements worth \$183 million with the Republic of Tatarstan, a leading industrial region within the Russian Federation. The accords were concluded in Kabul in the presence of Nooruddin Azizi, Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, and Oleg Korobchenko, Tatarstan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Commerce. Azizi highlighted Afghanistan's untapped resource wealth, particularly in oil and lithium, and urged Tatarstan to invest in large-scale mining projects. Korobchenko described the visit as a step toward deepening economic cooperation, noting Tatarstan's role as one of Russia's most industrially advanced republics. The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment called for greater banking cooperation and streamlined visa procedures to facilitate trade. Chamber head Sayed Karim Hashemi urged Tatarstan to increase exports to Afghanistan, while deputy chief Younas Mohmand requested official coordination to ease visa issuance for Afghan traders. Azizi also underlined the warming of Afghanistan-Russia ties, saying that legal barriers to bilateral engagement have been removed, opening the way for expanded cooperation in trade and investment.

6. Developments with Pakistan

a. Pakistan Shuts Ghulam Khan Border with Afghanistan, Stranding Travellers and Disrupting Trade (Khaama Press, August 02)

Pakistan has closed the Ghulam Khan border crossing with Afghanistan's Khost province, citing new requirements for passports and visas. The move, which came into effect on August 01, has stranded travellers and raised fears of trade disruption. Until now, some passengers, including medical patients, were allowed to cross with "tokens" instead of full documentation. It remains unclear whether the restrictions apply to commercial trucks, adding to uncertainty for traders and transporters who rely on the route.

Ghulam Khan is the third most important crossing between the two countries after Torkham and Chaman, formally opened for trade and travel in 2018. The crossing is particularly significant for Afghan exports of fresh and dried fruits, as it offers a shorter and more direct route to Pakistan's North Waziristan and beyond. This is not the first time Islamabad has used the crossing as leverage. Just weeks earlier, the border was closed temporarily in a similar dispute, underscoring how frequently it is employed in response to political or security tensions. Analysts warn that repeated shutdowns of Ghulam Khan risk undermining local livelihoods and Afghanistan's fragile economy, while further straining already tense Pakistan–Afghanistan relations. Without a consistent cross-border policy, closures are likely to remain a disruptive feature of bilateral ties.

b. Bajaur Jirga Demands TTP Fighters Leave, Signals Rising Grassroots Pushback (Khaama Press, August 02)

Residents of Pakistan's Bajaur district have convened a *jirga* urging Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) fighters to leave the area and return to Afghanistan, a rare, direct appeal that reflects mounting public anger over violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The peace gathering, held on August 01, brought together community elders, political representatives, activists from the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), and other stakeholders. Unusually, several TTP members were present during the meeting, with locals pressing them to consult their commanders across the border before responding. The *jirga* followed new movement restrictions imposed by Pakistani security forces in Bajaur, part of efforts to contain clashes and restore order in a region long scarred by militancy. Participants voiced support for security forces and stressed that peace and stability must take precedence over militant activity. The call builds on a similar initiative in Tirah, where residents also demanded a TTP withdrawal, suggesting a widening grassroots movement across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The repeated jirgas mark a potential turning point: communities battered by militancy are no longer relying solely on state intervention. Instead, they are directly confronting militants and asserting their right to reclaim safety, stability, and agency over their own future.

c. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Calls for Afghan Cooperation to Counter Terrorism (Tolo News, August 05)

Amid heightened tensions between Kabul and Islamabad, officials in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have stressed the importance of coordination with Afghanistan to

effectively combat terrorism. Dr Saif, Information Adviser for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said regional security could only be achieved through bilateral engagement. “Coordination with Afghanistan is essential to effectively curb terrorism in the region, and under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the provincial government is taking serious steps to maintain law and order,” he stated. Political analyst Najeeb ur Rehman Shamal noted that closer cooperation could have wider diplomatic benefits, given that “the Pakistani government fulfils its commitments toward Afghanistan, particularly in countering terrorist groups, and if military and intelligence coordination increase, dismantling networks will naturally improve bilateral relations.

d. Pakistan Says Kabul Ties at Ambassadorial Level, Downplays Recognition Debate (Khaama Press, August 09; Tolo News, August 09)

Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has clarified that its relations with Afghanistan have already reached the ambassadorial level, with no immediate need for further steps such as formal recognition of the Islamic Emirate. Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan stressed that Islamabad views stability in Afghanistan as directly tied to its own national interests. Addressing speculation about Acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi’s planned visit to Pakistan, Khan said the trip has not been postponed or cancelled. Rather, the dates remain under discussion due to what he described as “procedural issues.” He dismissed reports that a UN Security Council travel ban had obstructed the visit, noting that “as soon as those are resolved, we look forward to welcoming the Afghan Foreign Minister in Pakistan.” On the broader question of recognition, Khan emphasised that relations are already functioning at a high level. Analysts, however, view the situation with caution. Political commentator Abdul Naser Shafaq suggested that external dynamics, including US pressure, the Ukraine war, relations with China, and Middle East instability, may be shaping Pakistan’s careful stance. Salim Paigir, another analyst, was more critical, arguing that Pakistan has shown little willingness to improve ties despite repeated overtures from the Islamic Emirate, and only raises issues under Chinese influence. Muttaqi had previously announced plans to travel to Pakistan in early August, underscoring ongoing uncertainty around the trip and broader Kabul-Islamabad relations.

e. Chaman Protests Against Pakistan’s Border Restrictions Intensify (Tolo News, August 10)

Protests at the Chaman-Spin Boldak crossing continue unabated, nearly two years after Pakistan made crossing the border conditional on holding a passport and visa. Residents of Chaman argue that the measure is an attempt to divide Pashtun communities along the disputed Durand Line and to suppress their rights. At a recent gathering, protesters accused Pakistan's security agencies of deliberately fuelling insecurity to silence Pashtuns. "The aim of all explosions, raids, and operations is to silence the people so they do not speak out about their rights. This is being carried out by Pakistan's security agencies," said Sadiq Khan Achakzai, spokesperson for the sit-in. Leaders of the protest movement reiterated their rejection of the passport and visa requirements. Mohammad Wali urged residents not to yield to pressure and called on the youth not to come under the influence of the Pakistani government and to fight for their rights. Another protest leader, Hayatullah Afghan, declared: "We do not accept passports and visas along the hypothetical Durand Line, and this unjust decision is unacceptable to any Afghan or Pashtun to abandon their own land." Similarly, Abdul Qudus Azad stressed that the struggle is not just about border restrictions but about defending Pashtun identity: "The Pakistani government cannot separate Chaman and Spin Boldak, and we will not submit to the passport and visa decision. Our struggle is for the defence of the country, and we are even ready to make sacrifices for this cause." Despite the sustained sit-in and repeated demands, the Pakistani government has yet to respond. The Chaman protests highlight not only discontent over border controls but also the deeper grievances of Pashtuns, who view the policy as part of a larger effort to curtail their voice and unity.

f. Nine Soldiers Killed in Balochistan Militant Attack; Pakistan Claims 50 Insurgents Eliminated ([Anadolu Ajansi, August 12](#); [Arab News, August 12](#))

At least nine Pakistani soldiers were killed after militants attacked a police station and a paramilitary compound in Balochistan's Washuk district, officials said. The assailants struck as the army moved to reinforce local security units. The military's media wing, ISPR, did not immediately confirm the incident but announced that 50 militants had been killed in the past four days during operations in Zhob and Sambaza, near the Afghan border. ISPR said weapons and explosives were recovered, vowing to secure Pakistan's frontiers against "khawarij", its term for Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) fighters. This follows a day after the US designated BLA alias Majeed Brigade as a terrorist organisation.

g. Karzai Condemns Reported Pakistani Airstrike in Afghanistan's Nuristan ([Afghanistan International, August 14](#); [Khaama Press, August 14](#))

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has voiced concern over media reports of a Pakistani drone strike in Nuristan Province, urging Islamabad to respect Afghanistan's sovereignty and avoid violations of international law. Speaking on August 14, Karzai said he was "deeply concerned" by the alleged strike and called on Pakistan to pursue "civilised relations and good neighbourliness" instead of military action. The reports first emerged via Tasnim News Agency [now unavailable], linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, citing unnamed sources. Local media in Nuristan have also mentioned drone activity but provided no details on casualties or targets.

