



Human Trafficking in Afghanistan: Sources and Documents

July 2021

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I. Bacha Bazi

1. Amnesty International's Human Rights Report, Afghanistan 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/afghanistan/report-afghanistan/>
According to the Amnesty International report of 2020, Afghan children continue to be recruited for combat, particularly by armed groups and faced multiple abuses including sexual abuse (bacha bazi). The authorities made little effort to hold perpetrators accountable.
2. The New York Times, “**An Afghan Boy’s Rape and Death Prompt a Rare Response: Arrests.**” By: David Zucchino and Taimoor Shah, 9 Oct. 2020, www.nytimes.com/2020/10/09/world/asia/afghanistan-rape-bacha-bazi.html
A dispute started when a 13-year-old boy stole fruit from another boy. Two days later, one boy was dead and his family accused an influential police commander of abducting and raping the child, fatally injuring him.
3. The New York Times, “**U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Allies.**” By: Joseph Goldstein 25 Sept. 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/asia/us-soldiers-told-to-ignore-afghan-allies-abuse-of-boys.html/>
Sexual abuse of children has long been a problem in Afghanistan. Powerful “Lance Cpl. Gregory Buckley Jr. who deployed to Afghanistan told his father that he could hear Afghan police officers sexually abusing boys they had brought to the base. At night we can hear them screaming, but we’re not allowed to do anything about it because it’s their culture.” American forces in Afghanistan ignored sexual abuse of children because they believed that allegations of child sexual abuse by Afghan military or police personnel would be a matter of domestic Afghan criminal law.
4. **Afghanistan’s Child Sexual Abuse Complicity Problem: Afghan Military’s Sexual Exploitation of Boys Persists, Human Rights Watch, August 2, 2017,**

www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/02/afghanistans-child-sexual-abuse-complicity-problem

According to this report, the Afghan government has failed to adequately assist bacha bazi victims, resulting in the arrest and prosecution of boys who have victims of that abuse. The Afghan government's failure to stamp out bacha bazi abuses within the military strained relations of US forces with Afghan security forces implicated in such violations.

5. **Bacha Bazi: Afghanistan's Darkest Secret**, By: Jesutofunmi E Somade, Aug 18, 2017
<https://humanrights.brightblue.org.uk/blog-1/2017/8/18/bacha-bazi-afghanistans-darkest-secret>

"Many high-ranking officials reportedly engage in bacha bazi but [are] rarely prosecuted the authorities. International condemnation regarding the lack of action on bacha bazi has grown. UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict told the General Assembly that "laws should be passed; campaigns must be waged and perpetrators should be held accountable and punished."

The Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) also criticized Afghan government officials for active complicity in the sexual exploitation and recruitment of children by Afghan security forces. Bacha bazi is an under-reported human rights problem that is causing suffering to the most vulnerable children in Afghanistan. The lack of action by the US and Afghan governments "constitutes a dark stain on their record as they attempt to create a more free and safe society after the war. Whilst the rhetoric of both governments signifies an increased engagement with the problem, swift action must now follow to protect the young boys of Afghanistan from further abuse."

6. **An Untold Story: The Need to Address Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Refugee Boys**, by: Emily Ausubel, October 26, 2021,
<https://ksr.hkspublications.org/2019/10/22/an-untold-story-the-need-to-address-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-of-refugee-boys/>

"Mohammad was sold by his family when he was 12 years old to an older man to serve as a bacha, or boy child entertainer. In this role, he would have to dance, sing, and sometimes provide sex for the man who owned him. Mohammad escaped and left Afghanistan to Europe, where he ended up in an asylum center in the Balkans. He was able to evade the life of a *bacha*, but other refugees quickly discovered his past. Groups of around 20 adult men gang raped Mohammad each night for several days. The local government and humanitarian agencies finally moved him to a shelter for unaccompanied refugee children for extra protection, but the necessary intervention came too late. Mohammad experienced extreme psychological distress in the aftermath of both fleeing his home and experiencing this abuse. Mohammad's story is particularly horrific but unfortunately not unique. Each year, thousands of unaccompanied and separated children flee their countries due to war, terrorist threats, armed recruitment, and poverty, making them vulnerable to such abuse."

7. **Afghanistan: Child Abuse Going Unpunished**, Refworld, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, by: Zulmai Ashan, Apr 20, 2018,
<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b8660bea.html>

“Activists in the northeastern province of Takhar are warning that despite hundreds of cases of child sexual assault reported to the police each year, very few criminal investigations are ever opened. They claim that not only are the police apparently reluctant to pursue cases, but that widespread corruption has also served to derail any access to justice. Issues of shame associated with these types of crime also mean that families of victims also often prefer to turn to tribal mediation and other informal justice processes.”