7. Rising Concerns Over Killings of Afghans in Iran ([Tolo News, August 11](#))

In the past three months, six Afghan citizens, including women, have lost their lives in Iran under separate incidents, with Iranian authorities yet to address any of the cases. Ahmadullah Wasiq, spokesperson for the Commission for Addressing Refugee Issues, confirmed that one Afghan woman remains missing while investigations are ongoing. Legal experts have stressed that Afghanistan's diplomatic missions in Iran must take stronger action. They argue that embassies and consulates should go beyond documenting such cases, ensuring they are pursued in Iranian courts until justice is delivered. Political analyst Idris Mohammadi Zazi underscored that the Islamic Emirate bears responsibility for defending the rights of its citizens abroad. Echoing this concern, political analyst Gol Mohammaddin Mohammadi remarked that such incidents violate international norms: "In Iran, whenever an Afghan is killed or put on trial, it is against international principles and is not good news for Afghans." Meanwhile, the scale of deportations has continued to surge. Between April and July this year alone, nearly 1.4 million Afghan migrants were expelled from Iran, further heightening the humanitarian and diplomatic strain between Kabul and Tehran.

8. China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Meeting to Be Held in Kabul ([Tolo News, August 13](#); [CNN News/YouTube, August 15](#))

Kabul is set to host the sixth trilateral dialogue between the foreign ministers of China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan on August 20. The meeting will focus on strengthening trilateral cooperation and reviewing progress on decisions taken during the informal trilateral meeting convened in Beijing in May this year. The last formal session of the dialogue was held in

Islamabad in May 2023. Political analysts suggest the meeting carries both opportunities and challenges. Kamran Aman, a political affairs expert, noted that Afghanistan is trying to have good relations with all countries because it is in its self-interest, but Pakistan has never been and is not sincere in its behaviour towards Afghanistan. The dialogue comes shortly after the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan announced his intention to visit Islamabad in early August. Analysts highlight China's central role in facilitating the process. Wahid Faqiri observed that Beijing seeks to ensure peace and stability in the region while projecting its diplomatic capability to resolve disputes in its interest. Despite recent high-level exchanges, including visits by Pakistan's foreign and interior ministers to Kabul, several contentious issues between Kabul and Islamabad remain unresolved. The upcoming trilateral meeting will therefore be closely watched for signs of progress in easing tensions and advancing regional stability.

9. Deputy Minister Praises Japanese Ambassador as His Mission in Afghanistan Concludes ([Pajhwok Afghan News, August 14](#); [Tolo News, August 14](#))

As Takayoshi Kuromaya's tenure as Japan's Ambassador to Afghanistan comes to a close, Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Naeem, commended his effective efforts and activities. Naeem highlighted the historic ties between Afghanistan and Japan, stressing the need to expand cooperation in economic, security, and cultural fields. He also briefed the ambassador on Afghanistan's stability, counter-narcotics measures, anti-corruption efforts, and infrastructure projects, calling for greater international understanding. Ambassador Kuromaya expressed satisfaction with the country's security environment, progress in counter-narcotics, and infrastructure development, affirming Japan's continued cooperation and assistance to the Afghan people. Political affairs analyst Abdul Naser Shafiq noted Japan's history of supporting war-torn countries, describing its embassy in Afghanistan as essential and expressing hope for the appointment of a new ambassador soon. Economic affairs analyst Mohammad Nabi Afghan emphasised the importance of seeking Japan's support in agriculture, industry, and technology to align Afghanistan with global progress. During his nearly two years in office, Ambassador Kuromaya notably supported the reopening of girls' schools, initiatives to combat polio, and the provision of humanitarian aid.

10. Interior Ministry Urges Regional Cooperation to Curb Synthetic Drug Trafficking ([Tolo News, August 15](#))

The Ministry of Interior has criticised neighbouring countries and international organisations for their lack of cooperation with Afghanistan in combating narcotics. According to ministry spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani, border police have found that synthetic drugs are being trafficked into Afghanistan from abroad. Qani called on neighbouring and regional states to prevent such trafficking, noting that even individuals from Europe had been arrested last year for involvement in drug smuggling inside Afghanistan. He stressed that the modern types of narcotics entering the country are primarily coming from the region. The ministry claimed that poppy cultivation has been completely eradicated, drug trafficking reduced to zero, and the production and consumption of synthetic drugs effectively brought under control. Factories involved in narcotics production were said to have been dismantled. Despite these assertions, Qani lamented the absence of cooperation from regional neighbours, the European Union, and the United Nations in Afghanistan's counter-narcotics efforts. These comments follow concerns raised by UN agencies and neighbouring states about the rising trafficking of synthetic drugs from Afghanistan into the wider region. Although the United Nations has set up a working group to promote alternative crops in Afghanistan, progress on the initiative has so far been limited.

AFGHANISTAN'S RETURNEE CRISIS

1. IOM Warns of Crisis as 1.5 Million Afghans Deported in 2025 (IOM, August 07)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has raised alarm over one of the largest waves of forced deportations in recent history, with 1.5 million Afghans expelled from Iran and Pakistan in 2025 alone. Since September 2023, more than 4 million Afghans have returned, placing immense pressure on Afghanistan's fragile economy and social fabric. The UN has urged urgent international support to prevent a humanitarian crisis. Women and girls make up a significant proportion of returnees, accounting for half of those deported from Pakistan and a third from Iran this year. UN Women has warned that they face heightened risks of poverty, early marriage, violence, and severe restrictions on their freedoms once back in Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate has rejected these concerns, insisting that women's rights are being safeguarded, citing measures against forced marriage and mechanisms for legal complaints. However, activists argue that opportunities available abroad are not accessible at home, with education and employment restrictions continuing to draw international criticism. As deportations intensify, the mass return of Afghans threatens to deepen humanitarian challenges and compound social tensions, making international assistance more urgent than ever.

2. Deported Afghans Report Abuse, Property Seizure in Iran (Tolo News, August 08)

Afghan citizens recently deported from Iran have accused Iranian authorities of abuse, harassment, and confiscation of property. Several returnees told Tolo News that in recent months they had been unable to leave their homes for fear of police action, with some reporting the loss of cars, shops, and even homes during their detention and deportation. Ali Reza Soltani, one deportee, said Iranian police "would beat us, harass us, and take us to the station" if they were seen outside. Another, Omid, described how he lost his business and car in Mashhad: "They treated us like dogs, beat us, took my car, and closed our shop." Others claimed that families were separated at the border, while some were accused of espionage without evidence. "They kept saying: confess that you are a spy," recalled Seyed Mahmood, who has since lost contact with his family. Deportees urged the Islamic Emirate and the international community to provide jobs in Afghanistan to reduce migration pressures. "Our youth are truly humiliated

and insulted in Iran. It's not worth it to be degraded like this just for a piece of bread," said Talib Shah, another deportee. The Commission for Refugee Affairs has previously condemned Iran's treatment of Afghan migrants and urged Tehran to coordinate deportations with Kabul. This comes as Iran's police chief once again stressed the expulsion of "illegal" Afghan migrants. The caretaker government in Kabul, meanwhile, has reiterated its call for the "honourable return" of citizens from neighbouring countries.

3. Germany to Step Up Deportations of Afghan and Syrian Migrants ([Arab News, August 07](#); [Deutsche Welle News, August 07](#); [Tolo News, August 08](#))

Germany is preparing to expand deportations of migrants convicted of crimes, including those from Afghanistan and Syria. Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said in an interview with *Table Today* that Berlin is working to organise more deportation flights to both countries. "The deportation of criminal Afghan and Syrian asylum seekers is absolutely necessary," he stressed, noting that individuals without legal residence status could not remain in Germany. In July, Germany deported 81 convicted Afghan asylum seekers to Kabul on a flight arranged with Qatari assistance. Officials have indicated that future deportations will follow a similar model. Dobrindt has also underlined the need to establish limited, technical contacts with the Taliban-led administration in Kabul to enable the process, while insisting such engagement would not amount to formal recognition. The move reflects growing political pressure in Germany to enforce stricter migration controls, even as rights groups warn of security and humanitarian concerns tied to returning individuals to conflict-affected states.