“As part of a two-month investigation, IWPR looked at 38 cases of alleged sexual assault on children carried out over a two-year period. Most of the families of these victims complained to the police, but never had their cases referred to the attorney’s office. Takhar’s police prefer personal relations to justice, and that means people don’t trust law enforcement. Also, lack of oversight by the ministry of interior affairs allowed this practice to continue year after year.”

8. **PBS, Pentagon Maintained Aid for Afghans Accused of Rights Abuses, Watchdog Says**, by: Leila Miller, January 25, 2018

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/pentagon-maintained-aid-for-afghans-accused-of-rights-abuses-watchdog-says/>

A government watchdog has found that the United States military provided assistance to Afghan security force units implicated in human rights abuses, despite a federal law designed to cut off aid in such instances.

9. **The New York Times, Afghan Pedophiles Get Free Pass from U.S. Military, Report Says**, by: Rod Nordland

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/23/world/asia/afghanistan-military-abuse.html>

A former Special Forces officer, Capt. Dan Quinn, was relieved of his command and pulled from Afghanistan after fighting with an Afghan militia commander for keeping a boy as a sex slave.

10. **Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), Child Sexual Assault in Afghanistan: Implementation of the Leahy Laws and Reports of Assault by Afghan Security Forces**, June 2017

<https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/inspections/SIGAR%2017-47-IP.pdf>

The Leahy laws generally prohibit DOD and State from providing assistance to units of foreign security forces that have committed a gross violation of human rights. Secretary of Defense issued guidance on how to report gross violations of human rights by units of foreign security forces worldwide, including in Afghanistan. SIGAR did not find evidence that U.S. Forces were told to ignore human rights abuses or child sexual assault. SIGAR interviewed several current and former U.S. service members. One said he reported an alleged incident to his commanding officer but did not know what came of the report. Another told SIGAR that her and his fellow service members witnessed an incident but thought it would be best to leave it alone and did not report.

According to the report, DoD and State have confirmed that some units of the Afghan security forces (ASFF) have committed gross violations of human rights, the Secretary of Defense has used the “notwithstanding” clause in the DoD Appropriations Acts to

continue providing ASFF funding for select training, equipment and other assistance to some implicated units in Afghanistan.

11. Bureau of International Labor Affairs. 2019 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Afghanistan, page 2

<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1328021/download>>

“Boys across the country are subject to commercial sexual exploitation through the practice of bacha bazi, which typically entails keeping a male or transgendered child for the purpose of sexual gratification. Although bacha bazi is illegal, it is defended by some as a cultural practice. The perpetrators include police commanders, military members, tribal leaders, warlords, members of organized crime groups, clergy, and other men, typically with some authority or financial influence, who conspire to make boys available for sex. Minors complained that some teachers and principals pressured them to perform commercial sex acts to pass exams.

“According to media and NGO reports, many of these cases went unreported or were referred to traditional mediation, which often allowed perpetrators to re-offend. Cases were further underreported because the stigma associated with these crimes prevented the vast majority of child victims from bringing cases forward to law enforcement or seeking care. Some child victims also reported authorities forced them to have sex in exchange for pursuing their cases or raped them and sent them to detention centers when they tried to report their abusers.

“In November 2019, media outlets reported at least 165 cases of the sexual abuse of boys at 3 schools by teachers, school managers, and local authorities in Logar Province. Numerous videos of these sexual assaults were posted on social media. Some boys were banished by their families, while families of other boys fled the region. Two human rights activists who had researched the Logar abuse and made some of their findings public were taken into custody by the National Directorate of Security and released only after making video statements under duress in which they stated that their investigation and reporting had been incomplete and incorrect. The activists subsequently received death threats and fled Afghanistan.”

II. Forced Labor

1. Officials: Young Afghans Trafficked to Study under Taliban, AP NEWS, Associated Press, by: Kathy Gannon, July 31, 2017

<https://apnews.com/article/child-trafficking-ap-top-news-pakistan-international-news-afghanistan-590be9a02ef14617b6cacec827>

Afghan children were sent to Pakistani madrassas for education, but then trafficked from province to province or across the international borders for cheap labor, sexual exploitation, and recruiting to the Taliban under the guise of religious education. Families unknowingly helped the traffickers, sending their children in the hope of a better education or employment.

2. **An Overview on Situation of Child Labor in Afghanistan Research Report.**

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission's report,

<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/471f4a560.pdf>

“The situation of children in today Afghanistan is of grave concern. A large number of Afghan children are subjected to worst forms of labor. The increasing number of street children, children used for begging, inconceivable number of children employed in carpet-weaving workplaces, increasing number of children exploited in activities related to narcotics, heavy vehicle repair workshops and sexual exploitation.

“Due to children vulnerability, child labor are more prone to danger than any other segment of population and these dangers can include all forms of physical, material, sexual and mental abuse. Forced labor is forbidden in the Afghanistan Constitutions Article 49 but the actual practice is going on in Afghanistan.”