4. Afghan Media Group Urges End to Deportation of Journalists ([Khaama Press, August 11](#))

The Afghanistan Media Support Organisation (AMSO) has launched a campaign urging Iran and Pakistan to halt the deportation of Afghan journalists, warning that such actions put lives at risk and undermine press freedom. In a statement on August 10, AMSO called on social media users to amplify the campaign's three central messages:

- "No to the deportation of journalists from Pakistan and Iran"
- "Speed up the relocation of journalists to safe countries"

- “Journalism is not a crime”

The move follows Pakistan’s new deportation policy, which rights groups fear will endanger not only journalists but also civil society activists, human rights defenders, and former Afghan security personnel. During an online meeting a day earlier, AMSO stressed the urgent need for accelerated relocation of at-risk Afghan journalists to safer countries, warning that continued expulsions could have severe consequences. International press freedom organisations have repeatedly called for stronger protections for Afghan media workers who fled the Taliban and remain stranded in neighbouring states. The campaign underscores mounting fears over shrinking media space in the region and appeals for coordinated global action to safeguard journalists.

5. Investigation into the UNAMA Human Rights Report on Afghan Returnees ([Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 10](#); [Tolo News, August 11](#))

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the formation of a special commission to examine the [recent report issued by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan](#) (UNAMA) regarding the alleged mistreatment of Afghans forcibly returned from Iran and Pakistan. The commission comprises representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the Ministry of Interior, and the General Directorate of Intelligence. Its mandate was to review the claims contained in the report and to coordinate with relevant state institutions should the allegations prove credible.

In its findings, the commission rejected the credibility of the UNAMA document, noting that while limited mention of positive developments was made, the report predominantly relied on selective narratives that presented a distorted picture. The commission pointed out that:

- The report was based on interviews with only 49 individuals, despite the return of millions of Afghans.
- The cases highlighted were neither representative nor verifiable, with vague allegations such as a woman’s claim of forced marriage by a military official, or unspecified killings in Takhar and Paktia.
- Politically charged language was used, including terms such as “revenge,” “arbitrary arrest,” and “torture,” which undermined neutrality.

- Incidents outside the reporting period were included, creating what the commission described as a misleading impression of recent conditions.

Officials concluded that the methodology employed was “non-standard,” overly focused on negative portrayals, and failed to account for the social, religious, and cultural context of Afghanistan. The statement argued that millions of returnees had re-entered the country in “safe, dignified, and stable conditions,” which the report had ignored.

On August 05, 2025, UNAMA officials from the concerned division were summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where these observations were formally conveyed. They were urged to review their reporting methods, adopt corrective measures, and ensure greater professional accuracy. The ministry also warned that if such “baseless” reports persist, the government reserves the right to take appropriate action.

The UNAMA Human Rights Section’s report, released earlier in the week, had warned that forced returnees, particularly women, former security officials, human rights defenders, and journalists, face risks to their lives. It also criticised restrictions on girls’ access to education and the enforcement of rules requiring a male guardian (*mahram*) for women to access services. Women’s rights activist Tafseer Siyahposh expressed hope that the authorities would heed these concerns: “We hope that the Islamic Emirate will respond to our women’s demands and pay attention to this matter. If they do not celebrate, we women should also have a share in it.” The Islamic Emirate, for its part, continues to maintain that it provides necessary services to returnees and that the question of women’s and girls’ education is strictly an internal matter.

6. Pakistan

a. Hundreds Forcibly Deported Through Torkham Crossing (Tolo News, August 10)

In just 24 hours, 300 Afghan families and 350 prisoners were deported from Pakistan via the Torkham crossing, according to officials in Nangarhar. The deportees were provided with essential assistance before being transferred to their home areas. According to Bakht Jamal Gohar, head of migrant transportation in Torkham, the Pakistani side handed over 350 prisoners to Afghanistan, among whom 20 families of deportees were included and even possessed legal documents. Newly deported individuals have appealed for greater support from the Islamic

Emirate and international aid organisations. According to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations, on August 09 alone, 747 families were forcibly returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran.

b. Afghan Migrant Families in Islamabad Appeal for Visa Extensions and Support (Tolo News, August 14)

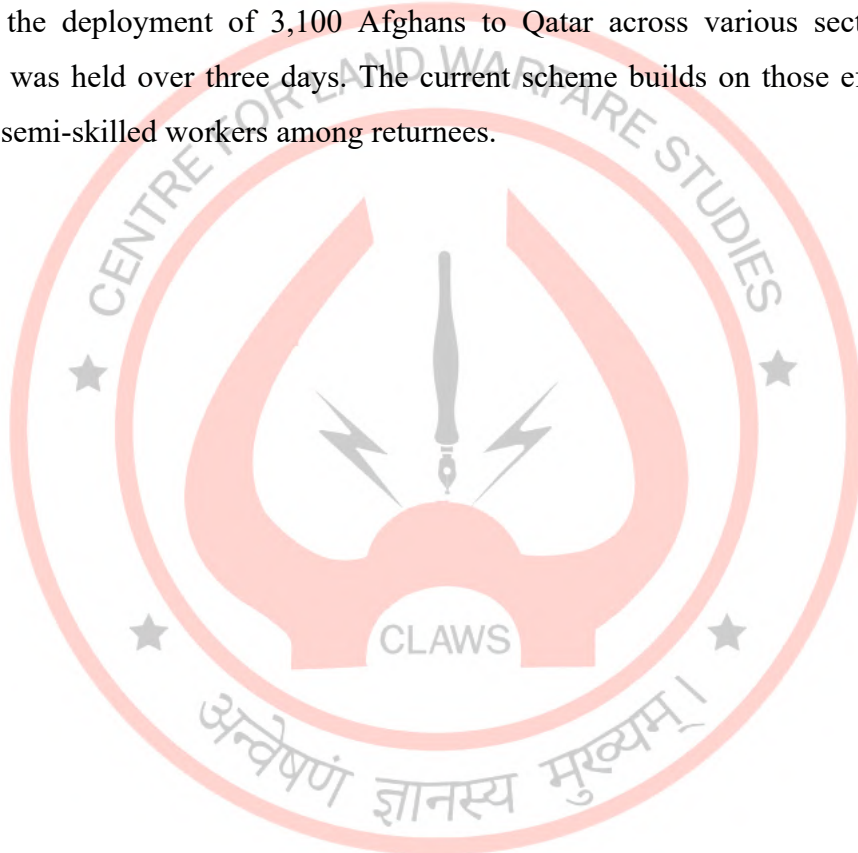
Several Afghan migrant families in Islamabad, holding migration case files, have raised concerns over the Pakistani government's refusal to extend their visas. Recently, they have been living in a recreational park after being evicted from their homes. Madina Rahmani, one of the affected migrants, described the difficulties: "Due to a lack of visas, we were evicted from our homes and have been living in the park for fifteen days. We can't sleep in the tents during the hot days and rainy nights, and our children have fallen ill." Migrants with pending cases have also urged international organisations to act. While the Pakistani government has allowed holders of Afghan Proof of Registration (PoR) cards to remain in the country until the end of August, many Afghan migrants remain uncertain and anxious about their future and that of their families.

7. Afghan Children Face Severe Hardships Amid Mass Deportations (Tolo News, August 12)

Children are bearing a disproportionate burden of Afghanistan's ongoing migration crisis. With deportations from Iran and Pakistan sharply increasing, Afghan children are enduring both emotional and physical hardships as they return. The scale of the crisis is staggering. Save the Children reports that, on average, one child returns to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan every 30 seconds. In the current year alone, more than 8,00,000 children have crossed back, three-quarters from Iran, double the previous year's total, following stricter deadlines imposed on undocumented migrants. The organisation further noted that in June alone, 80,000 Afghan children were deported from Iran, including about 6,700 unaccompanied minors. Nearly 39% of returning children were expelled against their will. The rising influx of child deportees highlights the urgent need for coordinated humanitarian assistance, particularly in education, health, and psychosocial support, to prevent an entire generation from being left behind.

8. Qatar to Offer 1,800 Job Opportunities for Afghan Returnees ([Tolo News, August 12](#); [Associated Press, August 13](#); [Macau Business, August 14](#))

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has announced that Qatar will provide employment opportunities for 1,800 Afghan returnees across 23 professional fields. Economic experts view the initiative as a positive step, believing that sending Afghan workers to Arab countries like Qatar is beneficial for Afghanistan, as they can acquire new skills in the destination country and bring liquidity into the country. This is not the first such initiative. Previously, the ministry announced the deployment of 3,100 Afghans to Qatar across various sectors, for which registration was held over three days. The current scheme builds on those efforts, targeting skilled and semi-skilled workers among returnees.



About the Author

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