More examples related to the child forced labor are available on page 15, 17, and 18.

3. Bureau of International Labor Affairs. 2019 **Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Afghanistan**, page 3

<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1328021/download>>

“Afghan boys are used for forced labor in agriculture and construction abroad, and girls are used for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work in destination countries, primarily Iran and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, children were subjected to human trafficking to settle their family's debt, sometimes as a result of their parents' drug addiction, by being forced to produce bricks and illicit drugs. Many Afghan girls are subjected to forced marriage in exchange for money for their families. In addition, traffickers in Iran exploit Afghan children in forced labor as beggars and street vendors and forced criminality, including drug trafficking and smuggling of fuel and tobacco. Girls from Iran, Pakistan, and China were subject of human trafficking to Afghanistan for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Widespread violence and lack of economic opportunities lead some Afghan children to leave Afghanistan. Some children went to Iran specifically to engage in child labor. According to the UN, some Afghan refugee children in Iran engaged in child labor and did not attend school.”

4. AREU, SGG. **A Mapping Study: Institutional Mechanisms to Tackle Trafficking in Persons in Afghanistan**. AREU and SGG, page 25, Dec. 2017,

<https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/gdc/gdcovop/2018306383/2018306383.pdf>

“Trafficking in persons for forced and bonded labor is considered very common in Afghanistan, even though it is specifically prohibited under the national laws, the practice of is going on. Men and boys are lured into forced labor situations through misrepresented working conditions, most often for activities such as agriculture, mining, construction, carpet weaving, domestic work and in services such as restaurants and bakeries. Bonded labor is predominantly practiced in the brick-making industry in the eastern belt of Afghanistan. Bonded labor of Afghan men and boys is also widely seen in the carpet-weaving industries in Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan and Iran. Most victims and their families are aware of the exploitative practices of these industries and willingly allow their family members to work in such circumstances due to the lack of viable alternative economic opportunities.

“The most vulnerable persons for forced labor include young and adult men as well as adolescent and young boys, depending on the economic status of their families. Due to cultural norms requiring women to remain within their households once they reach puberty, women are less often exploited in forced labor. However, women belonging to families that are bonded in debt work alongside the other family members. Young girls, however, are widely subjected to forced and bonded labor for domestic servitude both within Afghanistan and abroad in Pakistan, Iran and many of the Gulf States. In these cases, both young boys and young girls can be subject to sexual exploitation in addition to physical abuse.”

5. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, **An Overview on Situation of Child Labor in Afghanistan Research Report**, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/471f4a560.pdf>

III. Sexual Exploitation

1. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), **Women report sexual abuse fears at GREEK reception centers**, February 9, 2018
<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2018/2/5a7d89374/women-report-sexual-abuse-fears-greek-reception-centres.html>
“Reports of sexual harassment and violence at some overcrowded refugee reception centers in Greece are a great concern because thousands of refugees were living in unsuitable shelter with inadequate security. According to the UNHCR report, more than 600 asylum seekers on the Greek Aegean islands reported sexual and gender-based violence in 2017. One woman said she had not taken a shower for two months from fear of being attacked.”
2. United Nations, Office of Drugs and Crime, **Appropriate Legal Responses to Combating Trafficking in Persons in Afghanistan**, July 2008
https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Legal_Responses_to_Trafficking_in_Persons_Manual_for_Parliamentarians_of_Afghanistan.pdf
According to the report, Afghanistan is a country of origin for trafficking for the purposes of forced prostitution, forced labor, slavery, and practices similar to slavery and organ removal. The trafficking of Afghan women occurs primarily to Pakistan and Iran for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and the trafficking of children occurs to Iran, Oman, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. UNODC also reports that Chinese, Philippine, and Thai women provide sexual services out of Chinese restaurants in Kabul. It is not clear whether these women are trafficking victims, but indications show the trade is highly organized, with connections to local and Chinese criminal networks. (Page 16)
3. **Human Trafficking and the Taliban**, June 3, 2014
<https://humantraffickingsearch.org/human-trafficking-and-the-taliban/>
According to the article, Taliban played both sides of the issues, publicly stoning women to death for prostitution but privately abducting women from villages to serve as sex

slaves to the soldiers. In a country where the purity of women is sacred and rape brings shame upon a family, the few women who survive their ordeal are rarely able to go back to their families or old lives. During the Taliban regime, an estimated 6000 female and 4000 male sex workers worked just in Kabul. Afghanistan has a long history of abusing young boys that called bacha bazi. Underage boys are dressed up as girls and sold to the highest bidder to keep as concubines. During the Taliban the number of Bacha Bazi grew. The commanders of the Taliban were kidnapping teenage boys for the purpose of sexual gratification at militant camps. After the boys were sexually abused, they were then sent to participate in terrorist attacks throughout the country.

4. **Human Trafficking in Afghanistan, The BORGEN Project,**

<https://borgenproject.org/category/children/child-soldiers/>

“Afghanistan currently faces a large-scale human trafficking crisis that is rooted in centuries of abuse. Children and women are sold or kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery or armed forces. With the Afghani Government failing to properly protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, the U.S. Department of State and a network of NGOs are working to alleviate the problem.”

5. The Washington Post, **“On eve of military exit, U.S. names Afghanistan among world’s worst on human trafficking”** by: Missy Ryan, July 1, 2021

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/afghanistan-human-trafficking/2021/07/01/1e418804-da7e-11eb-ae62-2d07d7df83bd_story.html

In the U.S. annual trafficking report, the State Department named Afghanistan among the countries with world’s poorest records “Tier 3” on human trafficking for the second year in a row.

“Tier 3” countries that failed to take significant action against human trafficking might lose American assistance. According to U.S. law, countries in that category may be denied non-humanitarian, non-trade assistance, and the United States may also seek to withhold financing to them from multilateral lenders. But the president can also waive those restrictions. The president is expected to decide before the next fiscal year begins in October. Since 2002, the United States has provided Afghanistan some \$36 billion in civilian assistance and \$88 billion in security assistance. The Biden administration has promised to provide billions more in coming years.

The Afghan government did not investigate or prosecute many high-level security officials or government employees for bacha bazi, despite continuing reports of complicity.

The Afghan government has never prosecuted military or police officials for employing child soldiers — a practice also used by anti-government militants — the report said. Instead of protecting victims, the government has often penalized or abused them.”

6. TOLO News, **Trading of Women Rife in East Afghanistan, Report Claims, 2013**

<https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/trading-women-rife-east-afghanistan-report-claims>

“The sale and exchange of women as goods is rampant in Afghanistan’s eastern Nangarhar province with as many as two women traded per day, according to the findings of a sociology researcher.”

IV. Abuse of Third Country Nationals ‘TCNs’

1. ACLU, Victims of Complacency: The ongoing trafficking and abuse of third country nationals by U.S. Government contractors.
<https://www.aclu.org/report/victims-complacency-ongoing-trafficking-and-abuse-third-country-nationals-us-government>
“A report released by the ACLU and Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Law Clinic at Yale Law School in June 2012 examines the ongoing trafficking and abuse of Third Country Nationals (TCNs), tens of thousands of whom are hired yearly through U.S. Government contracts to work in support of U.S. military and diplomatic missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.”
2. The Washington Post, “**Committee acts to stop contractors from enabling human trafficking**” by: Joe Davidson, June 27, 2012
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/committee-acts-to-stop-contractors-from-enabling-human-trafficking/2012/06/27/gJQAYjDs7V_story.html
“In contrast to all the debate about federal employees, too little attention has been paid to more than 70,000 people, from countries such as Bangladesh, Fiji and the Philippines, who work for military contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of them are lured by promises of lucrative jobs, only to be paid next to nothing and forced to go heavily in debt from labor brokers. Their living conditions often are shameful, and their passports are sometimes confiscated.”
3. Human Trafficking Search, **Third Country Nationals Trafficked by Military Contractors**, September 3, 2013
The US military sub-contracts the majority of its non-military labor needs through outside agencies. Foreign workers are commonly brought into US military bases to work as cleaners, cooks, fast-food employees, beauticians and construction workers. Most workers are from underprivileged countries like Fiji, the Philippines, Nepal, Ukraine and Bulgaria.

The investigations into the staffing of military bases are finding that large numbers of workers were promised lucrative jobs in wealthy middle eastern countries like Dubai but instead end up in war zones like Iraq and Afghanistan working seven days a week for 12 hours a day. The workers are often forced to work for years in dangerous and unsanitary conditions and are only allowed to return home at the discretion of the contractor.”
4. ALJAZEERA AMERICA, **After 12 years of war, labor abuses rampant on US bases in Afghanistan**, by: Samuel Black, March 7, 2014
<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/7/after-12-years-ofwarlaborabusesrampantonusbasesinafghanistan.html>
“South Asian workers are at the bottom of the social hierarchy on U.S. bases. They earn far less than American or European contractors, work 12-hour days with little or no time off and, on some bases, aren’t allowed to use cellphones or speak to military personnel.” Of 75 people ‘Fault Lines’ contacted who work or used to work on U.S. bases across Afghanistan, 65 said they paid agents fees ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Many said

their monthly salaries, generally \$400 to \$800, ran several hundred dollars short of what they were promised.

5. VOA, **US Overseas Contracts Faulted in Human Trafficking**, by: Sharon Behn, November 24, 2014
<https://www.voanews.com/usa/us-overseas-contracts-faulted-human-trafficking>
“Ten years ago, allegations erupted that U.S. contractors and subcontractors were abusing foreign nationals hired to work in Iraq, Afghanistan and other high-risk countries. Though Congress and the White House have enacted laws to protect those workers, a new report says gaps in recruitment policy and monitoring still leave them vulnerable.”

V. Organ Trafficking

1. The New York Times, **“In Afghanistan, a Booming Kidney Trade Preys on the Poor”** Widespread poverty and an ambitious private hospital are helping to fuel an illegal market — a portal to new misery for the country’s most vulnerable. By: Adam Nossiter and Najim Rahim, Feb 6, 2021
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/06/world/asia/selling-buying-kidneys-afghanistan.html>
“In Afghanistan, as in most countries, the sale and purchase of organs is illegal, and so is the implanting of purchased organs by physicians. But the practice remains a worldwide problem, particularly when it comes to kidneys, since most donors can live with just one. Mir Gul Ataye, 28, regrets every second of his decision to sell his kidney. A construction worker who had earned up to \$5 a day before his operation last November, he is now unable to lift more than 10 pounds, and barely that.”
2. The Telegraph, **‘They are butchering a human for money’: Afghanistan’s poor sell their kidneys on the black market.** By: Ben Farmer and Akhtar Makoi, Feb 23, 2021
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/climate-and-people/butchering-human-money-afghanistans-poor-sell-kidneys-black/>
“Organ trading is flourishing among the desperate – but donors sometimes find they have traded their own health for a few thousand pounds. The prospect of selling a kidney has become a financial lifeline for the city’s most despairing, the men said. Poverty has combined with the desperation of those needing transplants to create a thriving black market.”
3. Pajhwok Afghanistan News, **‘Trafficking in Persons for the purpose of organ removal’** by: Nafisa, April 19, 2017
<https://pajhwok.com/2017/04/19/trafficking-persons-purpose-organ-removal/>
“Herat City (Pajhwok): An Afghan woman from Herat Province was forced to sell her kidney in order to rescue her husband from captivity in Iran. While Afghans are already suffering from various political, economic and security challenges, organ trafficking has emerged as the country’s latest form within a broader

human trafficking problem. Hameeda, 35, is among those persons who sold her bodily organ in order to bail out her family from trouble.

4. KSU The Sentinel Newspaper, '**In Afghanistan, illegal kidney trade leaves poor people poorer and with serious health problems**' February 9, 2021
<https://ksusentinel.com/2021/02/09/in-afghanistan-illegal-kidney-trade-leaves-poor-people-poorer-and-with-serious-health-problems-02-09-2021-worldwide/>
"We had no choice," said Abdul Samir, "We were forced to sell." Otherwise, we wouldn't even have sold a nail."
5. Independent, '**Afghan children fall prey to killers who trade human organs**' by: Mike Collett- White, August 10, 2012
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/afghan-children-fall-prey-to-killers-who-trade-human-organs-41750.html>
"Ismail is only 10 years old, but the horrors of the past three months will be with him to his grave. He was rescued by the Afghan authorities on Friday, after being kidnapped in March with his brother Ibrahim, 6.
Quietly, he told seeing the bodies of four boys of about his age that had been cut open. They took us to a mountain where I saw the bodies," he said. "They had taken out the organs."

VI. Documentaries and Videos of Human Trafficking in Afghanistan

1. '**Mother and Father Sold Me**' – Afghan Children Reveal 'Heartbreak' of Human Trafficking, RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan, February 12, 2016
<https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-children-reveal-heartbreak-of-human-trafficking/27543763.html>
"Each year dozens of children in Afghanistan are sold into slavery or even worse fates. Their families, usually very poor, hand them over to smugglers in exchange for the promise of cash. Some kids are even groomed as suicide bombers for the Taliban. RFE/RL spoke to two children who escaped from the clutches of the traffickers."
(RFE/RL's Radio Free Afghanistan)
2. **PBS, The Dancing Boys of Afghanistan**
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/dancingboys/>
"In Afghanistan today, in the midst of war and endemic poverty, an ancient tradition (bacha bazi) has re-emerged across the country: Many hundreds of boys, often as young as 11, are being lured off the streets on the promise of a new life, many unaware that their real fate is to be used for entertainment and sex. With remarkable access inside a sexual exploitation ring operating in Afghanistan, an Afghan journalist investigates this illegal practice, talking with the boys and their masters, and documenting how the Afghan authorities responsible for stopping these crimes are sometimes themselves complicit in the practice."
3. **Human Trafficking in Afghanistan**, HAGAR The whole journey,

<https://hagar.org.hk/video-human-trafficking-in-afghanistan/>

“In Afghanistan, internal trafficking is more common than transnational trafficking. And most of the trafficking victims are children. Trafficking is slavery. Children are slaves.” The impact of human trafficking doesn’t end when a survivor has escaped or been rescued. Due to social stigma, a survivor’s family may reject or even threaten to harm them.

The survivor could therefore be forced to flee their community and leave everyone they know, making them even more vulnerable to further exploitation.

4. U.S. Adds Afghanistan to List of Worst Human Traffickers Over Child Sexual Slavery, Child Soldiers by: REF/RL, June 25, 2020,

“The U.S. State Department has added Afghanistan to a list of nations doing little to stop human trafficking, saying Kabul has failed to properly address child sexual slavery and the recruitment of child soldiers.”

Afghan ‘Dancing Boys’ Tell of Rape, Abuse, By: REF/ RL, 2016

<https://www.rferl.org/a/us-adds-afghanistan-to-list-of-worst-human-traffickers/30690934.html>

“Bacha bazi is a common practice in Afghanistan among wealthy and powerful men who exploit underage boys as sexual partners.”

5. Afghan Children are forced to hard labor

<https://www.facebook.com/NowThisNews/videos/1116931985063591/>

6. VOA, “Child Labor in Afghanistan Remains a Problem”

<https://www.voanews.com/episode/child-labor-afghanistan-remains-problem-3719991>

“With war still raging in Afghanistan, the country also faces the problem of child labor as families put their school-age children to work to help make ends meet. Two families whose children had been working in a brick-making factory - to earn their livings and pay off family debts - now have a new lease on life.”

7. CNN, “Girl was sold so the rest of her family could eat.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gBKAbzR8U0>

Families sold their daughters to be able to feed their households or solve and a dispute.

8. Scroll.in, “Afghan teenage girl, almost sold by parents as child bride, turns rap sensation”

<https://scroll.in/video/1020/afghan-teenage-girl-almost-sold-by-parents-as-child-bride-turns-rap-sensation>

Sonita Alizadeh was only ten years old when her parents tried to sell her to a man. That attempt fell through, but it wasn’t to be the last time. Now, after nine years, she has finally spoken up against the inhuman practice of selling child brides in some parts of her country, Afghanistan.

9. Forced to sell a kidney: Desperate Afghans give up their organs to survive

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQ6oNFnGcSo>

VII. U.S. Trafficking in Persons Reports from 2001 – 2021 (Afghanistan)

1. U.S 2001 TIP report (Afghanistan was not included)

On July 12, 2001, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell announced the release of 2001 Trafficking in Persons Report to Congress. It was the first State Department's TIP report. Afghanistan was not included on the report because United States did not have diplomatic relations with Afghanistan during the Taliban regime (Due to insecurity the U.S. Embassy in Kabul closed on January 30, 1989. Then the U.S. Liaison Office in Kabul opened on December 17, 2001, and the Embassy was reopened on January 17, 2002.)

For reading the 2001 State Department TIP report, please click [HERE](#).

Also, further information related to the report is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2001/index.htm>

2. Afghanistan's 2002 TIP report (Tier 3)

On June 5, 2002, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell announced the 2002 Trafficking in Person Reports to Congress. It was the second TIP report. According to the report, Afghanistan was a country of origin and transit of women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and labor. During the reporting period, Afghanistan was under control of two different governments (Taliban and the Afghan Interim Authority, AIA). Until December 2001 Taliban controlled about ninety percent of the country and Taliban forces were engaged in TIP. During the AIA also Women and children were trafficked to Pakistan and the Middle East for purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation. Also, due to poverty Afghan poor families have sold their children for purposes of forced sexual exploitation, marriage, and labor. Neither the Taliban nor the AIA have complied with minimum standards for combating human trafficking. Thus, Afghanistan was placed on Tier 3 because Afghan Government had not complied with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

To read the 2002 State Department TIP report, please click [HERE](#).

Also, information related to the U.S. TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2002/10679.htm>

3. Afghanistan's 2003 TIP report (Placed in special cases category)

The U.S. 2003 Trafficking in Person Report, released on June 11, 2003, did not place Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt on tiers. These countries were placed in special cases category. According to the report, Afghanistan was in transition after 20 years' war. The Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan was in the process of adopting a new constitution and reviving old anti-slavery statutes as it prepares its new legislative framework. The Government established a commission to combat human trafficking in April 2003 and with the help of non-governmental organizations, undertook low or no-cost anti-trafficking measures such as conducting awareness-raising campaigns.

To read the 2002 State Department TIP report, please click [HERE](#).

Also, information related to the U.S. TIP report on Afghanistan (Special Cases) is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21262.htm#specialcases>

4. Afghanistan's 2004 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2004 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 14, 2004. Afghanistan has moved up to Tier 2. According to the report, the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan did not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but the government made significant efforts to combat TIP. Afghanistan's law enforcement actions against trafficking improved and police arrested suspected traffickers and for the first-time rescued victims. The judiciary currently applies a mix of legal codes, Shari'a law, and customary law. Traffickers may be prosecuted under several statutes (legal codes, Shari'a law, and customary law) prohibiting kidnapping, rape, forced labor, transportation of minors, and child endangerment. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and UNICEF established and transit center and a family verification system to assist reuniting trafficked children. Several trainings, workshops and meetings were hold in different part of Afghanistan. The government established an inter-ministerial child trafficking Commission that include representative from the international organizations as well.

To read the 2004 State Department TIP report, please click [HERE](#).

Also, information related to the U.S. TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33197.htm#afghanistan>

Note: from 2004 to 2009 Afghanistan was continuously placed on Tier 2.

According to the State Department's report, Tier 2 Countries are those whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

5. Afghanistan's 2005 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2005 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 3, 2005. Afghanistan again placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2005 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46613.htm#afghanistan>

6. Afghanistan's 2006 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2006 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 5. 2006 Afghanistan again placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2006 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65988.htm>

7. Afghanistan's 2007 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2007 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 12, 2007. Afghanistan again placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2007 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/82805.htm>

8. Afghanistan's 2008 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2008 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 4, 2008. Afghanistan was again placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2008 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/105387.htm>

9. Afghanistan's 2009 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2009 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 17, 2009. Afghanistan was again placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2009 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/123361.pdf>

10. Afghanistan's 2010 TIP report (Tier 2 Watch List)

The U.S. 2010 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 14, 2010. Afghanistan was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List.

The U.S. 2010 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/142759.htm>

Note: from 2010 to 2014 Afghanistan was continuously placed on Tier 2 Watch List. According to the State Department's report, Tier 2 Watch List.

11. Afghanistan's 2011 TIP report (Tier 2 Watch List)

The U.S. 2011 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 27, 2011. Afghanistan was again placed on Tier 2 Watch List

The U.S. 2011 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2011/164231.htm>

12. Afghanistan's 2012 TIP report (Tier 2 Watch List)

The U.S. 2012 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 19, 2012. Afghanistan was again placed on Tier 2 Watch List.

The U.S. 2012 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/192366.htm>

13. Afghanistan's 2013 TIP report (Tier 2 Watch List)

The U.S. 2013 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 19, 2013. Afghanistan was again placed on Tier 2 Watch List.

The U.S. 2013 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2013/215376.htm>

14. Afghanistan's 2014 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2014 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 20, 2014. Afghanistan moved up to Tier 2.

The U.S. 2014 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2014/226664.htm>

Note: In 2014 and 2015 Afghanistan moved up to Tier 2.

15. Afghanistan’s 2015 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2015 Trafficking in Person Report released on July 27, 2015. Afghanistan placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2015 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2015/243379.htm>

16. Afghanistan’s 2016 TIP report (Tier 2 Watch List)

The U.S. 2016 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 30, 2016. Again, Afghanistan was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List.

The U.S. 2016 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258708.htm>

17. Afghanistan’s 2017 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2017 Trafficking in Person Report released on June 27, 2017. Afghanistan moved up to Tier 2.

The U.S. 2017 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-trafficking-in-persons-report/afghanistan/>

18. Afghanistan’s 2018 TIP report (Tier 2)

The U.S. 2018 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 28, 2018. Afghanistan was placed on Tier 2.

The U.S. 2018 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-trafficking-in-persons-report/afghanistan/>

Note: In 2017 and 2018 Afghanistan was remained on Tier 2 but in 2019 Afghanistan was again downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List

19. Afghanistan’s 2019 TIP report (Tier 2 Watch List)

The U.S. 2019 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 3, 2019. Afghanistan was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch list.

The U.S. 2019 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report-2/afghanistan/>

20. Afghanistan’s 2020 TIP report (Tier 3)

The U.S. 2020 Trafficking in Person Report was released on June 25, 2020. Afghanistan was downgraded to Tier 3.

The U.S. 2020 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/afghanistan/>

Afghanistan was in Tier 3 in 2002 but moved up to Tier 2 in 2004. From 2004 to 2019 Afghanistan moved back and forth between Tier 2 and Tier 2 watch list. But after 18 years of receiving financial and technical support from the international community the Afghan Government did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and did not demonstrate overall increasing anti-trafficking efforts compared to the previous reporting period. The State Department that year reported that Afghanistan remained a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children

subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking and that the Afghan Government failed to combat TIP. Thus, in the U.S. 2020 TIP Report Afghanistan was downgraded to Tier 3.

21. Afghanistan's 2021 TIP report (Tier 3)

The U.S. 2021 Trafficking in Person Report released on July 1, 2021. Afghanistan remained on Tier 3.

The U.S. 2021 TIP report on Afghanistan is available at the following link:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/afghanistan/>

According to the report the Government of Afghanistan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.

During the reporting period there was a government pattern of sexual slavery in government compounds (bacha bazi) and recruitment and use of child soldiers; therefore, Afghanistan remained on Tier 3.

VIII. Additional Documents and Reports on Human Trafficking in Afghanistan

1. Afghanistan Ministry of Justice, **Report of The High Commission to Combat Human Trafficking And Migrants Smuggling - 2018**
<https://moj.gov.af/en/report-high-commission-combat-human-trafficking-and-migrants-smuggling-2018>
2. AREU, **Institutional Mechanisms to Tackle Trafficking in Persons in Afghanistan**
<https://areu.org.af/publication/1803/>
3. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, **Appropriate Legal Responses to Combating Trafficking in Persons in Afghanistan**
https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Legal_Responses_to_Trafficking_in_Persons_Manual_for_Parliamentarians_of_Afghanistan.pdf
4. IOM, **Trafficking in Persons An Analysis of Afghanistan**
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/trafficking_afghanistan.pdf
5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, **Afghanistan renews commitment to address human trafficking and migrant smuggling**, March 2021
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/Webstories2021/Afghanistan-renews-commitment.html>

IX. Afghanistan's Human Trafficking Documents in Farsi

1. Afghanistan's Anti Human Trafficking Law/ Farsi
<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/105006/128264/F1912644394/AFG105006.pdf>

2. TOLO NEWS, FARAKHABAR: Taliban and Daesh Involved in Human Trafficking, November 22, 2017.

<https://tolonews.com/farakhabar/farakhabar-taliban-and-daesh-%E2%80%98involved-human-trafficking%E2%80%99>

A report by the United Nations reveals that Taliban and ISIS are involved in human trafficking including sexual exploitation, forced labor and organs selling.

3. Afghanistan Voice Agency (AVA), “Having Sex with a Trafficker, the Cost of Reaching to Europe”

<https://avapress.com/fa/103260/%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D9%82%D8%A7%DA%86%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%87%D8%B2%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%80-%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%AF%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%BE%D8%A7>

Translation from Farsi: Farida is an Afghan immigrant who risked her life and traveled with her family to Europe. Farida’s family including her parents, five sisters, and one brother crossed Iran and were trafficked to Turkey on foot. She said, besides the hardship of the trip, the brutal and inhumane treatment of traffickers made them crippled, and they regretted making the trip. Traffickers play with women’s dignity along the way and see them as sex workers.

Many refugee women in Turkey have also talked to Farida about how they were raped by traffickers and were forced to have sex with traffickers in order to cross Turkey and reach Germany. Farida added that in some cases traffickers directly ask male members of the family to exchange sex with women or girls of that family in return for assistance in reaching their destination.

4. 8 AM AF, **From Human Trafficking to Sexual Abuse**, by: Rahmatullah Arianpoor, <https://8am.af/from-human-trafficking-to-sexual-abuse/>

According to the article, women and adolescents are often the main victims of human trafficking. Traffickers use various tricks to separate men and women and then use women and adolescent boys for sexual exploitation. The victims remain silent and cannot disclose the issue due to cultural reasons. Even if the crime is disclosed there is not any institution to address it. Traffickers do not give up even when the victims arrive in Turkey. On numerous occasions, traffickers have sent the family to their destination country through Greece, but have kept the girls of that family behind. Traffickers use the girls in prostitution. Some women and adolescents are sexually abused not only by traffickers, but also abused by their companions. Many women are being forced into forced marriages with traffickers.

5. Subhe Kabul Newspaper, **Sexual abuse of refugee women in Greece**, by: Mujib Arzhang, Oct 22, 2018

<https://subhekabul.com/%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%E2%80%8C%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B2%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%86/sexual-of-afghan-refugee-women/>

Official and unofficial statistics show that women and girls are being sexually abused by men in the refugee camps in Greece.

6. BBC News, **Afghan refugees sexually harassed in Turkey, Greece, and Indonesia**, September 2018
<https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan-45532724>

7. Afghanistan Ministry of Justice, **Minister of Justice in Nimroz: If human trafficking is not stopped, sanctions will be imposed on Afghanistan.**

<https://moj.gov.af/dr/%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%84%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%86%DB%8C%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D8%A7%DA%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AC%D9%84%D9%88-%D9%82%D8%A7%DA%86%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%AF%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D9%86%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%B9-%D9%85%DB%8C%E2%80%8C%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%AF>

The Afghanistan Minister of Justice, Fazl Ahmad Manawi, who led an official delegation to Nimroz province on February 20, 2021 to assess the situation of human trafficking, said, “If human trafficking is not prevented, Afghanistan may face international sanctions.” Minister Manawi pointed to the U.S. State Department’s Trafficking in Person Report 2020 and raised concerns about sanctions that the U.S. may impose on countries that have dropped to Tier 3. He added that sanctions will affect the economic and political situation of those countries.

8. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, **Factors, and consequences of Bacha bazi in Afghanistan: research reports, 2014**
<https://ael.af/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/%D8%A8%DA%86%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86.pdf>

Summary of this report is available at the following link:

https://www.aihrc.org.af/home/daily_report/3322#